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**CAN SPORT PROVIDE A SPACE FOR GENDER EQUALITY?: A QUALITATIVE  
STUDY OF CHILDREN WHO PLAY KORFBALL**

**by**

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**for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## **Abstract**

Mixed sport has been described as having the potential to de-gender sporting activities and bodily experiences, as well as combat gender inequalities (Laberge and Albert, 2000). Korfball was originally invented within the educational setting by a Dutch school teacher who designed rules to encourage boys and girls to participate on a level playing field (Summerfield and White, 1989). This thesis provides a historical overview of korfball in order to explain the contrasting trajectory of the sport in comparison to traditional sport, and explores the power structures and ideologies that may have influenced the creator of korfball.

This research involved a yearlong ethnographic study with a junior korfball team (under 13s), and during this time interviews took place with five girls and four boys. The analysis of findings demonstrated how korfball players were experiencing this sport in a different way to other sports. Both the opinions of players, and observation of formal and informal practices, demonstrated how the 'whole package' (Wellard, 2013) of korfball was important to players. Some of Foucault's descriptions of power relations were used to explain the occurring phenomena, and the effect of wider society upon the experiences of korfball. The rules of the game and various influences meant that korfball spaces often facilitated and promoted sporting equality. Yet, in spite of sex equality often being visible within the junior korfball space, normalised gendered performances were still evident. Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) ideas were applied to these findings to aid explanations. Junior korfball players within this study usually maintained an understanding of gender that reflected wider social norms. Players were often reluctant to think critically about accepted gender norms, but the findings from this study were more positive regarding equality within korfball, than previous studies (Crum, 1988; Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

...from korfball's foremost international athletes, to children in the playground, this is an activity where both sexes play together on completely even terms. (International Korfball Federation, undated).

### **A personal reflection: my introduction to korfball**

From a young age, I have always enjoyed physical activity. I remember being six years old and my mum taking my younger brother and me to the park to ride our bikes or kick a football between us. I was enrolled in Saturday morning ballet, tap and modern dance classes and around this age I had also joined a swimming club, swimming once a week. By the time I left the swimming club at 15 years old, I had been training six times a week for many years. In addition to organised sports, throughout my childhood, I lived in a cul de sac where friends from down my road, boys and girls of varying ages, would spend summer nights and weekends riding bikes up and down the road, roller skating, playing 'it' and variations of 'hide and seek', or building assault courses in our back garden. I enjoyed competition and physical activity and I enjoyed playing with friends. At this age I had no real understanding of gender.

I also have positive memories of my experiences at school. I can remember year six in primary school most vividly (aged 10 years old), where it felt like our class, which comprised roughly 20 boys and girls, were all the best of friends. Although at times boys would play football in lunch breaks along with a few girls, there were many lunch breaks spent playing 'bouncy' which involved chasing a bouncy ball, or 'stuck in the mud', or 'hide and seek'. Here, boys and girls ran around together. At primary school I competed in running in the district sports event, swimming galas, the netball team, and the girls' football team. Our deputy head teacher was also a keen sports teacher, and it was her that brought in some Dutch korfball players to teach the year six children korfball so that our school could enter a team for 'National Youth Day', an event which still occurs annually. A number of girls and boys were picked to play a day-long tournament against other schools and korfball clubs, and it was here that the local county korfball club 'scouted' our players to join their team. At that stage, I could not join the team as they trained on the same day that I had my swimming club.

At secondary school, a single-sex girls' grammar school, my love of sport seemed to extend beyond most of the other girls' appreciation of it. I was part of every sports team, rounders, netball, athletics and hockey to name a few. My school engaged in the local sports competitions and when I took part in these, rather than just sitting with girls from my school, I would also meet up with my friends from swimming and we would chat and watch the athletics in between our events.

When I was about 12 years old, my friend from primary school, Louise, who had continued to play korfbal since our National Youth Day tournament, asked me to play for her team. After playing this game I realised that korfbal training took place late enough in the evening that I could attend after swimming training. I began to train on a Thursday and play matches on a Sunday. The team consisted of players that had attended my primary school, and we all became firm friends. We would call for each other in the evenings and weekends, and would travel together to training and matches on Sundays.

Although, by the time I was 14, gender had become more apparent, especially with 'love' interests developing among the boys and girls within the korfbal friendship group, I did not feel that there was an obvious presence of one sex dominating the other and this was never a topic of discussion or evident on the korfbal pitch. Louise was the captain and the strongest player, which seemed to eliminate any sense of male superiority. Even in the senior team, the captain and strongest player was Suzanne. Within our team, the girls wore pleated skirts and the boys wore shorts which could be seen as a clearer marker of difference, but tactics only revolved around wise choices regarding who would mark which girls or boys on the other teams. We were aware that some teams had stronger boys or stronger girls and our coach would tactically match our strongest players to theirs. However, I do not recall that there was ever a discussion about girls or boys being physically more able or innately better skilled. When it came to korfbal, I was blissfully unaware of, or maybe naïve about, the notions of male dominance within sport.

Looking back now, as an adult with a child of my own and exploring sport participation, I can see that I did have a relatively active childhood. My experiences of sport and

physical activity might even be considered less representative than those of many other girls. Taking part in sport was not considered a problem, precisely because it was not made a 'problem' for me at home or in school. My introduction to korfball was also perceived as a 'natural' step into a sport that I could play with my friends and it seemed similarly natural for me to play games with other boys and girls. Sport was fun and a central activity in my socialisation with other children of my age.

After leaving school and studying at University, I became more aware that my experiences of sport were not shared uniformly by other women. I also realised that korfball was different to many other more traditional sports and was not played as widely as I had originally believed when I first started. Reflecting upon my experiences has helped shape the focus of this research and, in particular, provided a context upon which to develop research questions which seek to explore further how sport is experienced by other children and how the practices found in korfball might accommodate a more inclusive and gender-neutral environment.

### **Focus of the Research**

Many writers have explained how the rates of participation for women in sport have increased in recent years (Mansfield, 2006; Dunning, 1999; Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000). Yet studies reveal that boys and men are more likely than girls and women to be supported to partake in sport, more men than women take part in structured sport and the coaching and organisation of sport are dominated by men (Mansfield, 2006; Messner, 2011; Cahn, 1994). Despite these assertions, mixed sport has been described as having the potential to de-gender sporting activities and bodily experiences, as well as combat gender inequalities (Laberge and Albert, 2000).

I primarily endeavoured to conduct this research because of my experiences in the sport of korfball, at both a junior and then senior level. My fondness for a relatively unknown game led me to explore the extent of social research in the area. This investigation revealed a stark lack of contemporary studies into gender equality within korfball, although it is positioned as a sport that claims to facilitate equality between the sexes (IKF, undated), while the only visible studies into gender were written over twenty years ago. Furthermore, I could not find any studies to date that research sporting equality

between different genders in *junior* level korfbal, despite its potential to ease participation within a mixed physical education environment.

Korfbal was originally invented within the educational setting by a Dutch teacher, Nico Broekhuysen, who designed rules to encourage boys and girls to participate on a level playing field within an egalitarian game (Summerfield and White, 1989). It was believed that children who play korfbal might have the opportunity to embrace the notion of equal sporting abilities at a young age and be more critical of traditional gender discourses. There is very little accessible media coverage of korfbal (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated; Crum, 1988) and, therefore, it is a lesser known sport than many other single- sex sports, meaning that the wider population has a decreased chance of having existing preconceptions about it. That korfbal also has a different socio-historical trajectory might also add to the extent to which the sport has been able to develop on a larger scale.

All of the above, suggested to me that there is merit in further investigations into gender equity in korfbal. Therefore, the importance of this study relates to the wider problem of sport and gender inequality. Gender inequality is prominent in sport in that not only do girls tend to have less opportunity than boys to play sport (Cooky, 2009), but there still exist dominant essentialist ideas which associate women with weakness and submissiveness (Ezzell, 2009), in contrast to muscularity and sporting enthusiasm (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006b). According to McDonagh and Pappano (2008), Tolvhed (2013) and Adams (2011) one explanation is that most sports are gender segregated, and that differences between the sexes become taken for granted which enable strict gender binaries to be maintained. Consequently, the historical creation of korfbal, invented as a sport for boys and girls to play on equal terms, presents an opportunity to explore gender equity further and, potentially, the realization of what this sport may have to offer in response to gender inequality. For example, research by Clark and Paechter (2007) suggests how boys demonized girls who demonstrated intent and competitive desire, calling one girl 'vicious' as she played a ball game with them. The assertion here is that there are discourses that operate to exert overt external gaze, as well as internal self-surveillance which can be seen to lead to girls accepting feminine ideologies and failing to fully exert themselves within activities for fear of seeming

unfeminine (Clark and Paechter, 2007: 269). These forms of negative interaction were not evident during my junior experiences in korfbal. Where boys and girls played in unison, and female players tended to dominate important positions, such as captain. Therefore, korfbal was considered a site that might challenge sport as a space which maintains gender inequality.

Taking into account my interest and experience of korfbal and women's sport, these have influenced the general rationale for this research study. In doing so, the following research aim and questions were developed:

#### **Research Aim**

- To investigate whether junior korfbal can create an alternative sporting space that achieves gender equity

#### **Research Questions**

- 1) How successful is junior korfbal at attaining sporting equality between the sexes?
- 2) Does junior korfbal promote gender neutrality?
- 3) Can korfbal offer an alternative culture and different values to traditional, mainstream, mediated sports?
- 4) Do the original aims of korfbal maintain relevance/influence in the game today?

#### **Structure of the Thesis**

While there has been extensive documentation of traditional sports in the UK (Hargreaves, 1986), korfbal emerged at a different socio/historical period. For the purposes of this research, it was considered important to investigate the historical emergence of korfbal and, consequently, chapter one seeks to identify the social and geopolitical location of its emergence in order to 'set the scene' and establish a context to understand the aims and intentions of its development. Chapter one provides important information about the socio-cultural context in which korfbal was invented in at the turn of the twentieth century. This historical overview allows the reader to understand the contrasting trajectory of the sport in comparison to

traditional sport and provides a foundation to explore the power structures and ideologies that may have influenced the Dutch creator of korfbal, Nico Broekhuysen. This chapter also introduces how korfbal is played and acknowledges findings from the few studies that have been conducted in the sport.

Analysing historical phenomena was important to Foucault and his genealogical approach was a central aspect in his explanations of historical power relationships within particular areas of society, at certain times. He stated that history provides 'the depths from which all beings emerge into their precarious, glittering existence' (Foucault, 2002: 238). In chapter two, Foucault's concepts are described in further detail, Foucault's concepts and ideas were chosen because of their perceived usefulness to this study, although an overarching *theory* was not chosen to explain junior korfbal. Instead, relevant ideas were extrapolated and later applied to research data: ideas that were considered most appropriate in explaining the junior korfbal setting most successfully. The broader ideas that are investigated within chapter two include power, discourse and surveillance; but within these broader ideas, particular applications of silence, normalising judgement, classification, and docile bodies were utilised. Bearing in mind that Foucault did not look specifically at either gender or sport within his work, chapter three provides an overview of literature on gender in sport, considering how others have theorised relevant phenomena, and also recognising contemporary findings that relate to this study. The complicated relationship between gender, sex and sexuality is discussed, including the idea that gender is a performance, rather than an expression of an intrinsic trait (Butler, 1990, 1993), before recognising the significance of the body to gender and sport, the importance of ability, and the normalised segregation of men and women in sporting environments. When discussing the normalised segregation between men and women/boys and girls within sport, writers suggest that mixed sport may be able to reveal aspects of equal ability and performance (Wachs, 2002; Messner, 2011), which highlights the importance of an investigation into mixed sports, such as korfbal.

Chapter four discusses how the data within this study was collected and analysed in order to complete the investigation. Having acknowledged a socio-historic analysis of korfbal in chapter one, chapter four explains the importance of also obtaining rich



primary data in order to further explore the research questions and explain how junior korfball players understand gender. Here, an ethnographic approach, incorporating participant observation and interviews, is justified in order to generate further knowledge about the experiences of 'others'. In addition, in this chapter, I explain my rationale behind the epistemological and methodological approaches being adopted when describing power relations, gender performances, and the understandings of players within a junior korfball setting. Furthermore, my reflexive approach is noted, along with a number of examples of my personal reflections on the field, so that the reader can get a 'feel' for the way in which a reflexive approach was taken within the data collection and analysis.

Chapters five and six, provide the analysis of findings from this yearlong ethnographic study. During my year on the field, it became clear that korfball players were experiencing this sport in a different way to other sports. Both the opinions of players, and observation of formal and informal practices, demonstrated how the 'whole package' (Wellard, 2013) of korfball was important to players, including the rules of the game, the involvement of various adults, and the ways in which the sport was performed. Chapter five discusses this idea, applying some of Foucault's descriptions of power relations in order to explain the occurring phenomena, and also the effect of wider society upon the experiences of the sport. The rules of the game and the influence from various adult roles meant that korfball spaces often provided a place which facilitated and promoted sporting equality. Within the korfball environment, it may be that the korfball gaze sees and therefore dominates over the gaze which exists in wider society, aligning with assertions from Foucault (1994) who suggests that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates. Yet, in spite of sex equality often being visible within the junior korfball space, normalised gendered performances were still evident, so this became the focus of chapter six. Chapter six focusses on the gendered body, how players understand masculinity and femininity, the gendering of emotions, and the enactment of gender and equality within junior korfball. It continues to utilise a Foucauldian lens, but also applies explanations related specifically to gender, such as the ideas of Judith Butler (1990, 1993), and recognises previous gender literature in comparison to the findings from this study. The

chapter demonstrates how the junior korfbal players within this study usually maintained an understanding of gender that reflected wider social norms. Players were often reluctant to think critically about accepted gender norms, but the findings from this study were more positive regarding equality within korfbal, than previous studies (Crum, 1988; Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989). Players exhibited the use of social taboo (Foucault, 1990), and individualisation of the non-normal (Foucault 1979a) in order to normalise gender within the korfbal space, and were, therefore, at times, part of the maintenance of the normalisation processes.

The conclusion provides an overview of the research and an evaluation of its success in relation to the original research questions. It also suggests how further research might be developed in light of the findings in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The Invention of Korfball amidst Sociological Developments at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

At the start of the twentieth century, Europe was entering a period of accelerated reform and 'progression'. These European processes of change could be seen across political, social, and educational realms. To contextualise the invention of korfball within the Netherlands in 1902, it is important to acknowledge the political and societal climate that would have influenced the development of this new sport. The historical context of korfball is important as it has a different historical trajectory to traditional, mainstream sports, and emerged from different values. Invented within a progressive education environment, and as a mixed sport for girls and boys to play in unison, it is necessary to acknowledge the roots of the ideals that korfball grew from. Recognising the original aims of korfball, will help build a starting point for answering one of my core research questions which asks whether the original aims are still relevant today. Additionally, it will begin to generate understanding related to the culture and values that make korfball different to mainstream mediated sports, as per research question three.

Although Europe's history cannot be seamlessly detached from a wider world history at the start of the twentieth century, it is still feasible to consider the concentrated and localised structural and ideological issues (Roberts, 2001), as well as those related specifically to the Netherlands, in a similar way to how Foucault (1980: 292) analysed phenomena during specific times and within specific locations, such as 'the formation of disciplinary systems in eighteenth-century Europe' (Foucault, 1980: 292). For example, Foucault (1980) explained how psychiatry, as a scientific discourse, was created out of a number of historical conditions. Although it is beyond the scope of this project to complete a full genealogical analysis, it is important to recognise the relevance of historical context within this study since history provides 'the depths from which all beings emerge into their precarious, glittering existence' (Foucault, 2002: 238). Additionally, according to Crum (2003a), korfball reflects the environment and

period in which it originated. Thus, this chapter offers an account of the conditions that influenced the invention of korfbal, and continues by discussing its development into a sport played in the present day.

This chapter introduces korfbal and reviews the relatively small number of studies completed in the area. It discusses korfbal's diffusion in contrast to the development and diffusion of mainstream modern sports in Europe; it investigates the historical context in Europe that may have been influential on the invention of korfbal, including areas of society such as education, work, economics and politics; it recognises the innovative educational contexts in which korfbal was developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and concisely identifies women's roles in society and changing opportunities in physical education at this time. The main themes that arise from an investigation into the relevant literature include the notion of egalitarianism, an ideology centred on utopia and the potential for a better life for all, the philosophies generated by progressive educators, and the concept that all of these themes were generated as a result of the progressive era.

### **1.1. What is korfbal?**

Korfbal is promoted as being 'the world's only mixed sport' (IKF, 2006: 1), with men and women playing in unison on a level playing field (Crum, 2003b; 1988). Thompson and Finnigan (1990: 7) explain how korfbal has even been commended for 'being 'the answer' for coeducation, 'the solution' for a sporting world where gender inequalities are a continual controversy, and the 'proof' that integrated sport can indeed serve the interests of men and women equally well'. After some media attention received during the 1985 World Games, *WomenSports Magazine* (Spring 1986) labelled korfbal as a 'truly egalitarian sport' (Summerfield and White, 1989: 146).

Korfbal, like netball and basketball, is a ball sport that is played by hand (IKF, 2006; Crum 2003b, Summerfield and White, 1989). The aim of the game is to score goals by shooting the ball through the basket, known as the korf<sup>1</sup> (IKF, 2006; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost

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<sup>1</sup> Korf is the Dutch word for basket (IKF, 2006: 1), so korfbal in Dutch translates to basketball in English (Renson, 1997)

undated). The korf is situated high enough that 'dunking' is not possible (Crum, 2003b). To shoot for a goal, players must escape from their personal opponent with skills of passing the ball and moving quickly and efficiently (IKF, 2006). Teams are made up of eight players, with four women and four men on each team (Crum, 1988; IKF, 2006). To ensure equality and eliminate unfairness, women only mark women and men only mark men, so players are only playing directly opposite their own sex. This arguably weakens traditional sporting advantages of height, muscular strength and speed (IKF, 2006). To limit contact, players have protected possession of the ball. So whilst a player has possession no other player can take possession without the ball leaving their hands<sup>2</sup> (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). To add to the promotion of equality and teamwork, solo play is forbidden (IKF, 2006), including dribbling the ball and running with the ball. The concept of playing together is key within korfbal (Crum, 2003b), and the rules make teamwork obligatory (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). It is suggested that it is the educational roots of korfbal that make sure that players have equality and rely upon each other (Crum, 2003a).

The game ensues as two men and two women from one team attack, whilst the other two men and women from that team defend in the opposite section; and the opposition oppose a person of their own gender (Summerfield and White, 1989). In essence, due to the splitting of the playing area into two halves, a four on four 'duel' takes place within each rectangle (Crum 2003b). As soon as two goals have been scored (by either team, or a combination of the two teams) the defenders and attackers swap ends, and in doing so they also swap roles, so attackers become defenders and vice versa (IKF, 2006; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated).

One of the rules that make korfbal unique, is the 'defended' rule<sup>3</sup>. This rule asserts that any player 'defended' by a player of the same sex<sup>4</sup> does not have the right to shoot;

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<sup>2</sup> The ball can be intercepted during a pass or when it leaves a players' hands

<sup>3</sup> The 'defended' rule was not part of the original set of rules, it was not until 1965 that shooting whilst 'defended' was completely prohibited, but it was an unwritten regulation for an extended period of time prior to that (Rodenburg, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> If someone of the opposite sex marks a player it is considered an infringement of the rules (Crum, 2003b) and anything from a free-pass to a penalty can be awarded.

this encourages fast shots and learned techniques<sup>5</sup> (IKF, 2006; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). The ‘defended’ rule means that speed and agility play a more vital role than physical attributes such as height, and ability to jump high (Crum, 2003b), since a player is constantly trying to break free from an opponent. For a team to effectively defend the opposing team, it is standard practice for each player to have a specific opponent to which they ‘stick’. The attacker must then use speed and skill to move away from their opponent and develop the opportunity to score (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated; Crum, 1988).

Korfbal is intended to be a sport in which anyone can participate, it is deemed straightforward to learn and play just for fun, and yet competitive enough to enjoy at an elite level (Crum, 2005a). Korfbal is often considered to radiate a sense of community to those that participate or have an affiliation with the sport. Families of those that are involved in korfbal are frequently part of that community too, ‘for in many countries korfbal, like hockey and handball, is a typical family sport’ (Fransoo, 2003: 174). This family structure was further enhanced by the addition of under 12 and under 10 years old korfbal (Rodenburg, 2003). Rodenburg (2003: 155) explains that ‘prams along the out- line, juniors lying in the sun, kids shooting korf all day are examples of the cast-iron korfbal culture’ (Rodenburg, 2003: 155).

## **1.2 The Historical Development of Korfbal**

Nico Broekhuysen is considered to be the founding father of korfbal (Van Dijk, 2003; Renson, 2003). He taught in a mixed Primary School in a poor part of Amsterdam at the beginning of the 1900s (IKF, 2006; Summerfield and White, 1989) and is said to have developed korfbal from basketball, which was demonstrated at a progressive educators summer school in Nääs, Sweden, in 1902 (Renson, 2003; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). Broekhuysen was labelled as a progressive educator (Renson, 2003), and certain values endorsed by progressive education are arguably evident within korfbal (see section 1.2.6 for more on progressive education).

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<sup>5</sup> ‘A shot must be considered defended when the hindering defender satisfies the following conditions: he must actively be trying to block the ball AND whilst actively trying to block the ball he must i) be within arm’s length of the attacker ii) have his face turned towards the attacker and iii) be nearer the post than the attacker’ (IKF, 2015: 16).

The summer school course was, amongst other things, striving for the renewal of games played outside, so practical sessions were arranged to demonstrate and promote outdoor games (Renson, 2003). The main catalyst for the development of korfbal was a perceived need for a competitive mixed sport that relied on cooperation, where rules were designed to encourage boys and girls to participate on a level playing field, refute violence and form an egalitarian game (Summerfield and White, 1989). Korfbal offered an innovative and quite radical alternative to single-sex team sports that had been introduced to, and developed in schools around the same time (IKF, 2006). Taking this into account, in order to better understand the invention of korfbal and the sporting differences it promoted, it is important to recognise the influences from wider society at the time of creation.

### *1.2.1 Breakdown of Traditional Influences in European Societies*

Around the turn of the twentieth century, a clear development in the transmission of ideas was evident within European cities. The potential for a better life and humanitarianism became prominent at the same time as socialism (Dickinson, 1939); and urbanisation (De Vries, 1984). Urbanisation led to a fragmenting of power from more traditional social sources, such as the Church and family, due to a less concentrated and localised culture (Roberts, 2001) and a general hope among the masses for a completely new society (Joll, 1982). On the continent specifically, many intellectuals held enlightened ideas that,

unemployment, slums, malnutrition, poor health would be swept aside; education, equality of the sexes, State welfare, taxation of the rich, nationalisation of businesses would create a new world. It was to be a City of God – but without God (Stone, 1983: 47-48)

The argument here is that the more conventional structures for knowledge transmission such as the Church, for example the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands (Van Rooden, 2002), which traditionally conveyed moral and ethical values about the correct way to live and behave, became less prominent as urbanisation moved people from rural settings into more highly populated cities and towns. Van Rooden (2002) asserts that, during the nineteenth century, in the Netherlands, like much of Europe, Christianity (incorporating the Dutch Reformed Church) was depleted of reputation, and religion, in general, declined in social importance and prominence.

This gave rise to more readily accepted alternatives, and people became susceptible to, and aware of, embodied change, new beliefs and reformations, such as the ideas of socialism, all culminating in positive aspiration for a new and innovative society. Views, values and beliefs were rapidly changing and becoming optimistic in Europe towards 1900, which may provide an explanation for the generation of innovative ideas that shaped the creation of korfbal, such as egalitarianism, equality and mixed gender sports participation.

### *1.2.2 Changes in European Society during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*

In addition to changing values and beliefs in Europe, due to the breakdown of traditional influences, from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century many other changes took place. Advancements were made within European society in terms of land and sea transport, health and welfare services, sanitation and accommodation (Davies, 1997). It was a time for invention and the development of new possibilities, and as a result, there was a greater appeal for new sports which could reflect the broader social change. The general reformations within European society arguably led to a better way of life, leading to extended life expectancy, declining mortality rates, and growing populations (Roberts, 2001; Davies, 1997; Anderson, 1987; Joll, 1982). The Netherlands reflected much of Europe in this respect (Wintle, 2000). Roberts (2001) argues that these improvements within society led to a culture that was less tolerant of deprivation and one which began to have a stronger aspiration for overall happiness.

One suggestion concerning the wider desire for a better life relates to the money economy turning once self-sufficient peasants into consumers and taxpayers (Davies, 1997), suggesting a transition from being required to meet obligations, to having the opportunity to demand rights (Anderson, 1987; Joll, 1982). The suggestions here indicate that Europe was developing social justice, but also evolving in relation to beliefs, expectations and the presumption that happiness was not only desirable but attainable. Changing attitudes meant that new ideas and innovations became prevalent within society, and opened the doors to optimistic ideals such as equality and egalitarianism; notions that are arguably mirrored within the idealised ethos and rules of korfbal. Additionally, the development of modes of diffusion such as transport,



literature and education meant the dissemination of collective new ideas and initiatives, spreading awareness of this noticeably adapting and transforming society to a wider population (Anderson, 1987). Many European countries made primary school attendance compulsory for both sexes and all classes towards the turn of the twentieth century (Roberts, 2001; Davies 1997), including the Netherlands in 1901<sup>6</sup> (Wintle, 2000). Arguably these transformations had started to develop during the eighteenth century in Western Europe and were considered to be interrelated with the era known as the Enlightenment (Hampson, 1999).

### *1.2.3 Political Influence on Humanitarian Ideals, and Increased Awareness of Diversity*

The late 1900s spawned a period of inspiration and innovation. At this time, several political parties, such as socialist parties, began to promote and endorse the need to stop oppression (mainly centred on the lower classes, with regards to working hours for example), the promotion of sacrifice for the greater good and equality (Davies, 1997; Joll, 1982), and also a more united society centred on social reform (Anderson, 1987). The rise of socialism corresponded with the changing beliefs and attitudes of expectation that the working classes began embracing at the time, and furthermore, were actively endorsing through a political stance which demanded a society based on a universal equality and improvement for all.

The advancement of ethics and values sensitised towards the equality of different classes and the sexes began to illustrate an amplified awareness of human difference and appreciation of humanity as a whole. Along with this awareness, legislation regarding welfare, social services and working hours were becoming evident in most Western European countries by 1900, and shortly after this, extensive developments were made with regards to medical advances (Roberts, 2001, Davies, 1997). Society was changing dramatically in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. More liberal attitudes were making way for the consciousness of human difference and different groupings of people. To emphasise the growing interest and attentiveness of human diversity, it is possible to see the development of

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<sup>6</sup> This is particularly important when considering the invention of korfbal in a mixed school environment (see section 1.2 on the Historical Development of Korfbal).

anthropological study cultivated during this time, leading to a hastened awareness of variation (Roberts, 2001), as well as the development of ethnography and sociology within Universities around 1900 (Davies, 1997). With the increased awareness of human diversity and groups within society and the concept of equality as an ideal, it is unsurprising that this environment gave the opportunity for korfbal to develop, and promote equality of the sexes within a sporting sphere.

Nevertheless, despite the modern recognition of a more humanitarian society, a growing awareness of social groupings, and a greater exchange of liberal notions, not all emerging beliefs necessarily shared egalitarian views (Anderson, 1987; Roberts, 2001; Adams, 2001). It would be misleading to assume that socialism and humanitarianism were all-encompassing, universal notions that were supported and followed by each and every individual or group of individuals within European society. It would be misleading to suggest that the invention of korfbal came at a time when only optimism for equality and compassion was evident. However, ideas of equality and liberation were highly prominent at the time, contributing to improved opportunities for many women, which was extremely timely for the development of a sport that aimed to serve boys and girls equally well.

#### *1.2.4 Liberation of the Female Body*

Tied in with the notion of growing awareness of diversity was the changing stance on the liberation of the female body. Despite this, at the end of the nineteenth century, many medical authorities still maintained that female energy was finite and that it should be conserved for puberty and other physical changes in women at various life stages (Vertinsky, 1994). Nonetheless, a degree of freedom had been gained from physical education and a more liberal school of thought was becoming evident regarding the physical female body and the opportunity it gave for empowerment and emancipation (Hargreaves, 1994). Most of all, physical education and sport gave way to growing awareness of ways in which the body could be used to struggle against female subordination (Hargreaves, 1994). The preliminary progression of thought from many medical authorities in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century evolved from the recommendation of no physical activity for women to an endorsement of certain types of moderate physical activity. However, this suggestion

was still relatively restrictive and rejected sports with a competitive ethos that encouraged dynamic exercise, and any kind of physical activity that was overly energetic (Vertinsky, 1987).

While there remained marked differences between the games being played by boys and middle-class girls within schools during the late 1900s, one similarity included the notion that girls could be taught moral virtues that were required for leadership (Hargreaves, 1994). Playing games within their schools demonstrated that girls could acquire physical and moral qualities that had previously been solely attributed to boys. Leisure and physical activity began to extend to working classes through the teachings of middle class physical educators (Hargreaves, 1994). In line with these advancements, by the end of the nineteenth century clothing had been adapted to suit the needs of physical activity. For example, the gymslip was being worn in educational settings. In turn, the body could be seen to be liberated and less restricted physical activity was becoming established practice, albeit a gradual and complex struggle (Hargreaves, 1994). The assertion of freedom of the female body that came from some physical educators aided the struggle against the subordination of both middle-class and working-class women. Hargreaves (1994) suggests that this was of optimum importance since the body was a vital tool regarding the oppression of women in society, 'the repression of women's bodies symbolised powerfully their repression in society' (Hargreaves, 1994: 85). Nevertheless, despite the surge of awareness of female body due to physical educators, Madame Österberg, a pioneer in women's physical education in England, was partially responsible for limiting the potential of female bodies. Österberg was a Swedish gymnastics teacher who travelled to England from Sweden to endorse Swedish gymnastics in schools for young girls of all classes in the late 1800s. She launched her approach to physical activity in England, founding training colleges for middle and upper-class female teachers who could then take the new style to London schools for working-class girls and middle and upper-class women (Trangbæk, 2000). Despite such support in the unrestraint of the female body with regards to physical activity and movement, Österberg limited the potential for further awareness of freedom of the female body by ensuring that physical education was strict and regulated to concentrate on integrity and

morality, rather than a more pleasurable and gratifying use of the body in expressive and less restrictive activities (Hargreaves, 1994). Österberg promoted physical education for women, yet promoted the notion of producing ‘womanly women’ as quoted in a report from her physical training college in 1895 (Hargreaves, 2002: 61). The principle behind Swedish gymnastics was hygiene, health and morality, competition was completely prohibited (Trangbæk, 2000).

Hargreaves (1994) asserts that dress reform as the Victorian era came to a close was central to the very literal liberation of the female body. Changes were made from very tight fitting and restrictive clothing such as corsets to looser fitting clothing promoting ease of movement. This further aided the advancement and ease of female physical activity, including more appropriate clothing designed for activities such as cycling (such as shorter skirts) which did not only aid liberation of the female body, but also the physical freedom to move from location to location (Hargreaves, 1994). Women’s bodies were slowly being liberated, and with that came increased opportunity for equality, particularly in physical activity. Thus, once again, providing a context for the invention of korfbal and its inclusive format.

#### *1.2.5 Influence and Relevance of American Society on Europe*

To gain a greater and more accurate understanding of the context that korfbal was invented in at the turn of the twentieth century, it is also worth mentioning the significance of what was occurring outside of the European arena at this time. Since the restrictions imposed by communication and transport limitations were becoming less prevalent during this period Europe and America had a degree of important exchanges of people, goods, and possibly ideas. The period from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century (1890-1917) is labelled as the Progressive Era in America (Burt, 2004; Abrams, 1969). Similar to European countries, this time frame provided America with a long list of various legislations relating to societal reform (Galliher, Gregory and Cook, 1992). Weiler (2004: 4) argues that in America this era was inspired by ‘a society dedicated to the common good and based on respect for all its members’. These are similar idealistic claims that were being professed about European society around the turn of the twentieth century, but it cannot be assumed that these ideas were applicable to, or benefited everybody.

Ideas of equality between the sexes were also spreading across America at the same time as they were in Europe. The first movement promoting women's rights in America started at a conference in 1848 (Adams, 2001), the fight for equality was further developed as the century proceeded and continued to develop as America entered the progressive era (Rynbrandt, 1997). There have been an influential number of studies completed on women in the progressive era, especially from feminist historians (Frazer, 1990). Rynbrandt (1997) argues that women were an important element of progressive reform, and they formed a network of groups deemed as women's clubs that were initially based on improvement for themselves as individuals, in areas such as literacy, but developed an emphasis on community advancement. Many women's clubs fought for a humanitarian social justice and an improvement in public health (Rynbrandt, 1997), reflecting moral and ethical reform of the body. The women's clubs also provided trade unions and legislation relating to wages and working conditions, as well as a push towards educational reform and suffrage (Frazer, 1990). Matthews (2003), writing on the development of the women's movement in America between the 1870s and the 1920s made the assertion that during this time women in America changed their roles within society over many spheres, for example, employment and professions, education and organisations, and ideologies and suffrage. This was similar to prominent and noticeable events occurring within European society including the assertion for equal rights and the right to vote. While progression for women may have been particularly influential on the development of korfbal and its egalitarian ethos in 1902, Nico Broekhuysen was also considered a progressive educator, so this movement is also said to have some influence over its development.

#### *1.2.6 Philosophies of Progressive Education*

As previously stated, the turn of the twentieth century brought an era of change in numerous respects, in various areas of society, and in many countries all over the world. These changes included a degree of educational reform. During this time there were also a number of new and original philosophies emerging with regards to educational practise. The late 1800s and early 1900s produced a specific type of education, known as 'progressive education'. In the same way the progressive era

contained ideologies of a better society, progressive educators were also unified in striving for a more commendable and righteous world (Weiler, 2004). Since Nico Broekhuysen, the inventor of korfbal, was deemed to be a progressive educator, it is important to consider the influence of this movement. The assertion that progressive educators rejoiced in a vision of utopia has been stressed by countless scholars researching the history of this topic (Weiler, 2004; Maher, 1999; Dale, 1979), with specific mention of progressive education being underlined by principles of equality and freedom (Dale, 1979).

Progressive education envelopes numerous countries, generates a variety of names, and encompasses countless different ideas and philosophies (Dale, 1979: 191). It is argued that progressive education, with ideas such as social improvement and equality, complies with the aspiration for a greater good that was reflected in the progressive era as a whole (Pak, 2001). In the same way the progressive era contained ideologies of a better society, progressive educators too were unified in striving for a more commendable and righteous world (Weiler, 2004), many progressive educators had a vision of utopia (Maher, 1999; Weiler, 2004), and strongly believed in equality and freedom for all human beings (Dale, 1979). The changing values and beliefs within society as a whole, such as ideals of humanitarianism were being reflected on certain educational principles. Taking into consideration this potential absorption of ideals that some forms of education were experiencing, and the fact that korfbal was developed within an educational setting, the influence of a wider society and educational philosophies on korfbal's creation is convincing.

A number of key progressive educators have been discussed in literature, educators embracing philosophies based on developing a better society via alternative educational methods. Friedrich Froebel was labelled as one of the first real founders of progressive education (Read, 2003). Froebel created the idea of the Kindergarten (meaning garden of children in German) around the mid-1830s and based his concept on children's early development before the age of six years (Read, 2003). Froebel died in 1852, but he had built up a large following, predominantly of women, who took his philosophies and methods all over the world including Britain, the USA and Russia (Brennan, 1993). Froebel's ultimate goal was to develop an improved type of human

being which would reflect and impact on society to make the world a better place (Jeynes, 2006; Read, 2003 and 2006; Chung and Walsh, 2000; Baader, 2004). Froebel also had strong beliefs in the importance of play which he defined as 'the self-active representation of the inner- representation of the inner from inner necessity and impulse' (Froebel, 1887: 55 cited in Kuschner, 2001:277), which has been consistently observed and identified,

in order to continue in play, especially involving other children, youngsters needed to practice self-restraint, cooperation, and adherence to certain rules (Saracho, 1986), which contributed to developing them into self-disciplined, social, and law-abiding adults (Liebschner, 2001; Saracho, 1986) (cited in Jeynes, 2006: 1942)

The use of play as an apparatus to develop children's social skills as well as moral and ethical awareness was becoming utilised within the kindergartens, thus spreading the notion of the importance of play. This approach was maintained and enforced after Froebel's death by John Dewey who maintained that play could be used as a tool for societal development, recognising the value that physical education held within a school environment (Gerber, 1968). Additionally, Froebel believed that women had roles in society which were as important as men's if society was to continue to function effectively (Read, 2003), for example, teaching (Bethell, 2006; Baader, 2004). Women found their calling in teaching at kindergartens and promoting Froebel's philosophies (Bethell, 2006). In turn, with the expansion of kindergartens the promotion of women as teachers and professionals educating future generations spread internationally (Baader, 2004). There are differing views as to whether these women consciously used the kindergarten as a method of improving the feminist struggle (Read, 2003), or whether they accidentally stumbled across this cause, which coincidentally gave elevation to the fight for gender equality (Read, 2006).

Froebel was a key influence on progressive education, but a little later other progressive educators also came to the fore in Europe. Maria Montessori developed her first school in Italy early in the 1900s (Peters, 2008) after working with mentally impaired children and recognising the heartless way that they were treated, she then opened up her mainstream school. Her successes spread globally and soon there were schools in England and America amongst other countries (Adams, 2001). The central aspect of

Montessori's teaching method was that the child should be at the hub of the teaching philosophy,

However you try to categorise the Montessori philosophy – structured, progressive, traditional, even permissive – the more you read about and observe the methods, the more you see that the power of the philosophy comes from its insistence on giving the child choices and a great deal of independence. (Peters, 2008:71)

Montessori saw this concept of the child making their own choices as the key to learning through their own means; she viewed the experience as the crucial learning factor. She believed that along with educational reform could come global peace, an ethically aware society, (Duckworth, 2006), a change in human existence and renewal of humanity, harmony (Miller, 2004), social growth (Cohen, 1990), and a better type of man (Potts, 2007).

Also similar to Froebel, she created opportunities for women to become teachers and advance within society. She did not intend to impose political frameworks upon her children in the way of gender equality or otherwise, although she did declare that differences should be removed in order to create a unified society where all people work together in order to achieve a united goal (Miller, 2004). It becomes clear that multiple progressive educators believed in eliminating the difference between children and promoting equality, which aligns nicely with Broekhuysen's development of korfbal as a sport that provides a level playing field for girls and boys to play sport together. Additionally, these progressive educators continue to illustrate the way in which the growing ethical and societal beliefs within a wider society were replicated into an educational setting, such as the increasing opportunities for women.

### *1.2.7 Changing Opportunities for Women in Society*

Within Europe around 1900, feminists were fighting against the inequality between the sexes, illustrated by the lack of suffrage for women (Anderson, 1987). Despite the evident lack of suffrage for women around 1900 within Europe, the expansion of feminist groups around this time gave a heightened degree of awareness to the inequalities experienced by the female sex, raising awareness and contestation of sexual discrimination. This led to increased rights for women in Europe at the turn of



the twentieth century, including but not limited to the right for married women to own property in addition to unmarried women, increased general employment opportunities (Adams, 2001), the right to register as doctors, and the right to open savings accounts in their own names (Anderson, 1987), but these gradual equalities were mainly being gained by middle-class women. Although the right for women to vote in Europe was not evident yet, slowly inequalities were being recognised and contested, bringing changes and advancements in the female struggle for equality. Within the Netherlands women were paid a lot less than men and did not often benefit from education beyond primary school, it is also argued that they were potentially in a worse physical/medical state than men since the gynaecology was so bad (Wintle, 2000). Nonetheless, by the 1870s a number of socialists and radical liberals recognised the gender disparity and the unjust nature relating to a number of aspects: women receiving less pay, less education, and decreased stability in health through medical practice (Wintle, 2000). With this acknowledgement, came the opportunity for contestation.

In addition to a general increase in rights and opportunities, women were being given growing prospects in physical activity such as gymnastics, at the very least, in an educational setting. This was in contrast to the first half of the nineteenth century when assertions were being made by medical professionals that women had limited energy for their lifetime which should be reserved for bearing and rearing children, thus encouraging them not to participate in physical activity. The move into the twentieth century brought physical activity as a core part of the curriculum in most of the elite schools for girls (Hargreaves, 1994). Despite this radical change, Hargreaves (1994) claimed that the working classes were still given less choice and variation than middle and upper classes in their physical activity at school, but were offered gymnastics. The appreciation of benefits associated with physical activity were becoming clear, even if discipline and self-control were also part of physical activity, alongside good posture, care of the body, and other similar features. With regards to recreation and competitive sports, Hargreaves acknowledges that by the end of the nineteenth century middle class women were utilising bicycles for exercise, and were able to access swimming baths. Wimbledon Tennis Championships had also begun accepting female competitors by 1900, and other sports such as hockey, punting and badminton

were becoming competitive in an educational setting. Hargreaves (1994) also notes that sports were becoming available to working-class women at the end of the nineteenth century, but these were legitimised due to the benefits sports could have on work.

Where governing bodies were created for sports, the male form of the game excluded women from their associations and from the start there was a clear 'separatist ideology in the formation of modern sports' (Moon, 1997: 56); such as the Amateur Athletics Association which was established in 1880 and consisted of an all-male self-governing and independently maintained body that clearly demonstrated itself to be specifically for men. Moon (1997) suggests that even when the Women's Amateur Athletics Association was created in 1921, the rules and procedures emulated the men's with no diversion and by this point men had firm control of athletics in Britain. Men determined the ways in which women could take part in athletics and maintained a predominantly middle-class, gentlemanly representation with an amateur ethos and a strong image of masculinity. This male-orientated, male-prioritised, and male-regulated demonstration of the development of modern athletics would seem transferrable to many other modern sports that maintained their emphasis on masculinity throughout the historical development (see section 1.3.1 for examples of the development of other modern sports). Arguably, the development and protection of many modern sports as a sacred realm for men and masculinity, could be a direct backlash to the advancement and increasing opportunities that women were gaining in Western society at the time.

Korfball was not created as a male-orientated, overtly masculine, and female excluding sport; it was instead historically developed from the outset as an inclusive activity that could promote gender equality within a sporting environment. Consequently, it differs greatly historically from many other sports, even the ones that now have a mixed alternative. It begs the question as to whether korfball has succeeded in maintaining its gender equality ethos in contrast to other modern sports which have been unsuccessful in cultivating that ethos, due to the values and purpose in which it was initially created (as a mixed sex sport, as opposed to an adaptation of a historically male developed sport). Therefore, it is important to consider the place of mixed sports

during this time.

### *1.2.8 Mixed Sports*

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was very little opportunity for men and women to participate in physical activity together. Hargreaves (1994: 54) specifically mentions that certain sports could be played in a mixed setting, such as tennis for example, but in these instances, women were considered 'inferior to men' and the mixed version of the game was used to simply support and strengthen traditional gender values and characteristics,

When allowed, [mixed sports] were accepted if the women played supportive, ladylike roles as men's partners (Hargreaves, 1994: 109)

This was a very different outlook to the vision created by the invention of korfbal. Korfbal was created as an opportunity for boys and girls to play as equals in a physical setting. It is apparent that there was a growing appreciation of equal opportunities for women in both a social and sporting environment towards the end of the 1800s, thus there is a visible context to which the mixed and egalitarian rules of korfbal may have been born out of. Nevertheless, with regards to the egalitarian ethos that was encompassed by korfbal in 1902, it would still seem that korfbal was ahead of its time with the concept of joining together men and women as equals in a sporting sphere. This can be seen more clearly when comparing the ethos's and characteristics of other modern sports which were developed at the same time as korfbal, and considering the success of their diffusion compared with that of korfbal.

### **1.3 International Development of Korfbal**

Broekhuysen formally launched korfbal in 1903 (IKF, 2006), and he was attributed to be the first to put the korfbal rules on paper (Van Bottenburg, 2003). A high number of korfbal clubs were established shortly after its invention, and it took-off well in the Netherlands where it originated and also in Belgium (IKF, 2006). Physical Education teachers in the Netherlands strongly aided the expansion of korfbal, as Broekhuysen provided courses to teach korfbal (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). Amalgamations of teachers and pupils formed korfbal clubs (Van Bottenburg, 2003). The Dutch and Belgians created the International Korfbal Bureau (IKB) in 1924, which was then superseded by the International Korfbal Federation (IKF) in 1933. Korfbal

has been a demonstration sport at the Olympic Games on two occasions, in Antwerp in 1920 and Amsterdam in 1928 (IKF, 2006; Van Bottenburg, 2003; Summerfield and White, 1989), but this is evidently some time ago with no note of Olympic interest in more contemporary years. De Coubertin was vocal about his dislike for women in the Olympics and women's sport, 'with regard to the admission of women to the Games, I remain a fervent opponent. It was against my will that they were admitted to a growing number of competitions' (De Coubertin, 1928: 105 cited in Crum, 2003a: 123). This firm aversion to women in sport would mean that the radical structure of korfbal, with its equality of the sexes and unification of men and women, would be a detrimental to the sports acceptance in the Olympics. Crum (2003a) summarises this argument,

the mixed nature of korfbal – the distinguishing feature that from the 1970s opened the doors to so many countries – must have been a thorn in the flesh of de Coubertin. And although his direct influence on the Games was on the wane, it did spoil korfbal's chances at the time (Crum, 2003a: 124)

This notion could also illustrate why korfbal was unsuccessful in gaining Olympic status even after demonstrations at the 1920 and 1928 Olympics. De Coubertin's above comment came in the same year that korfbal was demonstrated at the Olympics for the second time, showing that his views were still prominent. Despite this, the IOC officially recognised korfbal in 1993 (IKF, 2006; Van Bottenburg, 2003), presumably due to the number of countries affiliated to the IKF (Fransoo, 2003).

Before the Second World War korfbal had expanded to be the fifth most practised sport in the Netherlands, yet its global diffusion was not particularly successful (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Considering that basketball and korfbal have many aspects in common; their link to education, popularity in their retrospective countries, creation at a similar time; basketball diffused across the international scene at a rate korfbal could never even imagine (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Basketball spread from the United States of America before the First World War. Japan, China, the Philippines, Korea, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, and Cuba were all exposed to basketball through the American army, Merchants, seamen, and students at American universities; but more influentially, YMCA missionaries from the USA who privileged basketball with a place in their education agenda (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Basketball continued to spread after the world wars, to Europe, and to a number of African countries through peace

assignments post World War Two. This spurred the success of Basketball's international prowess, and the International Basketball Federation now boasts a membership of 211 countries (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Basketball's international success was not mirrored in korfbal's diffusion. The Netherlands did not have the power or dominance of the USA, and as such, were not successful in broadening the korfbal scope internationally. Dutch teachers were not travelling the world with educational programmes and influence like the American YMCA missionaries (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Instead, korfbal diffused to areas that had an association with the Netherlands, such as Flanders, the colonies, and the Netherlands East Indies; it did not spread outside of the Dutch-speaking realm until after World War Two (Van Bottenburg, 2003; Fransoo, 2003). The spread of korfbal by no means compared to the spread of basketball, despite the comparable roots, its continued development was thus extremely dissimilar to that of Basketball.

Korfbal in the Netherlands was rapidly growing into a more serious sport during the 1960s and 1970s. Only football was played more than korfbal in the Netherlands in the 1970s, and korfbal was the most played sport by girls aged 18 years and younger until the beginning of the 1980s<sup>7</sup> (van Bottenburg, 2003). Additionally, there has been a hastened growth in korfbal worldwide since the 1970s (Fransoo, 2003). The IKF (2006: 6) suggests that this is due to the fact that 'social attitudes worldwide have caught up with the progressive, innovative nature of the sport', implying that korfbal was ahead of its time when it was invented at the turn of the twentieth century. Rodenburg (2003) agrees that the sixties and seventies advanced the success of korfbal due to the social climate fostering ideas such as collaboration between men and women. He goes on to assert that during this time the more conventional roles of the men as the main attackers and women as supporting players had nearly vanished, instead, players alternated their roles, which was a reflection of the general attitude of the time<sup>8</sup>. Van Bottenburg (2003: 91) explains that, similar to basketball and most sports, the global spread of korfbal nearly always started with 'a bilateral contact

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<sup>7</sup>In 2003 Fransoo (2003) claimed there were about 100,000 korfbal players affiliated with the Dutch Korfbal Association, which accounted for two fifths of the world's active korfballers.

<sup>8</sup>Despite this assertion, it does not align with findings from previous studies completed during the 1980s (see section 1.4 which acknowledges previous research studies in korfbal)

between a person or group from the adoption country and the country of origin'. An example of this process includes a school korfbal player (Albert Milhado) who escaped to England during the war and took korfbal with him (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Another reason for korfbal growing in success during the 1970s was that Adri Zwaanswijk, the Netherlands national coach, embarked on a world tour in 1978 and demonstrated korfbal in a high number of countries in Asia and South America, this successfully generated an increased number of national korfbal associations (Rodenburg, 2003; Fransoo, 2003; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). Despite the success in the growth of korfbal awareness and the number of countries affiliated to the IKF, there was no financial backing for the prospective countries, meaning that a large number of enthusiastic states could not maintain korfbal and thus were unable to join the IKF. Those countries that have become affiliated with the IKF over the years, and managed to continue their participation in korfbal have typically been able to do so because someone endorsing the sport established it in their chosen country, successfully hauled it through less positive times, and launched a stable organisation. This acknowledgement goes some way in explaining why korfbal is still a relatively unknown sport in many countries and may demonstrate a rationale for its lack of popularity compared to many mainstream sports that earmark large sums of money for promotion.

Countries that became affiliated with the IKF during the 1970s included Portugal, Australia, Taiwan, and India amongst others (Fransoo, 2003). A supporter of Zwaanswijk, and President of the Royal Dutch Korfbal Association (KNKV), also helped to actively spread the knowledge of korfbal by sending a team over to the United States of America to demonstrate the sport in a number of universities (Fransoo, 2003). The motivating factor for this in 1976, was the law passed in America that stated teaching should be of a mixed sex nature (title IX) (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated; Van Bottenburg, 2003). 1978 marked the start of the korfbal world championships, and since 1987 they have taken place every four years in a cyclical pattern (IKF, 2006), mimicking the same cyclical pattern as the Olympic Games but not on corresponding years. Korfbal went on to join the world games in 1985 and has been a participant ever since (IKF, 2006; Summerfield and White, 1989). Four-yearly continental championships

are also held in Asia-Oceania and Europe (IKF, 2006), demonstrating the number of high-level international korfbal competitions that are now routinely administered. Korfbal was ranked in the Netherlands as the third most popular team sport for girls under the age of 18 in 2003 (Van Bottenburg, 2003). Even so, in 2002 there were still limited numbers of countries associated with the IKF; 17 of these were from Europe, seven from the former colonies, and seven other countries in the sphere of Asia, which equaled 35 countries in total (Van Bottenburg, 2003). It is argued that the twenty-first century, with changing social attitudes, will provide an appropriate environment for korfbal to continue to develop and grow in numbers of participants and participating countries. The notion of the family unit and values of social cohesion are said to be fashionable once again, so the merits of korfbal being a sport for all the family should be well revered (Rodenburg, 2003).

Over 50 countries are now affiliated with the IKF, across five continents, and the IKF are constantly endeavouring to expand that number (IKF, 2006). Europe is the continent where korfbal is most prominent (which is unsurprising considering its roots and creation), with the Netherlands and Belgium being the leading forces in the korfbal world. Other countries with IKF membership include Chinese Taipei, Russia, South Africa, Australia, India, as well as China and the USA (IKF, 2006), yet Van Bottenburg (2003) suggests that on a more general level, outside of the Netherlands it is practically unheard of.

The IKF aims to promote the philosophies of korfbal in order to boost its popularity, as a progressive and innovative sport, embodying principles of equality and co-operation, korfbal has immense potential to assist in establishing relationships, building communities and strengthening organisations' (IKF, 2006: 9).

By marketing korfbal in such a way, the IKF aim to strengthen the sport internationally, making a wider audience aware of the benefits of korfbal through its original principles. A distinct sport like korfbal, with a rare attribute such as the mixed sex character, has huge potential for spreading abroad, even if some people interpret it as a 'girl's sport' (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated).

Despite this huge push to develop the global spread of korfbal, the mixed sex format

does, however, limit its appeal in some countries. Women's sport may not be accepted in some cultures, and the mixed character will only serve to be more restrictive even in those countries that accept single-sex female sports. The chances of korfbal successfully achieving sporting status in countries where Islamic law is the prominent religion, are minimal to non-existent (Fransoo, 2003). Similarly, poorer areas such as many countries in Africa will not be able to afford the equipment to establish and sustain korfbal, and the IKF is not in a position to fund countries with no financial backing of their own (Fransoo, 2003).

Regardless of the marketing of korfbal, it is often hard for korfbal to compete with larger sports such as football that drive millions of dollars into development per year, compared with korfbal trickling 60,000 Euros per year into growing their sport (Fransoo, 2003). By endeavouring to understand the differences between the development and diffusion of korfbal from 1902 onwards, and that of other modern sports with similar timeframes to korfbal, the vast gaps with regards to contemporary awareness and popularity can be recognised.

### *1.3.1 Development of Modern Sport during the Nineteenth Century*

Football, as an example of a traditional sport, emerged from folk games that have been referred to as long ago as the fourteenth century (Dunning and Sheard, 2005). In the 1830s games within Public Schools started to adapt, and organisation and codification started to emerge (Dunning and Sheard, 2005). Around this time, Thomas Arnold's masters at Rugby recognised the ways in which sport could be used to contribute to 'discipline and morality' (Holt, 1989: 80). This led to Headmasters that until that time had strongly opposed the often violent games that boys were playing, to seize and refine the games to make them formal and tools for the projection of values such as 'team spirit and co-operation' (Holt, 1989: 80; Hargreaves, 1986; Dunning and Sheard, 2005), thus demonstrating the direct links between the perceived moral and ethical benefits of sport. The first set of Rugby's football rules were written up in the 1840s (Hargreaves, 1986). Dunning and Sheard (2005) argue that this was as a result of embourgeoisement which they deem to be the amplified dominance of the bourgeoisie as a result of industrialisation creating the newly formed middle classes. The moral emphasis linked to the 'fair play' ethos which was traditionally rooted in the



emergence of gentlemanly modern sport during the nineteenth century is of high importance regarding the development and diffusion of modern sport. In addition, the moral integrity of games such as football and rugby resulted in the prominence of fair play being rife; this meant having respect for the rules, but also appreciating the general spirit of the game (McIntosh, 1979). This demonstrates that the morality and ethical conduct that was travelling through realms of society, as previously mentioned in section 1.2.3, was also emulated in modern sports as they were developing.

This section demonstrates that there are obviously some similarities between the development of korfbal and football (as an exemplar of a mainstream modern sport) pertaining to the importance of morality and fair play, the development and codification in an educational environment, and the formation of the original governing bodies being only 60 years apart (the FA in 1863, the RFU in 1871, and then the initial korfbal governing body, the International Korfbal Bureau, in 1924). Whilst this case can be put forward to display a degree of developmental resemblance, the key objective for the development of korfbal was to create a space for girls and boys to play in unison (see section 1.2), on the contrary, football and rugby were shrouded in traits of masculinity, notions of gentlemanly conduct and muscular Christianity (Hargreaves, 1986), and were developed and advocated in boys' public schools. This reveals the distinction in the key aspirations of the chief actors involved with the initial development of both sports and highlights a stark contrast in the amount of consideration given to girls/femininity. To further understand disparities between korfbal and modern sports of the same time, it is also important to acknowledge how different the diffusion of other modern sports may have been, compared to the diffusion of korfbal.

#### *1.3.1.1 Diffusion of Modern Sport during the Nineteenth Century*

In conjunction with a new significance surrounding sport in England during the nineteenth century, unregulated and disorderly popular games receded (Pfister, 2003). Transitions continued from popular games to the newly favoured 'sport' and by the beginning of the twentieth century sport was well grounded, prevalent, and was being diffused around the globe by the British (Holt, 1989; Hargreaves, 1986) and also the Americans (Pfister, 2003). Guttman (1995) acknowledges that many scholars talk

about imperialism being the mode of diffusion of football from Great Britain to India, and cricket from Great Britain to India, Canada, and many areas of Africa throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Colonisation diffused cricket from Great Britain to North America around this time, and the Catholic school boys being educated in mainland Europe spread football from Great Britain to the continent, including Belgium. This demonstrates how the turn of the twentieth century not only brought about global change in beliefs and philosophies, but also major developments in sport. Despite korfbal emerging around the same time as the diffusion of modern sport it was not successful in spreading in the same way, and it was not until the 1970s, 70 years after its creation, that there was a significant surge in the sport's international popularity (Crum, 2005b) (see section 1.3 for the development and diffusion of korfbal). This could have potentially been connected to the ambitious format of korfbal uniting men and women on the sporting field, whilst other modern sports were solely aimed at preserving masculinity, and the dominance of Great Britain as a global power at that time (see section 1.3.1).

Regarding the diffusion of modern sport to the Netherlands, Guttmann (1995) translates Stokvis (1979) who explains that either Englishmen that inhabited the Netherlands, or the Dutch that had travelled to England (often to be educated), were responsible for introducing and founding clubs for sports including tennis, football and cricket. In contrast, the adverse reaction towards modern sport came from Dutch secondary school educators, who were instead dedicated to promoting non-competitive gymnastics. Stokvis (1979, translated by Guttmann, 1995) explains how between 1880 and 1890, secondary educators deemed the up-and-coming sports clubs as 'a cancer' destined to negatively affect the youth of the state<sup>9</sup>. This opposition may have been prominent from the perspective of the working-class educators, mainly because they took their lead from Germany and the non-competitive gymnastics which were notorious there, but since the early supporters of modern sport were members of the middle to upper classes, 'their affluent pupils, unimpressed by regimented

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<sup>9</sup> Stokvis' (1979) assertions here are interesting since Korfbal writers suggest that it was in fact physical educators that aided the expansion of Korfbal shortly after its invention in 1902 (see section 1.3), although there is no clarification to state whether these were all Primary Educators as opposed to the Secondary Educators that Stokvis talks about.

exercise, took their cue from England' (Guttmann, 1995: 47). So, the degree of resistance from secondary school educators, as modern sports such as tennis, football and cricket diffused from Great Britain to the Netherlands, did not inhibit the expansion of competitive modern sport in The Netherlands. The middle and upper classes continued to spread, embrace, and ground these sports outside of the educational realm. It is worth noting here that there is less clarity regarding the general consensus of primary sector educators during the end of the nineteenth century in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is not known whether the birth of korfbal was because, universally, Dutch primary school educators viewed competitive sports more favourably, or whether the dislike towards competitive sports in the primary sector was ever present. If the latter was true, it may have been due to Nico Broekhuysen's (the inventor of korfbal) stance as a progressive educator that meant he embraced competitive sports<sup>10</sup>. Even though Broekhuysen successfully utilised physical educators to develop and diffuse korfbal to some extent, faster and more widespread diffusion may have been partially inhibited due to the mixed structure of korfbal appearing to be too radical at this time.

#### **1.4 Research Studies in Korfbal**

Despite the aspirations that korfbal enthusiasts are endeavouring to promote, a number of studies challenge the claim that korfbal fulfils aims of equality between male and female players. Crum (2003a) draws on previous studies and concludes that on a practical level women simply cannot contend with the height and strength of men when scoring or rebounding<sup>11</sup> (Crum, 2003a). Summerfield and White (1989) agree with this argument. Within their British study, they found that there was an overarching dominance of men, which they attributed to men being better skilled, having physical advantages such as height, speed and strength, and also having played korfbal for extended periods of time. This final point would go some way in explaining the male presumptions of control and leadership which were also evident in the same study (Summerfield and White, 1989), but continues to raise questions about why female

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<sup>10</sup> See section 1.2 for information on the development of korfbal which details Broekhuysen's attendance at a progressive educators' summer school course. The course sought to gain renewal of games played outside, amongst other things (Renson, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Collecting the ball underneath the post after a shot has been unsuccessful

players did not tend to play for the same length of time as male players. Overall, Summerfield and White (1989) are sceptical about the empowerment of women through korfbal (and mixed sports in general), because of what they consider to be the natural and unforgiving nature of male physical superiority over women.

In addition to the arguable physical advantages of men over women, Crum (1988) concluded that traditional sex roles were evident in his observation of 26 high-level korfbal competitions. By this, he clarified that men dominated and women often played the supporting roles to aid the male attack. This finding is consistent with two later studies. The first suggested that korfbal follows the 'normal' sporting patterns of male and female relationships with men generally dominating despite the model for korfbal (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990). The second discovered that there was a presumption that men should score while women support and aid this scoring and initiation (Summerfield and White, 1989). In Summerfield and White's (1989) study, all teams investigated had both male captains and coaches.

Additionally, despite the game control that men assumed, women were more successful when intercepting passes (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990). This would suggest that women were skilled enough, and assertive enough, to battle for the ball, yet men consistently failed to rely on this skill. Questionnaire results in Crum's (1988) study revealed that female players 'tend to reject the idea of male superiority' whereas all male players 'tend to agree with the idea' (Crum, 1988: 238). In addition to this, when comparing korfbal to both handball and basketball, Crum (1988: 239) disclosed that 'male korfbal players attribute to themselves more masculine traits than male handball and basketball players do'. So it would seem that male korfbal players, in this case, believed themselves to be superior to female korfbal players, and actively defended traditionally masculine traits. When considering the masculine defence that the male korfballers demonstrated, Crum (1988) speculates that this could be down to the players defending their masculinity whilst playing a sport perceived as a 'sissy's sport' (239). Nevertheless, Crum's (1988) research demonstrated that, compared to handball and basketball players, male korfbal players were not *as* susceptible or *such* strong advocates for men being superior to women in sport. Crum (1988) speculates that this could be because the male players in a korfbal team are constantly in direct

contact with the sporting prowess and ability of their female teammates (Crum, 1988).

During a systematic analysis of korfball interaction in New Zealand, Thompson and Finnigan (1990) found that men were engaged in passes more often than women, which resonated with results from Summerfield and White (1989) who stated that irrespective of the gender of the person passing the ball, they were more prone to pass to men. Moreover, Thompson and Finnigan (1990) discovered that men took more shots at the korf, shot from further away, were more vocal, and threw longer passes, which would mean that less teamwork would be required to get the ball nearer to the goal before shooting. Within the study by Summerfield and White (1989), they also reported that 82% of the total goals in a number of analysed matches came from male shots, as well as 70% of failed goal attempts and every penalty taken. Men were prone to lobbing long, hard passes, whilst women looked for the shorter passes to assist and link. Men also loitered around the post in order to possess the strongest scoring positions, and ultimately took control of dead ball situations (free passes, centre passes, free throws, penalties); whilst women often played the role of support and interception (Summerfield and White, 1989). Furthermore, within their observation of one international team and four top level sides, Summerfield and White's (1989) results show that the inequalities discussed within the three studies that have been reported here, are arguably justified in further findings which demonstrate that 'men are twice as likely to score as women (on average, men scored from 1:6 of their attempts while women scored from only 1:12)' (Summerfield and White, 1989: 149). These results would go some way in explaining why men are shooting more than women and why they have more confidence to take control of attacking situations. Nevertheless, it is possible that this disparity is simply down to the lack of practise and confidence that women display, considering that men are all too often willing to take the shots themselves and thus inhibit female practise and self-assurance.

Most obviously and controversially though, with regards to gender equality, the International Korfball Federation (IKF) and the British Korfball Association (BKA) both refer to linesmen and referees as 'he' in their official rule books. There is, nonetheless, a statement at the beginning of the rulebook to rationalise this; it justifies that the use of 'he' can also refer to a 'she' (Summerfield and White, 1989). With a sport that openly

encourages, embraces and resides in the notion of equality, it would seem a simple enough rectification to amend the rulebook to a reference of 'he/she', rather than simply stating 'he' with a justification statement at the start. It is worth noting here that this is still the case as of the most recently published rules in 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 (IKF, 2015).

Arguably, to improve egalitarianism in korfbal, developments and policies should be created to make korfbal ideals consistent with korfbal realities. Rules could assert an alternation of male and female conducted penalties, centre passes and other dead-ball situations, as well as a compulsory appointment of one male and one female captain (Summerfield and White, 1989). These suggestions would mean that women get the opportunity to learn the skills and develop confidence that the male players seem to have already acquired and now actively retain for themselves. Active development should also be put in place to encourage women to become coaches and referees, by providing training programmes and courses to improve their skills and confidence in these areas (Summerfield and White, 1989). The main concerns that arise when considering such changes include the reaffirmation of gender difference and separation, by ensuring that men and women take it in turns to take control of given situations. However, this may not necessarily be wholly negative, since it provides the opportunity for men to learn to respect women taking control, and may go some way in increasing women's confidence when doing so.

Conclusions from the three studies (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989; and Crum, 1988) allude to the fact that korfbal is not successful in facilitating gender equality and promoting egalitarianism<sup>12</sup>. Thompson and Finnigan (1990: 7) explain how 'korfbal, for all its good intentions, cannot be divorced from that values of the society in which it is played', and Summerfield and White (1989: 150) explain how, 'without doubt, the prior gender structures of the wider society re-emerge in clearly defined microcosm in the playing of korfbal'. Yet, authors suggest that it should be commended for its conscientious efforts to negotiate traditional gender

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<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting here that data for all three studies were collected during the late 1980s, serving to demonstrate the lack of contemporary research in the area. It is also worth recognising that the completed studies all focus on adult engagement with korfbal, despite korfbal being invented for children to play inclusively (see section 1.2 on the Historical Development of Korfbal).

norms in a sporting environment, and the lack of egalitarian success in Thompson and Finnigan's (1990) research, has been attributed to the players within the study rather than the structure, tactics or ideals of the game. All in all, when trying to promote the status and equality of women in sport, coeducational sports likened to korfball arguably stand a better chance than sports where men and women are isolated, or more traditional male-dominated sports (Crum, 1988). Crum's (1988) research to some extent protests against the conceived equality in korfball, but it also implies that it has the potential for equality of sporting roles by recognising that the two strongest teams in the study did display equality. Crum explains how male domination was not true of two of the strongest teams in his study, as both of these teams had coaches who endorsed tactics rather than gender differences, and in these cases, the teams demonstrated equal gender positions (Crum, 1988).

### **1.5 Conclusion**

To an extent, it could be argued that the historical context provided in this chapter, would suggest that I could be described by Foucault as an 'eater' of history that has already been prepared by others (Foucault, 1980: 276). That being said, it would be beyond the scope of this study to endeavour to complete a full historical analysis, however, the main intention of this chapter has been to establish a historical context to better understand korfball and the origin of its values.

By recognising the unique aspects of korfball, and investigating how its emergence and development could be considered as a product of its time and environment, a clearer understanding of the underlying aims and values deeply embedded in the sport can be achieved. The late 1800s and early 1900s generated a radical epoch which changed and developed society. The general consensus for this time was to create an enriched humanity by means of various methods, pedagogies, and philosophies. Yet, despite a number of timely influences within society, such as political socialism, the progressive education movement, and improved opportunities for many women in society, all of which may have been extremely significant with regards to its invention, korfball did not evolve and diffuse in the same ways as many other sports with comparable timeframes. Arguably, its popularity at international level may have

been affected by logistical factors and the location in which it came into being, or it may be due to the mixed structure of the sport, which sets it aside from many other modern sports. Even when considering research studies as recently as the 1980s, the all-important value of equality between male and female players may seem less evident. Nevertheless, the original aims of korfbal need to be recognized in order to begin answering questions relating to whether these aims maintain influence in the game today, see research question four, and also whether korfbal can offer alternative values to other sports, see research question three. These questions will be further answered in chapters five and six, where findings from this research will be analysed and discussed. In order to explain the experiences of junior korfbal players in this study, a number of Foucault's ideas will be applied. Therefore, it is important to firstly recognize and explain some of Foucault's key concepts, which can be used to explain this study of korfbal. The next chapter will go on to recognize and discuss these ideals, which will later be applied to research findings in order to assess the research aim and research questions related to this study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Theoretical Underpinning: Applying Foucault to Sport and Gender**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

As detailed in the previous chapter, korfbal has a history of its own which has been influenced by social and political discourses and knowledge. Additionally, korfbal has ongoing considerations of gender neutral aims or a sex equal mission. Consequently, understanding the history of korfbal is important in order to understand the contemporary dynamics of this sport. Archaeologies of knowledge (historical accounts) were a central focus in how Foucault developed his ideas about relationships of power. The central theme of this thesis is to explore the gendered relationships of power that operate within the context of korfbal and whether gender is a central form of power within these relationships. Foucault is considered a useful starting point for this, as he incorporates histories of knowledge that are dynamic and not based upon single binaries (as with many traditional theories such as Marxism).

In this chapter, I will explain Foucault's concepts that are considered relevant to this thesis such as power, discourse and surveillance. Ideas discussed as part of these concepts include disciplinary techniques such as normalizing judgement and judgement of transgression, classification of individuals which often separate the 'normal' from the 'abnormal', as well as observation and panopticism which includes self-surveillance. Explaining these ideas will set the scene for their application during the examination of key issues in discussion chapters five and six. The way that power relationships function, the workings of discourse and practices that may alter it, and the importance of external and internal surveillance will later serve to respond to research questions related to sex equality and gender neutrality in korfbal, and whether korfbal can offer an alternative to traditional mainstream sports.

Having addressed Foucault's ideas that are relevant to this study, this chapter will then briefly acknowledge how a number of studies have attempted to apply some of his explanations to various problems in different sport and physical activity settings, demonstrating how Foucault's ideas have been seen as useful analysis tools more

broadly in this field.

## **2.1 Relationships of Power**

Power is a central theme in Foucault's work. Within this study, a number of his considerations of power will be used to better understand relationships within the junior korfbal team investigated in this thesis. In order to do this successfully, it is necessary to first acknowledge his assertions of an analysis of power rather than a theory of power (Foucault, 1990). Foucault (1990) recognises five main characteristics of a 'political analysis of power' in the West. In doing this, he establishes the complexity and multi-interpretational aspect of power. Firstly, the notion that power can simply say 'no'; secondly, the creation of rules, for example, what can be considered licit or illicit with regards to discourses; thirdly, prohibition which is maintained through social taboo; fourthly, silencing of a topic, leading to a complete denial of its being; and finally, power is implemented in the same way through all areas of society, irrelevant of class or position. A number of these characteristics will be applied in the discussion, chapters five and six. Licit and illicit ideas related to gender and sporting discourses will be revealed by way of junior korfballer's actions and reactions in and around the field. Additionally, examples of actions and interactions which highlight particular perspectives or performances as 'social taboo' with regards to gender norms, will also be discussed, as well as any issues considered to be silenced. By beginning to reveal how the characteristics of power apply to the research setting, it is possible to uncover the ways that power is operating within the korfbal context, whether that is a space in which wider gender discourses are reproduced or resisted, and what other issues of power might be evident in the field, such as broader discursive sporting practices.

When Foucault refers to power he is not referring to 'a substance', instead he discusses power as a particular form of relation between people. The distinctive aspect of power is that some people can influence the actions of others, but not necessarily in a coercive manner. Power does not exist if there is no potential for refusing or rebellion (Foucault, 1979b: 324), or the individual cannot be considered as 'free' (Foucault, 1982: 342). An initial consideration for applying Foucault was the idea that power does not operate in a linear/binary way (as proposed by orthodox Marxism). My perception of korfbal was that there were elements of resistance both within the game by the very fact that the

children had elected to play the game (as opposed to traditional sports), while there were other more obvious forms of power to be considered (gender/ability). Consequently, as Foucault suggests, power is always coupled with resistance, but resistance is moveable and changeable within the complex network of power relations. Through ever-present inequality, relations are always provoking positions of power (Foucault, 1990). Essentially, a relationship of power 'is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their action: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions' (Foucault, 1982: 340). For power relations to exist, 'the other' has to be deemed as an individual who acts; and a number of reactions, results and responses must be possible when faced with this power relationship. Yet, by using knowledge and specific discourses people expose certain actions as more satisfactory than others, this indirectly limits the possible actions (Smith Maguire, 2002). Because of this, it was felt that applying Foucault offered an opportunity to explore the possibilities for resistance (especially within the context of gender equality).

Power is omnipresent (Foucault, 1990); entrenched into the whole society and within social structures (Foucault, 1982), but power relations are specific in each location, and are always subject to change (Foucault, 1990; Foucault, 1984). Thus, despite the notion that dominant groups, governments and social institutions possess power, Foucault (1990) argues that they only symbolise power which can be ended. Considering this understanding of power, the korfballing space may offer alternative power relations to spaces operating in other areas of society. Additionally, korfball may offer a space in which dominant gender discourses and traditional sporting discourses can be resisted. In contrast to theories such as orthodox Marxism, Foucault refused to understand power as something that was owned by some and used to control those with no power (Smith Maguire, 2002; Andrews, 1993). He explained that dominant groups do not inherit their dominant positions because of the power they possess, instead, they gain their dominance due to the changeable working and strategic use of 'discourses' (Pringle and Markula, 2005). It takes the analysis of history and power in order to understand these workings and gain the opportunity to change them (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Foucault was not concerned with what power was and where it comes

from; rather he was interested in *how* power was used and the consequences (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Thus, a Foucauldian analysis of physical education would not simply be a critical analysis of the ways in which PE controls individuals, it would concern 'how and to whose benefit very specific bodily capacities are produced through forms of knowledge and training' (Smith Maguire, 2002: 300).

In an interview in 1976, Foucault explained that the notion of repression is, in fact, insufficient for depicting a more accurate explanation of power with productive features (Foucault, 1976). Smith Maguire (2002) applied this idea to physical education (PE), explaining how PE serves to develop physically strong individuals, but more importantly, it promotes the importance of a productive individual, one that can successfully contribute to social workings. When the effects of power are labelled as repression, power becomes associated purely with a prohibitive regulation that asserts 'no'. However, the nature of power is not purely prohibitive<sup>13</sup>, the hold of power is generated, maintained and accepted because its sole purpose is not to say 'no'. Power produces, it stimulates pleasure, shapes knowledge, and creates discourses:

we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms; it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1979a: 194).

In this respect, power can be seen as 'a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression' (Foucault, 1976: 120).

In addition to its links with productivity, power is often associated with the notion of truth. Truth is seen as neither peripheral to power or without power; it is part of the world we live in, formed 'only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power' (Foucault, 1976: 131). Every society has a particular system of truth, a 'general politics' of truth which is based upon the accepted discourses; the apparatuses that make it possible for individuals to differentiate true statements from false statements; the ways that each one is allowed or permitted; the techniques which are considered appropriate when examining and discovering truth; and the status of

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<sup>13</sup> Foucault (1979b: 452) states that he would not suggest that 'power, by nature, is evil'

individuals who are tasked with asserting what is true (Foucault, 1976). Foucault (1983: 376) explains how 'choices are being made at every instant, even if left unsaid. They are made according to the logic of a certain rationality which certain discourses are made to justify': discourse, therefore, joins together knowledge and power. As such, 'discourses can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy' in the same way that silence can maintain prohibitions but also weaken its grip (Foucault, 1990: 101).

Before returning to discourses in more detail (see section 2.2), sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 will recognise a number of techniques that Foucault discussed in relation to normalisation within power relations; namely, normalising judgement, judgement of transgression and discretion to the norm. These ideas will all be applied to junior korfball players within the discussion chapters (chapters five and six).

### *2.1.1 Normalising Judgement*

Foucault (1979a) explained how normalising judgment is one of the great instruments of power, a disciplinary technique. In a disciplinary society, the workings of power subject humans to practices of normalisation (Cole, 1993; Adams, 2011). Through these strategies, bodies are incessantly subjected to external and internal surveillance (Cole, 1993). Foucault (1979a) suggested that bodies that comply with normative behaviour become obedient and docile. This does not mean that society requires the creation of cultural dupes, normalisation relies upon levels and specialities to create individuality. Surveillance acts to subject each human to a gaze acting under a normalising judgement, this judgement is attached to a mass of punishments. Punishment does not need to be physical, it can be an emotional punishment, such as humiliation, persuading the individual to want to be 'normal' (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Within this research study, it is worth considering whether, within the korfball environment, there are any examples of, or any evidence to suggest that emotional punishment or humiliation act as normalizing judgements. These ideas will be investigated in order to evaluate whether, and if so, how, dominant gender and sport discourses are reproduced within the korfball space.

Foucault (1979a) explains five parts that contribute towards normalising judgement. Firstly, a small penal mechanism must operate at the centre of

disciplinary systems. Foucault (1979a) describes how,

the workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency) (Foucault, 1979a: 178)

In Foucault's example, punishments are encompassed within a number of discreet procedures, including physical discipline, deprivations, and trivial humiliations. Secondly, within the five parts that contribute towards normalising judgement, the entire unlimited realm of the non-conforming is susceptible to punishment. Thirdly, the punishment must act as a correction. Fourthly, the punishment should act alongside gratification in order to hierarchize negatively and positively; producing differentiation of individuals. Foucault (1979a: 181) suggests that 'by assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals 'in truth'; the penalty that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge of individuals'. Finally, by differentiating individuals and distributing them in order of rank, there is not only an element of punishment and reward, but it also recognises gaps between individuals, in order to hierarchize them (Foucault, 1979a). Disciplinary power does not define binary oppositions or right and wrong, it hierarchizes; it does not divide the condemned for all eternity, it homogenises (Foucault, 1979a: 184). The art of punishing within the domain of disciplinary power, brings these five elements together, culminating in the comparison of individuals within an entire field. Foucault (1979a: 183) asserts that 'the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*': the disciplinary mechanisms emit a 'penalty of the norm' (Foucault, 1979a: 183). Foucault (1979a) explained how,

it is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences (Foucault, 1979a: 184)

### *2.1.2 Judgement of Transgression*

Normalising judgement was first discussed as a disciplinary technique within Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (originally published in France in 1975), but the idea of

normalisation was also acknowledged within *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction* (originally published in France in 1976). Foucault (1990) used sexuality in the Victorian era to explain the use of 'judgement of transgression' and 'discretion of the norm' as techniques of normalisation. He explains how, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, increased discretion was granted to heterosexual married couples because this was presented as the accepted norm. However, inspection and interest turned focus to homosexuals, children's sexuality, and the sexuality of those deemed insane or criminals. Peripheral sexualities were called upon to enter into confession whilst others began to listen (Foucault, 1990). Within the field of sexuality, the 'unnatural' became a specific component, reducing the attention given to rape and adultery, and emphasising an increased cause for concern with sodomy and incest as fundamentally different (Foucault, 1990). Normalising judgement meant that discretion was given to the norm, whilst transgression from the norm was judged and reprimanded.

The judgement of transgression from the norm was also evident in Foucault's (1988) investigation into madness (*Madness and Civilisation* was first published in France in 1964). Within this work, he demonstrates how perpetual judgement and silence resulted in the madman judging himself. He explains how the madman must be aware of the constant judgement from those watching, judging and condemning him. He must recognise transgression by repression, as he is punished as frequently as necessary, until it is internalised in the madman's mind and he shows remorse. Foucault (1988) terms this as 'recognition by mirror', as the madman is made to observe and realise his own madness. Foucault (1988) explains how external judgment and punishment can then be ceased as the punishment will continue within the madman's mind (Foucault, 1988). Normalisation is once again produced through the realisation that they, as a madman, have transgressed from what is normal, and through the resulting repression and judgement, the individual knows how to normalise their self.

This idea can potentially be applied to discursive practices which contribute to gender discourse in this field of study. Research data will be analysed to consider whether there is any evidence of gender norms being maintained in korfbal, through discretion being granted to accepted forms of gender presentation in discursive practices, and transgression being judged or reprimanded in various ways, potentially until

transgression is internalized and necessary normalization adopted. Alternatively, there may be evidence to suggest that the norms presented in korfbal, vary to wider social norms, decreasing the need for the application of discretion of the norm and judgement of transgression in relation to dominant gender discourse. Ultimately, judgement of transgression can be seen as a tool of normalisation, along with normalising judgement. All of these rely on the acceptance of particular discourses and the rejection of others. Therefore, to better understand these concepts, it is imperative that the importance of discourse is acknowledged and the term further explained.

## **2.2 Discourse**

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1989) explained 'discourse'; he discussed the importance of written or spoken *statements*, which he believed were the raw units of discourses. These statements were seen as actual practices during certain times and within specific locations (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Foucault (1989: 90) gave a more detailed explanation of the term when he referred to discourse in three principal ways, 'sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements'. Power, knowledge and truth are all created through discourse, by individuals involved in power relations (Scruton and Flintoff, 2002; Markula, 2003; Pringle and Markula, 2005). Foucault argued that humans should be interested in the workings of discourse because these are the methods by which power relations are maintained, reproduced and contested (Pringle and Markula, 2005). Discourse helps to both reinforce and oppose understandings of reality including knowledge of the self and other individuals (Pringle and Markula, 2005). The self is created through discursive, and sometimes competing discourses, thus the self is not stable (Pringle and Markula, 2005). Discourse consists of a variety of discursive parts that become engaged during a number of strategies. Yet, discourse does not exist in binary oppositions; one discourse does not always run next to a competing one (Foucault, 1990).

For example, Foucault (1990) describes how, in the early eighteenth century, certain mechanisms were seen to reinforce religious techniques surrounding discourses of sex, 'there emerged a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex' (Foucault, 1990: 23). A rational discourse was required on sex in addition to the moral



discourse; one that would rely on analysis, classification and quantitative studies. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, discourses on sex continued to be produced within a number of institutionalised sites. Medicine created discourse related to 'nervous disorders'; psychiatry investigated mental illness related to topics such as perversions; law created a discourse concerning crimes and indecencies related to sex; as well as social monitoring which oversaw sexuality of children, their parents, and couples in general. In this way, Foucault's concept of discourse can be applied to sport and how, as described in chapter one, korfbal operates within a discourse of sport that has a history of mechanisms and techniques. It is both subject to these, but also resistant to them. Thus, in relation to power, Foucault (1990) discusses how these discourses did not develop aside from or in opposition to power; instead, they developed and multiplied within the same space as power, providing it with the opportunity for implementation. Sex was no longer concealed; instead it was forced to become discursive. Yet, the discursive growth was not merely a constant expansion, 'it should be seen rather as a dispersion of centres from which discourses emanated, a diversification of their forms, and the complex deployment of the network connecting them' (Foucault, 1978: 34). When summarising sex and the discourses that grew around the subject, Foucault (1978: 35) suggests that 'what is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*'. Like Foucault's description of sex as being concealed, one can apply the same logic to the notion of gender parity in sport – it was forced to become discursive, through outlets like korfbal. Consequently, with a critical eye, it is possible to see the multifaceted, less explicit nature of discourses, and how important discourses are in relation to complex power relations.

### *2.2.1 Classification*

Foucault (1979a) explained how the disciplines aim to obtain the optimum performance from bodies, utilising methods such as 'time-tables, collective training, exercises, total and detailed surveillance' (Foucault, 1979a: 220). Rather than a hierarchical power assertion, the disciplines intertwine power relations within the very grain of the multiplicity, discreetly and inexpensively. Instruments of power enable this to happen,

such as 'hierarchical surveillance, continuous registration, perpetual assessment and classification' (Foucault, 1979a: 220). Foucault (1979a) suggested that power maintenance through violence has been replaced by a discrete technology of subjection. The disciplines 'characterise, classify, specialise; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchize individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate' (Foucault, 1979a: 223).

Within his archaeological studies during the 1960s and early 1970s, Foucault investigated the creation of scientific classification and dividing practices (Foucault, 1982), and considered how knowledge was related to these processes (see discussion chapters five and six for the application of these ideas to korfbal). During the nineteenth century, the gaze within clinical settings acted as a comparative practice of disease classification (Foucault, 1994). Scientific classification, the first mode of objectification, relates to how human sciences create specific ways of knowing, resulting in individuals seeing themselves as objects, or subjects within scientific knowledge (Andrews, 1993). This is illustrated by continuous testing and classifying of people, through medical tests, or intelligence tests for example (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Foucault asserted that these methods utilised by the human sciences construct universal categories of people, thus objectifying humans in this process (Smith Maguire, 2002). For example, people are grouped into medical 'conditions' such as asthmatics, epileptics, diabetics (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

During the second mode of objectification, known as dividing practices (Foucault, 1982), the categorisation of people is then utilised to divide people into groups, often through the creation of institutions such as jails, schools, hospitals, and mental asylums. These categories are usually dichotomous and mutually dependent (Cole, 1993). They are used to separate the normal from the abnormal (Markula and Pringle, 2006; Cole, 1993). For example, Foucault suggested that sexuality has no objective reality, and only exists due to its construction (Andrews, 1993; Pronger, 1990). Yet, 'an interplay of power relations and knowledge production centres on sex, rendering it knowable, measurable, and *normal* by specific criteria' (Smith Maguire, 2002: 299). The projection of knowledge, specific bodies, such as man or woman, and bodily practices, such as homosexual intercourse, are grouped as either normal or abnormal, rendering them

susceptible to the workings of medicine and education. Sexuality, is therefore, a mode to objectify an individual, ensuring they are knowable and thus, controllable (Smith Maguire, 2002). Foucault (1977) suggests that dividing practices are created through discourses in order to legitimate social and spatial divides between groups of humans, for instance, men/women, or gay/straight (cited in Pringle and Markula, 2005). Through the division of man/woman, gender differences are produced and reproduced, and normalized assumptions about the gendered body are made. In this way, discourses begin to shape embodied gender, and gender specific embodied practices emerge from discursive practices related to gender discourse. This study aims to investigate whether korfbal can provide a space for gender neutrality, resisting dominant discourses of gender difference more broadly, and also the physical dominance of men within sporting contexts, and rebuff the division of individuals based on gender.

Foucault viewed dividing practices as a disciplinary technique that meant the body could be controlled successfully (Pronger, 1990). During the categorisation processes, in the nineteenth century, medicine centred more upon what was considered 'normal' rather than health in general. Ideas and interventions were formed based upon minimal theoretical understanding. Foucault (1994) explains how,

Liberty is the vital, unfettered force of truth. It must, therefore, have a world in which the gaze, free of all obstacle, is no longer subjected to the immediate law of truth: the gaze is not faithful to truth, nor subject to it, without asserting, at the same time, a supreme mastery: the gaze that sees is a gaze that dominates; and although it also knows how to subject itself, it dominates its masters (Foucault, 1994: 39)

The concept of 'the other', in comparison to what is considered as normal, was discussed, or implied, frequently within Foucault's work, and formed a discrete part of the classification process. For example, Foucault (1988) discussed Samuel Tuke's idea of 'the retreat', a place for madmen to be confined in order for them to take responsibility for their guilt and madness; an asylum for them to come to terms with their conscience. He explained how,

The asylum no longer punished the madman's guilt, it is true; but it did more, it organised that guilt; it organised it for the madman as a consciousness of himself, and as a non-reciprocal relation to the keeper; it organised it for the

man of reason as an awareness of the Other, a therapeutic intervention in the madman's existence (Foucault, 1988: 247).

According to Foucault, this line of reasoning demonstrated how guilt was used as a medicine for the madman to recognise himself as an object of punishment. This process allowed for him to become aware of his guilt and acknowledge redemption. Willis (2015) discusses how the idea of the other is clearly visible when considering sex and gender. She explains how,

any organisational system that sees identity in binary terms necessarily relies on the idea of the 'other' and gender and sexuality are no different. What we see as 'masculine' is inherently connected to what is 'not feminine' and this masculinity is bound up with heterosexuality (Willis, 2015: 5)

Due to the historical trajectory of modern sport being created for and by men and based on values of masculinity, when considering sport discourse, women are often seen as 'the other'. Complexities arise further when women do display masculine traits compliant with sport discourse, as, by embodying masculine traits, they defer from accepted gender discourse. Women demonstrating masculinity may also be considered 'the other' within a normalized gender framework (see chapter three for more discussions on gender). Thus, this example demonstrates the complexities of multiple discourses. Since korfbal is not a mainstream, traditional sport, and has a different historical trajectory to many other sports (as well as particular values pertaining to gender equality), the research will investigate whether 'othering' related to both sport and gender discourses is apparent in junior korfbal. It also considers whether there is a sense of gender equality and neutrality that offers an embodied resistance to these discourses.

Foucault (1973) suggested that social practices can produce fields of knowledge that do not simply reveal new objects, new ideas, and new techniques, but also produce brand new kinds of subjects and brand new subjects of knowledge. He explains how, during the nineteenth century, a particular knowledge surrounding man was created. This included knowledge of 'individuality, of the normal or abnormal, conforming or nonconforming individual' (Foucault, 1973: 2), and this knowledge essentially stemmed from social practices and surveillance. Foucault (1979a: 193) explains how in a disciplinary system, individualisation is 'descending': as power becomes more

anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualised; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference (Foucault, 1979a: 193). Within the regime of discipline, individualisation happens more often to the child in comparison to the adult, or the patient in comparison to the healthy man, or the madman in comparison to the sane man. Foucault (1979a: 194) described how 'the individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an 'ideological' representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline''.

Foucault (1979a) explains how the normal and abnormal individuals within society are continuously separated into binary opposites. Techniques and particular institutions are in place to quantify and evaluate individuals, observing and attempting to 'put right' the abnormal, 'all the mechanisms of power, which even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive' (Foucault, 1979a: 200). The Panopticon is described as the 'architectural figure of this composition' (Foucault, 1979a: 200).

In addition to notions of classification, including dividing practises and the creation of the normal as opposed to the abnormal ('the other'), discourses were not always related solely to the written and spoken word. Foucault (1990) also recognised the importance of what was not said, he discussed the significance of silence within discourse. Within discourse, silence is not separate from the spoken word, instead, these two aspects work alongside, and relative to each other (Foucault, 1990). When discussing sexuality in the Victorian era, Foucault (1990) explains how strict controls emerged about when and where discussing such things would not be appropriate. There were places and times for complete silence to be upheld with regards to sexuality, and where this was not the case there was often a call for consideration and caution. For example, consideration and caution were observed between teachers and those being taught, and parents and their children, thus creating a 'restrictive economy' which was built into the politics of speech (Foucault, 1990: 18). Within power networks and frameworks related to accepted discourse, Foucault talks about the influence of surveillance, which he refers to in a number of his works. Sometimes called observation, sometimes

referred to as the gaze, surveillance is deemed as a highly influential technique within Foucault's work. An atmosphere of classification and rules that clearly exhibit what is right and wrong develops an environment for self-surveillance and regulation. This becomes an everyday aspect of living, it becomes normalised and, therefore, true, legitimised knowledge.

## **2.3 Surveillance**

### *2.3.1 Observation*

Foucault (1988) discussed observation in a number of his works. When considering Tuke's ideas related to the asylum, he explained how the asylum in the classical age made the madman susceptible to observation. The sane man could observe the madman and utilise his image as a mirror of his own demise; seeing him as an animal and viewing his monstrous exterior. This observation was only one-way, as the madman was observed, yet not entitled to observe; he is forced to 'objectify himself in the eyes of reason' with no identity, anonymous (Foucault, 1988: 249). Observation was essential to the science of mental disease developing in the asylum, along with the classification of mental illness. The nineteenth-century confinement of the madman changed from silencing madness to talking about it. Silence was replaced by language as a result of observation and classification, creating 'surveillance and judgement' (Foucault, 1988: 151). From the end of the eighteenth century, the asylum, the place for the confinement of the madman, became a spectacle for those representing authority and judgement. Control was maintained and mastered,

without weapons, without instruments of constraint, with observation and language only; he advances upon madness, deprived of all that could protect him or make him seem threatening, risking an immediate confrontation without recourse [...] with the authority that is his for not being mad (Foucault, 1988: 251-252).

In later works, Foucault (1979a: 170) also suggested that disciplinary power functions well due to the utilisation of three main instruments: 'hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination'. Hierarchical observation is of utmost importance in the exercise of discipline, since visibility induces the effects of power, and at the same time, the means of discipline make individuals observable. This can be well explained by a military camp

environment, where the gaze was all-important within the technique of power; it provided a network of gazes where individuals supervised one another (Foucault, 1979a). Tents of specific ranks were placed in particular places to provide them with positions to observe. Hierarchized surveillance, very similar to the military camp environment, spread to hospitals, asylums and schools, where confinement was seen to make people knowable and docile (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1979a: 173) explained how 'the disciplinary institutions secreted a machinery of control that functioned like a microscope of conduct; the fine, analytical divisions that they created formed around men an apparatus of observation, recording and training'. There existed a hierarchical, permanent and practical surveillance which created a seamless system of disciplinary power. Foucault (1979a) described how this disciplinary power was organised as a numerous, spontaneous and anonymous power. It operates as a network of relations, with surveillance being projected from individuals laterally and from bottom to top, as well as top to bottom. The network "holds' the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors perpetually supervised' (Foucault, 1979a: 176-177). This capillary style network of power and observation means that no one person is in possession of power. This idea would suggest that, within a korfbal environment, the players, coaches, parents and any other people present in the space, would all experience effects of power, and be subjected to supervision. The use of this idea to explain particular phenomena within the korfbal space being studied, such as the reproduction or resistance of gender norms, and the reproduction or resistance of sport and/or korfbal norms, will be referred to throughout the discussion chapters, five and six.

Power operates as a piece of machinery, it is not owned by individuals. Despite the pyramid-style hierarchy assuming a 'head' at the top of the power structure, the entire mechanism is what creates power and allocates individuals in this eternal and incessant domain (Foucault, 1979a). The nature of this mechanism

enables disciplinary power to be both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising; and absolutely 'discreet', for it functions permanently and largely in silence (Foucault, 1979a: 177).

Even though at times imparted knowledge on particular topics was not evident, the gaze was still apparent. Foucault (1994) discusses how, prior to the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, knowledge generated by medical professionals in the clinic, sickness and health was still moderated and acknowledged. He explains how, even without the projected knowledge gained from the clinic, man himself used instinct to judge, and the gaze still existed. Foucault (1994) described how,

This relationship was one of instinct and sensibility, rather than of experience; it was established by the individual from himself to himself, before it was caught up in a social network [...] It is this relationship, established without the mediation of knowledge, that is observed by the healthy man; and this observation itself is not an option for future knowledge; it is not even an act of awareness [...] it is performed immediately and blindly [...] multiplied by itself, transmitted from one to another, it becomes a general form of consciousness of which each individual is both subject and object (Foucault, 1994: 55).

Yet, over time, calculation, knowledge, and authority meant that the dominating gaze was established. Foucault (1994) argued that the gaze that knows and makes decisions, is the gaze that reigns. The gazes are continuous and deliberate. Surveillance provides a power that does not require violence and thus appears less corporeal, yet at the same time, the power produced is more subtle, but still creates physical effects (Foucault, 1979a). Korfball is an embodied practice, so some of the physical, embodied effects that power has, could manifest very visibly. For example, when considering gender discourse, particular presentation of the body, as well as types of actions undertaken and the way that actions are undertaken, could visibly resist or reproduce dominant gender discourses. The visibility of such actions make them highly susceptible to the gaze. Additionally, the presentation and actions of the body within a korfball environment are likely to be susceptible to a korfball gaze, where behaviors that are situation specific are also considered as normal or not, in relation to the time and space they inhabit. Such ideas need to be considered when analysing participant data from this study.

### *2.3.2 Panopticism*

One way in which the social gaze can impact upon individuals can be demonstrated by Jeremy Bentham's architectural building: the Panopticon, which can be related to the



organisation of groups of individuals. The Panopticon can be applied to wider society and is explained as a representation of power relations in everyday life. In this respect, it follows similar assertions to the medical gaze Foucault (1988) discussed earlier in his writings. This gaze extended beyond doctors in hospitals, to wider society: 'medical space can coincide with social space, or, rather, traverse it and wholly penetrate it' (Foucault, 1988:31). Society started to consider an omnipresent gaze of doctors, whose interconnecting gazes created a network, 'a constant, mobile, differentiated supervision' (Foucault, 1988:31).

When discussing the social gaze in relation to the Panopticon, Foucault (1979a) describes the building in detail:

At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other (Foucault, 1979a: 200)

A supervising agent is then placed in the tower, and the cells are populated with madmen, the condemned, patients; those deemed as abnormal. The cellular divisions ensure that each inhabitant is individualised and continuously visible, 'he is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication' (Foucault, 1979a: 200). The main aim of the Panopticon is to create in the mind of the prisoner, an awareness of constant visibility from the tower, ensuring the certain operation of power. Essentially, 'surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action' (Foucault, 1979a: 201). This means that each inmate becomes the bearer of power over themselves, as each cell inhabitant is unaware of whether they are being watched at any one time, but is aware that they could be.

Foucault (1979a) explains this internalisation of the gaze by suggesting that,

he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1979a: 202)

Within a panoptic society, the exercise of power generates ultimate efficiency as the

number of supervisors is reduced, whilst the number of individuals whom power is exercised upon is increased. The general public would be granted access to irregularly and continuously inspect the panoptic environment; they would be able to observe the observers. Foucault (1979a: 207) explains how the Panopticon becomes transparent, and wider society therefore has the ability to supervise the way in which power is being exercised (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1979a: 209) suggested that the machinery of discipline operating throughout society during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, could lead to what he terms 'a disciplinary society'.

Nevertheless, Foucault's assertions of the importance of freedom when discussing power relations means that problems begin to arise regarding the effectiveness of panopticism. In contemporary society micro-penalties occur if individuals deviate from the 'norm', encouraging people to discipline themselves. For example, women survey and control their bodies under a panoptic bodily gaze of the 'judges of normality' who are everywhere, to try and maintain a normalised body through behaviours such as dieting and exercising in order to avoid mocking (Markula and Pringle, 2006). The omnipresence of the normalising gaze and technologies of discipline are evident in schools, the workings of science, the media, and spaces where sport is participated in; power relations are permeated and deeply ingrained throughout society, 'the focus and mechanism of disciplinary power, as a technology of domination, was the body. The mechanism of individualisation directs the dilemma of social problems on to individuals' (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 45), for example, the discipline of individuals regarding body size (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Particular capabilities and features are deemed measurable and are thus open for comparison and standardisation (Smith Maguire, 2002). Body composition is measured by inches and size, in addition to weight and scales, making it possible to monitor and thus making the body docile through normalisation, creating a satisfactory and efficient social body (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Therefore, Foucault summarised that the workings of power manipulated individual bodies into efficient bodies for society. This was done through a process of discipline that in turn normalised individuals into docile bodies. The way in which this process happened was labelled as panopticism (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Clift and Mower

(2011) explained how 'surveillance, in order to accomplish this [docile bodies], must move beyond formal boundaries; surveillance must become both embodied and omnipresent' (361).

### *2.3.3 Docile Bodies*

The Panopticon is, in essence, seen to aid the creation of docile bodies. Foucault (1979a) discussed the way in which soldiers, by the late eighteenth century, were essentially made into certain pliable objects or beings, susceptible to power. He explained how,

The soldier has become something that can be made; out of formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit (Foucault, 1979a: 135)

Foucault (1979a: 136) suggested that, within disciplinary procedures, the body could be seen as a target of power, he suggested that the body, 'is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces'. In turn, he explained that a 'body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved'.

Certain techniques were adopted in order to create the level of docility within the bodies that Foucault discussed. Foucault (1979a: 136) considered the change in 'the scale of control' which included singling out individual bodies and demonstrating a discrete coercion over actions and attitudes, rather than treating a mass of bodies at the same time, as a collective. Additionally, 'the object of the control' meant that the behaviour of the body or the 'language' of the body was no longer of utmost importance, and priority focused on the 'economy' of the body (136). The efficiency of bodily movements was important and restraint was directed towards bodily forces, rather than the actions, and exercise became the all-important ceremony. Finally, 'the modality' was important: 'it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement' (Foucault, 1979a: 137). Foucault (1979a: 137) explains how these methods, which led to the detailed control of bodily operations, and maintained the continuous domination of its forces and inflicted upon them a 'docility-utility' relationship, could be labelled

'disciplines'. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these 'disciplines' were the usual methods of subjection, since they were not expensive or violent, yet they gained the desired results of utility which were as great, or greater than methods such as slavery. During the time that these disciplines became prominent, the 'art of the human body' also developed, this was 'directed not only at the growth of [the body's] skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation or a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely' (Foucault, 1979a: 137-138). Foucault (1979a: 138) further explains how these techniques worked:

What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviours. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranged it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines (Foucault, 1979a: 138)

Discipline, therefore, created dominated and skillful bodies, which Foucault (1979a: 138) labelled 'docile bodies'. The careful control of bodies through discipline meant that the bodies were given an increased capacity, yet any power that may result, was controlled under strict dominance: 'disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination' (Foucault, 1979a: 138). These methods were used in school environments, hospitals and later, military organisations; the techniques of power diffused to ever wider domains throughout the seventeenth century. Foucault (1979a) described a number of important aspects required for successful discipline. He suggests that these include 'the art of distributions', 'the control of activities', 'the organisation of geneses' and the 'composition of forces': all of these ideas will be acknowledged in relation to junior korfbal players within the discussion chapters five and six.

The art of distribution relates to the way in which discipline ensues as a result of distributing individual bodies within space. This can be done through enclosure; through the use of cellular spaces and partitioning in order to separate bodies; the creation of functional spaces so that supervision is easy (such as factories and hospitals); and the development of a place within rank or classification so that bodies

have a mobile position within a network of relations (children within eighteenth century education were often ranked as a result of tasks, lined up in a classification order). The art of distributions lead to the organisation of “cells’, ‘places’ and ‘ranks’, the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical’ (Foucault, 1979a: 148). These spaces present rigid positions, but also positions that allow rotation. They lead to the conformity of individuals, and also ‘a better economy of time and gesture’ (Foucault, 1979a: 148). The rank and classification of individuals in tables allows for ‘distribution and analysis, supervision and intelligibility’, the table could be seen as a ‘technique of power and a procedure of knowledge’ (Foucault, 1979a: 148). The table can be seen as a technique to organise and order, acting as an instrument to master multiple individuals. These disciplinary techniques connect individuals and the existing multiplicity of individuals, ‘it allows both the characterisation of the individual as individual and the ordering of a given multiplicity’ (Foucault, 1979a: 149).

The control of activities took place through the utilisation of a number of tools. The ‘timetable’ was used in schools, hospitals, monasteries and workshops, and successfully imposed a number of methods which were to: ‘establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition’ (Foucault, 1979a: 149). The timetable became rigidly associated with hours, minutes and seconds, temporal regulation came into full force as the workers and military were given a detailed breakdown of time in addition to continuous supervision and the removal of any distractions. Time became useful time, disciplinary time. Secondly, ‘the temporal regulation of the act’ meant that bodily movements were controlled or maintained during their total sequence, Foucault (1979a: 152) explains this as a ‘sort of anatomo-chronological schema of behaviour’. Gestures and bodily behaviours are broken down, for example ‘the act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power’ (Foucault, 1979a: 152). Thirdly, ‘the correlation of the body and the gesture’ enforced speed and efficiency, it was not simply about teaching a sequence of movements, but teaching the correct way for the entire body

to be at the time of the movement. Foucault (1979a: 152) explained how, 'in the correct use of the body, which makes possible a correct use of time, nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required'. 'The body-object articulation' refers to the way in which discipline identifies the connection between the body and the object it is controlling or directing, 'over the whole surface of contact between the body and the object it handles, power is introduced, fastening them to one another. It constitutes a body-weapon, body-tool, body-machine complex' (Foucault, 1979a: 153). Finally, 'exhaustive use' means that discipline creates efficiency, it is about 'extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (Foucault, 1979a: 154). Through the disciplinary processes discussed, the natural body became a real entity and took the place of the mechanical body, 'through this technique of subjection a new object was being formed' (Foucault, 1979a: 155). Foucault (1979a) clarified this by stating that,

in becoming the target for new mechanisms of power, the body is offered up to new forms of knowledge. It is the body of exercise, rather than of speculative physics; a body manipulated by authority, rather than imbued with animal spirits; a body of useful training and not of rational mechanics, but one in which, by virtue of that very fact, a number of natural requirements and functional constraints are beginning to emerge (Foucault, 1979a: 155).

This very realisation meant that the body, expected to display docility in even the smallest gesture, displays the requirements of operating as an organism. Therefore, disciplinary power 'has as its correlative an individuality that is not only analytical and 'cellular', but also natural and 'organic'' (Foucault, 1979a: 156).

When explaining the organisation of geneses, Foucault (1979a) explains how the disciplines, which assess spatial arrangements, divide and then reorganise activities, must also be considered as 'machinery for adding up and capitalising time' (Foucault, 1979a: 157). This can be done in four ways: by splitting duration of time in consecutive or parallel sections (separate sessions into age or ability differences); by organising the sequence of ideas in accordance with a systematic design (providing an easy progression of ideas, increasing difficulty); confirming the timeframe of each segment and finalise it with an examination (to assess different abilities, ensure that each individual has reached the necessary level); and creating a sequence of meaning.

Foucault (1979a) explains how this technique involves tasking the body with activities that are repetitive and diverse but always ranked or progressive. Exercise gives the opportunity for an individual to be compared and characterised in association with other individuals or in relation to a particular programme of activities. It, therefore, maintains, due to continuity and control, a development, a surveillance, and a qualification. Thus, exercise,

served to economize the time of life, to accumulate it in a useful form and to exercise power over men through the mediation of time arranged in this way. Exercise, having become an element in the political technology of the body and of duration, does not culminate in a beyond, but tend towards a subjection that has never reached its limit (Foucault, 1979a: 162).

Finally, the composition of forces refers to the way in which individuals make up a machine in order to create an overall effect or result. Discipline was no longer seen 'simply as an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine' (Foucault, 1979a: 164). This requirement was visible in a number of ways: the body became seen as part of a multi-segmentary machine, an object to be moved around; a chronological series was developed so that 'the time of each must be adjusted to the time of the others in such a way that the maximum quantity of forces may be extracted from each and combined with the optimum result' (Foucault, 1979a: 164); the combination of forces needed a clear arrangement of command, with a master of discipline. The master of discipline and individuals would operate on a system of signalisation, whereby the master would give a signal and the individual would react to it, like an 'artificial, prearranged code' (Foucault, 1979a: 166). Foucault (1979a) explains how this was true within school environments around the seventeenth century, where there were 'few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals – bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher' (Foucault, 1979a: 166).

In summary, from the four important aspects of successful discipline, Foucault (1979a) suggests that an individual is characterised in four ways. He concludes that,

discipline creates out of the bodies it controls four types of individuality that is endowed with four characteristics: it is cellular (by the play of spatial distribution), it is organic (by the coding of activities), it is genetic (by accumulation of time), it is combinatory (by the composition of forces). And, in

doing so, it operates four great techniques: it draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges 'tactics' (Foucault, 1979a: 167)

The four techniques that Foucault discusses, can all be applied to sporting contexts. The hierarchizing of individuals is common place within sport, for example through leagues and world rankings, but also often within teams, when awards can be seen for most valuable player, or top goal scorer. This discursive practice can arguably be applied to sporting contexts in order to create docile sporting bodies. Particular movements are prescribed through specific skills and actions which aid efficiency in competitive situations. Repetitive exercises are often prescribed in training, often with progression as skills and techniques begin to be mastered. Finally, tactics are employed as a sports team begin to work as a 'machine', learning to act by responding to the actions of others during game scenarios. This study aims to investigate whether korfbal can offer something additional to traditional sports, so these techniques, which apply so readily to sport, will be considered in relation to korfbal in chapter five.

Foucault (1979a) discusses the importance of tactics, and describes how controlled behaviours and activities undertaken by specifically placed bodies, within particularly analysed patterns, are the most developed types of disciplinary practice. This use of discipline was once used to create docile military bodies, yet, by the eighteenth century, it had become both a 'technique and a body of knowledge that could project their schema over the social body' (Foucault, 1979a: 168). Foucault argued that power was invested in the body as well as being projected by the body itself (Pringle and Markula, 2005). By decreasing physical violence as a mode of coercion, power became more subtle and discrete (Cole, 1993), putting the emphasis on the individual to master his or her own body (Markula and Pringle, 2006). This movement demonstrated the emergence of the 'docile body' which refers to the way in which 'well-disciplined bodies were economically efficient but politically obedient: bodies that were ideal for employment within the capitalist workforce' (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 40). This idea revolved around the need for productive and disciplined bodies (Smith Maguire, 2002). Foucault (1979a: 25) discusses the body as 'directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it; mark it; train it, torture it, force



it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs'. This is the reason that Foucauldian investigations of the body as an object susceptible to normalising practices and disciplinary techniques, have been applied extensively in the sociology of sport (Markula, 2003).

#### **2.4 Power, Discourse and Surveillance Applied to Sport and Physical Activity Settings**

Numerous research studies have utilised Foucault's ideas in order to analyse and explain power relations in sport and physical activity. Applying key ideas relating to the influence of discourse and surveillance, these studies demonstrate how Foucault's concepts can be used as individual tools when attempting to better understand sporting phenomena. With regards to the influence and importance of discourse when applied to a sports setting, Pringle and Markula (2005) discuss how multiple discourses related to one topic can differ. For example, they describe how rugby can be portrayed as a violent sport for barbarians, whilst also being known as a sport for gentlemen. During their study, Markula and Pringle (2006) suggested that the objectification of rugby was not simply brought alive through talking and linguistics, it was as a result of historical conditions, as well as social relations and practices (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Chase (2008) also explored the influence of discourses within a physical activity setting and explained how,

dominant discourses surrounding running have perpetuated the notion that running is the terrain of athletes whose bodies match the normative ideal of running bodies. These discourses, along with the disciplinary processes associated with distance running, shape how distance runners are constructed. The image of the large or fat runner continues to exist in opposition to mediated and socially constructed images of ideal running bodies (Chase, 2008: 136-137)

She explains that images found in running magazines regulate running bodies, with large runners trying to attain the magazine body, whilst smaller runners actively try to sustain their normalised bodies, demonstrating the potential impact of dominant discourses on sporting and physical activity settings. The importance of discourses, potentially those specific to a korfbal setting, and also those within wider society, will be applied further to the junior korfbal setting within this research (see discussion chapters five and six).

In addition to his discussions of discourses, Foucault explained how normalisation was

used as a key technique within power relations. The idea of normalisation within a sports setting can be seen within research by Lee Sinden (2013) who suggests that elite sports foster environments that aim to homogenise the emotions of athletes through normalising judgement. She suggests that 'through technologies of emotion, in which emotions are viewed as essentially private, natural, feminine, irrational, and weak, standards are often set regarding athletes' emotionality to which they are persuaded to conform' (624). Emotions are discussed in relation to junior korfbal players in section 6.4. As previously discussed in section 2.1, the process of homogenization is aided by punishments, which act as tools to reinforce normalisation. This can be seen more generally within sports settings when coaches or other individuals implement punishments to demonstrate a detraction from accepted behaviour. For example, Claringbould, Knoppers and Jacobs (2015) explain how coaches in their study made junior athletes run extra laps, excluded them from participating in matches, or pulled individuals to one side to talk to them in order to punish them. That being said, punishment should act alongside gratification in order to hierarchise negatively and positively. Markula and Pringle (2006) explain how gratification can be more influential than punishment, for example as the 100m sprint is measured by time, the winners are rewarded in a number of ways, provoking the aspiration of others. Clift and Mower (2011) also found that normalisation was present within their study of athletes at a corporate sporting university, where they described how 'feedback from coaches and players were frequently discussed as important experiences that functioned as techniques of normalisation' (359). They recognised that players changed their behaviour depending on feedback, in order to comply with normalised ideals. Essentially, positive or negative feedback, which could be seen as punishment or gratification, influenced the players' actions. Additionally, Claringbould, Knoppers and Jacobs (2015) study into the disciplinary processes used by coaches on young athletes, found that the 'youths were managed by coaches who rewarded, corrected, punished or temporarily excluded them or had a serious talk with them if they did not meet their coach's expectations' (5). Therefore, within these studies, both praise and criticism can be seen to impact upon the process of normalisation. These ideas will be discussed in more detail in chapters five and six, when discussing junior korfbal players.

When Foucault (1979a) discussed normalising judgement, he explained how a small penal mechanism must operate at the centre of disciplinary systems, and these systems are 'subject to a whole micro-penalty of time' (Foucault, 1979a: 178). Markula and Pringle (2006) discuss how health-related fitness practices comply with the essential techniques of discipline that Foucault discussed. They occur in a disciplinary, certified space; they are timetabled, so they occur at set times but are also strategically timetabled during the classes, with warm-ups, cool-downs, and specific exercises. They suggest that health-related fitness classes are, in a comparable way to exercise prescription, ingrained with disciplinary techniques, as they promote recurring, and developmental processes, suggesting a constant increase of control over the body (this idea will be applied to korfball training in section 5.1). They create docile bodies by disciplining the individuals into fit bodies or normalised body shapes. McMahon, Penney, and Dinan-Thompson (2011) agree that training routines can be likened to disciplinary practices as they produce disciplined and docile bodies, a body which is 'subjected, used, transformed, and improved, achieved through strict regimen of disciplinary act' (Foucault, 1975: 63 cited in McMahon et al, 2011: 199). In their ethnographic study of swimming cultures, they argued that their findings provided evidence that the bodies of Australian swimmers were docile due to training and practices enforced by coaches, managers and the self, in the name of optimal performance. They suggested that the swimmers' bodies were '*controlled and monitored* which 'imposed a relation of docility-utility' (Foucault, 1975, p. 63)' (McMahon, et al., 2011: 199). These arguments relating to the creation of docile bodies within sport and exercise environments will be further discussed when applied to junior korfball within chapters five and six.

Surveillance is also explained as a powerful tool of domination and acts to subject each individual to a gaze operating under a normalising judgement. Within a sporting context, the visual subjectification of the body can come through many eyes. For example, referees, teammates, opposing players, and spectators all contribute to the management of such sporting bodies (Markula and Pringle, 2006; McMahon, 2011). This complies with research by Webb, McCaughy and MacDonald (2010) who suggest that during their research,

the workings of surveillance were complex and multi-directional. Students, teachers, HODs [Head of Departments], and school administrators were variously involved, both watching and being watched through the surveillance of work, surveillance of health behaviours, self-surveillance and surveillance of bodies (Webb, McCaughy and MacDonald, 2010: 213)

Similarly, it was clear from Chase's (2008) research into 'large' running bodies that participants were under widespread surveillance and subjected to disciplinary processes present within sporting environments. Through critical looks and unjustified suppositions, or public humiliation, fat runners were made to feel that their bodies must be normalised. Body composition is an extremely visible aspect of physical fitness, it is possible to see who is thin, who is fat, who is slim and who is obese, which renders the body extremely susceptible to the normalising gaze (Markula and Pringle, 2006). A study by Johns and Johns (2000) concluded that athletes were under constant surveillance by coaches and other athletes, which in turn developed a continual self-surveillance. Gymnasts, for example, are subjected to the discourse of the ideal body that is taken for granted in elite gymnastics. In turn, the gymnasts would be described as fat and idle if they did not conform to the normalised body shape, enforcing the technologies of domination and producing docile bodies for productivity (Johns and Johns, 2000). This was very similar to findings from McMahon et al.'s (2011) study of Australian swimmers. They explained how the ideal body shape was strived for by disciplining the self, and through modes of self-surveillance. McMahon et al., (2011) explain how swimmers purged and limited their food intake as a response to the normalising gaze which dictated an ideal body shape. The swimmers '*interiorised* and embodied the *surveillance, gaze* and ideas of others until they eventually began '*exercising surveillance over themselves*' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 155)' (McMahon et al., 2011: 200). The need for self-surveillance was further enforced by the fear of consequences if they transgressed from acceptable behaviour dictated by dominant discourses. For example, swimmers experienced threats of expulsion from the team if they gained weight, or threats of having to run to burn off excess calories, and did not question these powers. Therefore, there were visibly unequal power relations, which is also evident in studies by McMahon, Penney, and Dinan-Thompson (2011) and Lang (2010), who argue that, in the context of swimmers, coaches and managers act as prison guards, exposing swimmers to surveillance through their behaviours and the

execution of disciplinary practices. This was similar in the study by Claringbould, Knoppers and Jacobs (2015) who explained the influence of supervising forces upon junior athletes: 'in their interactions with their supervisor or coach, these athletes encountered and adapted to 'normal' behaviour and actively transformed themselves into becoming disciplined athletes' (13), arguably creating docile bodies.

The Panopticon is, in essence, seen to aid the creation of docile bodies. As stated in section 2.3.2, the Panopticon is explained as a representation of power relations in everyday life. Markula and Pringle (2006) recognised that, in a similar way that the individuals within the Panopticon cells cannot see whether there is someone in the tower, and thus take responsibility for their own surveillance with the assumption that there is, within a fitness club there is ample visibility for an individual to be susceptible to the gaze of others, and also to gaze at others (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Because the surveillance or gaze is not attributable to a specific person, or group of people, any individual can act as the gaze and controlling power (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Markula and Pringle (2006) argue that physical activity has the potential to turn individuals into docile bodies and can act as a disciplinary technique in the workings of power. Dryburgh and Fortin (2010) also suggest that unlike Foucault's analysis of the Panopticon, where prisoners were not able to establish whether they were being supervised, the dancers in their study were aware of those who were watching them. Yet, despite this knowledge, they still maintain that the gaze becomes internalised, in a similar way that it does in panopticism. Clift and Mower (2011) discuss self-surveillance and discipline in their research, and describe how their study demonstrated how 'participants' self-surveillance and self-discipline, according to the normative behaviours they embodied, functioned to regulate, maintain and (re)produce the disciplines of The University athletic department and soccer team' (363). It could be suggested that a disciplinary society operates on a micro-scale in this instance.

Multiple studies focusing on sport and physical activity also discuss Foucault's idea of docile bodies being created through training regimes and correction. Surveillance and discipline as Foucauldian concepts can be applied directly to sport and the athletic body, acting as legitimate sites for the production of docile bodies (Birrell, 2000; Scraton and Flintoff, 2002). Such disciplinary practices concentrated on the body as an object for

power to be projected on, in order to mould and 'educate' the body. Claringbould, Knoppers and Jacobs (2015) explained how youth athletes in their study described coaches *correcting* players in team sports, telling them to play as a team if individual players held the ball too long to try and show off skills. Similarly, in Lang's (2010) study on swimming, it was explained that 'training protocols at the clubs formed part of a disciplinary regime that attempted to enforce swimmers' embodied conformity to normative behaviour through the technique of surveillance, resulting in (re)forming swimmers into obedient, docile bodies' (25). Bridel and Rail (2007: 135) suggest this is also the case with marathon runners, asserting that 'the provision of specific training plans and group runs, as well as the use of other runners' abilities as extra incentive to improve running, worked together as a regulatory power'. They argued that the marathon body was susceptible to disciplinary procedures, such as diet to regulate weight gain, guidance regarding the correct levels of rest and recovery, and the required training, which resulted in high levels of self-surveillance.

In sum, athletes and sportspeople can be conceptualised as 'produced via their sporting experiences that are structured within relations of power and discourse, in their respective sporting 'disciplines'' (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 100). Sports produce disciplined bodies in the sense that bodies are made to obey rules as well as instructions, they are encouraged to work with other bodies, perform to the best of their abilities, utilise relevant skills, endure a level of uneasiness, and put forth efficient performance in relation to their responsibilities. For example, elite performers abide by these conventions by not doubting coaches or umpires, and not questioning the frequency or longevity of gruelling training programmes (Markula and Pringle, 2006). It is worth noting here that the disciplinary techniques employed within sporting spheres can create well-disciplined athletes and elite performers, but there are variable scales of success. The vast number of sports performers are losers, not champions, some also choose to maintain a social playing experience. In addition to this, sport also exposes people that do not meet the normalised gender order; deviant players, queers, lazy and disinterested players or non-players, unskilled players, and many more. Therefore, sport is not necessarily seen as a tool of discipline imposed by the ruling powers, instead, it creates a multitude of identities which comply or resist

disciplinary techniques with varying extremes (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has acknowledged a number of Foucault's key ideas which will later be discussed in relation to the data collected during this study, in order to try and explain how junior korfball players experience korfball, and how they understand and act out gender. This analysis assists the formulation of research questions relating to gender equality and neutrality in korfball, and the contemporary values and culture of korfball compared to historical aims and those of other sports. This study utilizes a number of Foucault's ideas in order to investigate korfball phenomena. The way that power relationships function, the workings of discourse and practices that may alter it, and the importance of external and internal surveillance, will later serve to respond to research questions related to sex equality and gender neutrality in korfball, and whether korfball can offer an alternative to traditional mainstream sports.

This chapter has also made reference to a number of sport and physical activity studies that have applied Foucault's ideas, demonstrating the applied use of Foucault in the field. The studies listed do not relate to gender in sport, but a brief overview of how Foucault has been applied to studies focused on gender within sport, will be acknowledged at the beginning of the next chapter.

In a social space such as sport, where gender inequality is still evident through differing opportunities and the social norms maintained through gender discourse, it may be difficult for korfball to successfully achieve aims of gender equality. Therefore, it is important to consider the wider context that korfball exists within, and better understand gender equalities and inequalities in sport, including arguments of assumed gender difference the assumed need for gender segregation in sport. The next chapter will start by acknowledging how Foucault's ideas have been applied in studies related to gender and sport, and will continue by recognizing the broader field of gender and sport.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Gender Research in Sport, Physical Activity and PE**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Continuing on from chapter two, which explained the theoretical arguments of Foucault considered relevant to this study, it is useful to recognize how some of these ideas have been applied to previous gender and sport studies. Foucault's ideas of power have been used in studies to investigate normalisation processes in sport (for example Drury, 2011); and his ideas of discourse have been utilised in research on masculinities in sport (Pringle and Markula, 2005; Markula and Pringle, 2006; Light and Kirk, 2010), marginalisation of the 'the other' (Brown and Macdonald, 2007), and the representation of women in sport (Thorpe, 2008). Finally, his discussions of surveillance have been applied to physical activity and gender, for example, Azzarito (2009) discussed the panopticon of physical education. Markula and Pringle (2006) utilise Foucault's (1979a) idea of docile bodies and summarise the importance of the influence of sport on the gendering of bodies by explaining that sport aids the production of contemporary gendered identities where 'masculine and feminine bodies are both docile, yet different' (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 100).

Having demonstrated the previous application of Foucault within the field of gender and sport, it is now important to recognize other key ideas within the broader field. Gender within a sporting context is a well-researched area (e.g. Grindstaff and West, 2010; Klein, 2000; Thorpe, 2010; Tolvhed, 2013; Azzarito and Solomon, 2009). In order to enter discussions related to the aims of this thesis, questions that address equality and gender neutrality in a sporting context, as well as the opportunity for korfbal to offer something different to other sports; it is key to look at previous empirical research and theories which also focus on these discussions. In this chapter, I will discuss the complex relationships between gender, sex, and sexuality; acknowledge the importance of the body when considering physical activity and gender; and finally, I will discuss gendered sports participation and the frequent segregation of men and women in sport.

#### **3.1 Explaining 'Sex' and 'Gender'**

##### *3.1.1 Intersectionality*



Before the discussion moves on to explore the categorisation of genders and sexes, it is important to acknowledge some complexities of this process. Poststructuralists have strongly critiqued the universalisation of social categories such as *women* (Messner, 1996), demonstrating the level of difficulty that arises when categorising women as a homogenous group (McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000; Cahn, 1994). When this generalisation occurs it is usually white, middle-class, able-bodied western women that are being referred to (Mansfield, 2006; Hargreaves, 2000). Despite many studies grouping 'boys' into a category, it would be wrong to categorise boys into a homogenous group. There are many who do not gain an early affinity for competitive sports, are driven out of the organised sports arena, or come from different backgrounds that provide limitations to sports access (Messner, 1990; McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000). The importance of diverse and splintered identities is emphasised in research (Messner, 1996; Hasbrook and Harris, 2000; Azzarito and Solomon, 2010), and a number of researchers have asserted the importance of looking beyond gender and recognising the intersection and complex relationships that occur between individuals when also considering race and/or social class (Wright and Burrows, 2006; Kirk, 2002; Penney and Evans, 2002; Azzarito and Solomon, 2006b; With-Nielson and Pfister, 2011; Adams, 2011; Hanis-Martin, 2006; McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000), as well as age, disability, ethnicity and sexuality (Maynard, 2002). In spite of this, many feminists have previously observed the fact that a continual dissection of *woman* through multiple identity traits and experiences will culminate in many extreme individualisations, and thus there will no longer be a group for contestation and challenge of hegemonic groups (Messner, 1996). It is useful to be aware of different experiences and opportunities that women may have been party to within the research which will be discussed throughout this section. Before this research is acknowledged the key terms, gender and sex, will be explained.

### *3.1.2 Gender and the Sex/Gender Dynamic*

Gender is most commonly used to refer to the social and cultural construction of masculinity and femininity; conversely, the term 'sex' is used to denote biological variance between men and women (Mansfield, 2006; Pelak, 2006). Judith Butler suggests that this is an overly simplistic explanation: 'Gender is not to culture as sex is

to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive,' prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts' (Butler, 1990: 10). Thus, gender is not owned, it is displayed or 'done' (Sisjord and Kristiansen, 2009; Connell, 2002). Various ideas around biological influence versus cultural assumptions will be discussed in this section.

Some academics strongly maintain that biological difference is the 'fundamental reason for segregating men and women' (Foddy and Savulescu, 2011: 1184). Biological determinism has been used as an ideology that serves to portray men as innately possessing characteristics that conform to sporting traits, such as aggression, physical power and competitiveness, whilst assuming that women do not (Mansfield, 2006). Theories suggest that sport serves to condone, honour and uphold the dominance of the heterosexual, masculine male through these traits (Mansfield, 2006), whilst notions of femininity, which are traditionally attributed to women, include fragility, docility, elegance and a kind and caring attitude, pertaining to a weak connection between women and sport (Mansfield, 2006; Messner, 1988; Clark and Paechter, 2007; Hargreaves, 2000). Women are viewed as the lesser alternative to men, with men holding positions of control and domination whilst women are the oppressed 'other' (Hargreaves, 2000). Despite these assertions, prominent notions of femininity and masculinity are ever present and contested through developing and peripheral gendered identities (Mansfield, 2006), which will continue to be discussed later in this section.

Biological justifications have been historically significant with regards to differences between male and female physical activity participation (Mansfield, 2006)<sup>14</sup>. Often men have given medical reasons for women's exclusion from sport (Ezzell, 2009; Moon, 1997), for example male doctors historically advised women to refrain from physical exercise since their bodies were born with a finite amount of energy to be correctly channelled towards childbearing and child rearing (Hargreaves, 1994), or because women would develop traits akin to men, such as a deep voice or facial hair (Griffin,

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<sup>14</sup> There is no scope to provide a full historical overview of the gendered aspect of the making of modern sport within this thesis, but the significance of a historical lens in understanding gender and sport is acknowledged

2002). More recently, Tolvhed (2013), Connell (2005), Woodward (2009), and Swain (2006) have suggested that the physical makeup of bodies means that they are limited in what they can do, and how they can perform within various social settings. Additionally, Foddy and Savulescu (2011) state that,

Men normally have much higher levels of androgens than women throughout their lives. It is entirely because of this difference that we consider it unfair to expect women to compete with men in athletic sports. In sprinting, rowing and swimming, men perform at high levels far beyond women, although both groups use the same equipment and training methods, and both groups work equally hard at their training. Men are larger, stronger and faster (Foddy and Savulescu (2011: 1184)<sup>15</sup>

This understanding is clear within a number of recent studies. For example, when boys (aged 15-16) in Laberge and Albert's (2000) study were asked to write essays explaining masculinity and sport, many asserted that men who ventured to engage in 'female' sports<sup>16</sup> would be physically inhibited and would not have the opportunity to nurture their *innate* physical superiority (Laberge and Albert, 2000). Additionally, a study conducted by With-Nielson and Pfister (2011), found that both male and female students aged 16 or 17 assumed that boys were 'naturally' more interested and better at sports than girls.

Yet, sex difference in sport is often attributed to social understandings, for example, Chalabaev, Sarrazin, Fontayne, Bioché and Clément-Guillotin (2013: 136) suggest that 'sex differences in sport exist in part because people believe they exist'. Larsson (2013) aims to give some explanation to this and argues that the creation of sex and gender within physiological research has changed so dramatically, especially in the twentieth century. He critically explains how,

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<sup>15</sup> A number of writers such as Foddy and Savulescu (2011), Tolvhed (2013), and Teetzel (2014) also discuss the problems associated with gender segregation, and describe the way in which biological differences are not always clearly defined by binary differences, using the case of Caster Semenya (a female 800m runner) as an example (see section 2.2.1) regarding Foucault's discussion of scientific categorisation). Scientific tests which are in place try to prove the strict binary sex of female athletes, do not take account for many biological discrepancies within the sex identification techniques. Woodward (2012: 58) further problematizes this by stating that there is an assumption that 'not only is there an absolute truth but also science is the route to establishing what that truth is'

<sup>16</sup> Female sports were considered as sports such as rhythmic gymnastics and synchronised swimming; sports that do not embrace competitiveness or strength. Whilst male orientated sports were sports such as football and boxing, which do encompass these values (Laberge and Albert, 2000).

physiological knowledge, as any knowledge, must be understood in relation to the social situation in which it is produced. Further, it cannot uncritically be utilised to make decisions about the social organisation of sex/gender. This issue is always a political, ideological and moral matter (Larsson, 2013: 346).

Linked to this idea that sex and gender have an ambiguous authenticity, is Judith Butler's (1990) discussion of the performative nature of gender, and in her later writing, Butler (1993: 2) explains that performativity is the 'reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains'. She describes how identity is performatively established by the same 'expressions' that are assumed to be its consequences (1). Essentially, Butler's (1990) theory of performativity suggests that an intrinsic gender identity does not exist, instead, the actions and performances that convey gender produce the appearance of a gender identity, rather than express a real gender. This has similarities with Messner's (1996) idea that male athletes can often 'do' heterosexuality and masculinity rather than actually 'being' heterosexual or masculine. The emphasis here lies in the idea that heterosexuality is also likened to a 'performance' rather than essentially connected with sexual interactions (Messner, 1996: 233). People construct sexuality and gender based shows through personal agency but within perceived limitations and boundaries of social systems of power and desire (Messner, 1996).

Butler (1990) therefore proposes gender trouble; that people should disrupt gender categories using performance. A gendered identity involves a progressive development that is created, encounters crisis, and modifies during an individual's contact with their culture and a wider society, whilst also involving active individual participation in this development rather than a submissive acceptance. Gender identity does not focus on a stable identity of masculine or feminine (Messner, 1990). Social constructionists make assertions regarding the creation of gender through discourse, relationships, interactions, and procedures, they dismiss ideas that gender is innate or natural (Hills and Croston, 2011). Beliefs for social constructionists lie in the social creation of gender through active participation and experience, rather than gender being an intrinsic and inborn instinct.

### **3.2 Theoretical Applications of Gender in Physical Activity**

As stated at the end of the previous section, gender differences can often be seen to

be a product of learned culture and ideologies in addition to agency (Cooky, 2009).

With- Nielson and Pfister (2011) suggest that,

through social practices individuals, as active learners, appropriate gender and the 'right' way of interacting, thinking, speaking and feeling as a man or a woman depending on and adapted to the retrospective contexts. In this way, individuals 'gender' themselves (With-Nielson and Pfister, 2011: 647).

For example, Grindstaff and West (2010) recognised that, within mixed cheerleading, the girls were more accepting of and willing to smile when performing cheers, whilst boys were reluctant due to the perception that smiling was feminine. Nevertheless, by investigating and uncovering spoken and unspoken discourse surrounding being female and male and exhibiting the ever changing and adaptable femininities and masculinities depending on context and negotiation of social norms, the standardised thinking about bodily differences can be disrupted (Azzarito and Solomon, 2010). To emphasise this, transparency regarding the numerous interpretations along the sliding scale of masculinity should be disclosed, rather than the false assertion of stable gender binaries. Hypermasculinity which encompasses traits of extreme physicality, bodily aggression and womanising for example, can survive alongside masculinities that provide a strong contrast such as softer masculinities that hold attributes including physical touch and affection of other men, bodily expression, and consideration of family values, all within one institution or culture such as sport (Klein, 2000).

Sports provide a space for the demonstration of hegemonic masculinity, which is 'the culturally idealised form of masculine character' (Connell, 1990: 83), or 'the definition of masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations: it is at the top of the gender hierarchy, superior to subordinated masculinities and femininities' (Sisjord and Kristiansen, 2009: 232). The idea of hegemonic masculinity is rooted in Gramscian theory, a neo-Marxist theory based on the concept of hegemony. Anderson (2005) and Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009) address the key attributes of hegemonic masculinity within sporting spheres, suggesting that they include characteristics of aggression, heterosexuality, and competitiveness; whilst Tolvhed (2013) additionally suggests a toned physique and assertiveness. Attributes such as strength and power which are performed in sports such as boxing and baseball assert the white male body as dominant and mighty (Azzarito and Solomon, 2010). Traditional

sporting masculinity is a form of hegemonic masculinity that acts to subordinate other masculinities in addition to femininities (Wellard, 2009).

Many authors have criticised the historical application of hegemonic masculinity accredited to Connell, suggesting that this application relies on dualist notions and lacks acknowledgement of agency, individual difference and the complexity of gender (Pringle, 2005; Thorpe, 2010), yet Connell's (2002) more recent work discusses 'multiple masculinities'. Arguably, simple dichotomous thinking or a dual categorisation of gender binaries is not a sufficient labelling process. In addition to hegemonic masculinities, Swain (2006) also categorised boys as displaying 'complicit masculinity', 'personalised masculinity', and 'subordinated masculinity'. Anderson's (2009) more recent work has focused on ideas of inclusive masculinity theory, whereby he claims that masculinity is changing in certain realms, and rather than a hierarchical structure of masculinities being present, as suggested by theories of hegemony, a lateral kind of structure exists where different masculinities are not so obviously valued more or less than others, suggesting a more inclusive structure of masculinity. Despite these suggestions, Anderson (2009) maintains that this does not mean that subordination has been completely removed. Interestingly, Daniels (2009: 1) asserts that everyone should more accurately be considered as polygendered, which she explains as: 'a mix of those characteristics, interests, behaviours, and appearances that have traditionally been used to sort females and males into exclusive categories called masculine or feminine'.

Swain (2006) utilised concepts of hegemony and combined them with Bourdieu's idea of 'capital' in his study of boys at a mixed, independent, English school. Results of this research showed how the most skilfully sporty boys, displaying hegemonic masculinity within the school setting, held physical capital and were often the most popular amongst other students, and perceived as successful. Hills and Croston (2012) also acknowledged that boys in general, in their study tended to embody physical capital in PE lessons since they were the ones to generally display skill, ability and knowledge within the activities<sup>17</sup>. Rather than utilising concepts relating to hegemony, Thorpe

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<sup>17</sup> Wellard (2009) explains that girls have a complex relationship with sport and physical education, but that said, not all boys have an easier relationship with sport and PE. He suggests that there is a tendency to assume that all boys have a natural affinity and ability towards sport

(2010) used a feminist application of Bourdieu's ideas related to capital and habitus to investigate contemporary snowboarding culture. Thorpe (2010) argues that masculinities in this environment 'are multiple and dynamic; they differ over space, time, and context, and are rooted in the cultural and social moment' (202). Thorpe (2010) made particular reference to the usefulness of Bourdieu in her gender study when explaining that men had various experiences of the snowboarding culture depending on their position within the field, their knowledge of the field, and their ability to accumulate valuable forms of capital such as masculine, social or physical capital. Nevertheless, complexities were also added to the explanation, as it was evident that gender relations were not static as the male snowboarders crossed social fields. Lefebvre (1991) argued that space is produced by and also influences cultural activity, and therefore space needs to be considered when assessing changing power relations in society. Lefebvre (1991), and Friedman and Van Ingen (2011) suggest that the body must be recognised in relation to the spaces it occupies, creates and is influenced by. Liimakka (2011) argues for the use of Bourdieu's ideas of habitus combined with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach when investigating perceptions of body experiences (see also Wright and Burrows, 2006). She argues that this allows the researcher to 'grasp both of the collectively experienced embodied limitations of an objectified female body and the embodied individual trajectories of objectification and empowerment' (445). She made an argument that an individual's body is influenced by a 'collective group habitus', but is not completely defined by it (446). Alternatively, Tolvhed (2013) explains how post-structuralism and phenomenology can be combined, rather than set up as opposing fields, in order to develop deeper understandings when theorising gender, sport and the body.

Taking Lefebvre's (1991) assertions into account, it would be feasible to suggest that different spaces provide different experiences/actions. Within the debate around structure and agency, whereby Giddens (1984) argued that agents have the power to resist or reproduce social structures; there exists a tension between the control held by agents and structures. Azzarito and Solomon (2009) also agree that individuals are influenced by dominant discourses but have the agency to resist or reproduce gender discourses; giving the example of participating in, or resisting specific physical activities.

Fine (1992) recognises that it is too simple to consider these two polar sides as finite answers to arguments regarding individuality and external influence. Instead, he argues, that interaction helps bond and explain the binaries of agency and structure (also see Messner, 2009). He explains how agents act in certain ways within structural settings, and these actions or perceptions are influenced by 'the meanings that previous contexts of behaviour have provided' (101). Fine (1992) suggested that structures are influenced by interactions, and individuals are impacted by external structures. From these acknowledgements of agency and structure, it would seem appropriate to suggest that different spaces would provide different actions based on structures in those settings and previous actions of agents in these spaces. Thus, alternative sporting spaces may provide the opportunity to change enactments in these settings. Korfball, as a mixed sport, may go some way to do this, as many other sporting spaces rely on gender segregation.

Messner (2002; 2009; 2011) explains how gender segregation can be attributed to 'soft essentialism', which he explains as a discrete and silenced understanding that girls and boys are entitled to equality, but that they are naturally and unquestionably different. With regards to this theory of soft essentialism, Messner (2011) completed a study in which he interviewed coaches from several youth sports (soccer, baseball and softball). It was found that coaches endorsed the concept of equality for girls and boys, yet they had trouble verifying this with the currently accepted notion of separatism within sport. In addition to this, the coaches spoke in an experienced manner about notions of empowerment that sport can contribute to for girls; however, they were less clear and concise regarding accounts for boys, and instead they reverted back to age-old stereotypes of boys having excess energy and being disorderly as benefits of sporting participation. Due to the understanding of difference, coaches recognised that they coached girls and boys with the presumption that girls are more emotional whilst boys are emotionally stronger and resilient, resulting in a dissimilar coaching experience (Messner, 2011). An interesting point that surfaced was that the 'toughening' of boys through sport was never considered as a factor in constructing differences between girls and boys. The fact that the taught aspect of gender could result in difference rather than it being an innate trait was not brought into question. Messner (2011)



argues that the teaching of gender difference contributes to the belief system of gender essentialism. Messner (2011) suggests that girls are privy to a degree of choice, with regards to sporting participation and work for example, whilst boys maintain traditional masculinity and their participation in sport is common-sense. It is therefore argued that this newer ideology pertains to a harder essentialism when related to boys, and a softer essentialism when associated with girls. In order to oppose the constraints that soft essentialism highlights, Messner (2011) argues that the most positive approach against soft essentialism would be to maintain girls/women's leagues whilst de-gendering the male leagues and opening them up to women. De-gendering male leagues, as suggested by Messner (2011), may provide increased opportunities for women in sport. Alternatively, by uncovering and contradicting dominant discourses centred on the body, PE and physical activity can become a positive experience for boys and girls, who may begin to feel that their bodies are sites of empowerment (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006a). The mass of various systems, customs and procedures in place to police bodies within the sporting culture, establishes such bodies as entities whereby oppression, but also negotiation and challenge can occur (Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000).

### **3.3 Bodies**

Woodward (2009) explains how 'enfleshed' bodies contribute to the formation of individual identity and lived experiences, in a similar way that With-Nielsen and Pfister (2011) suggest that 'gender is embedded in identities, enacted in social situations and 'embodied'' (647) (see also Swain, 2006). It is commonly understood that the body both produces and is produced by knowledge (Woodward, 2012; also see Shilling (2004) who utilises Bourdieu's (1986) concept of 'embodied' capital). Tolvhed (2013: 283) uses ideas from Woodward (2009) and explains how 'discourse and representation should be understood as embodied, and embodiment shapes discourse and representation'. For example, Whitson (2002) explains how his research found that childhoods differed between girls and boys as they are shaped 'by discourses of femininity and masculinity and by gendered practices of play that teach us to inhabit and experience our bodies in profoundly different ways' (227). Children experience daily encounters with gendered assumptions (Hasbrook and Harris, 2000). Whitson (2002) goes on to explain how

'feminizing practices' present the female body as an object which serves to constrain women, whilst 'masculinizing practices' promote boys to use their bodies in strong and empowering ways (229). Azzarito (2009) and Azzarito and Solomon (2009) argue that young people learn about gendered bodies and gender appropriate activities through physical education, in addition to other social settings such as family and media settings. They learn to interpret what high and low-status bodies look like and act like (Azzarito, 2009), and 'the body, then, through young people's negotiation of physical culture, becomes a *gender project*' (Azzarito and Solomon, 2009: 174). Despite this, the bodies that are dominant within society are not privileged to a timeless rule; challenges are ever present regarding dominant and subordinate bodies (Dworkin and Wachs, 2000). People embody ideologies and cultural values that are significant within any specific space at any given time. These values are disseminated through discourses (Azzarito and Solomon, 2009).

Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) explain how dominant discourses about the body have created understandings of the valuable gendered body, which relates to slenderness for girls, and muscularity for boys (see also Azzarito, 2009). It is argued that media and discourses about bodies lead children to police and monitor their own body shapes, which influences how they value their bodies, the physical activities they engage in, and how they engage in these physical activities (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006a). This self-surveillance is also what leads girls and women to monitor their own bodies, through diets, exercise and sometimes surgery, rather than a required policing from external coercive forces (Cahn, 1994). Additionally, many of our bodily attributes transmit gender identities to others, for example, size and shape, the way the body is held and posture, as well as the performance of physical skill and strength in various tasks (Hasbrook and Harris, 2000; Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000). Gorely, Holroyd and Kirk (2003), Swain (2006) and Velija and Kumar (2009) asserted that the gendered body of girls and boys is embodied. Gorely, Holroyd and Kirk (2003) suggested that physical activities in PE were chosen in line with creating a gendered physicality or look, and concluded that girls were fearful of being masculine, whilst boys were fearful of being feminine. Kirk, Horloyd and Gorely (2003) and Azzarito and Solomon (2009) discuss how girls embody femininity through participating in physical activities that create

slenderness, such as jogging; whilst boys are encouraged to embody masculinity through muscular and strong bodies often aided through participation in sports such as rugby, or fitness regimes involving weight lifting. Within Azzarito and Solomon's (2006a) study of PE it was mainly girls that revealed unhappiness with their bodies, normally related to losing weight, but some boys also felt dissatisfied with their lack of muscularity. Swain (2006) also explained how boys in his study were openly aware of the way in which they presented their bodies, concerning themselves with the appearance of their body. Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) further explain how 'girls and some overweight or low- skilled boys often experience a sense of disembodiment when their expression of physicality crosses over or is out of the seemingly fixed gender boundaries that gendered physical activities dictate' (201-202). Studies have also shown how 'girls' participation in physical activity is constrained by gendered discursive constructs [...] not formed through, but in opposition to, the display of physical prowess, muscularity, and enthusiasm for sport' (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006b: 92). Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009) describe how junior female wrestlers in their study display an anxiety when considering an increase in strength and developing big muscles, as opposed to slender feminine bodies. They, therefore, concentrated on creating a 'private body' in addition to an 'athletic body'<sup>18</sup>; a bi-gendered embodiment. Dworkin and Messner (2002: 24) suggest that 'defined according to the latest commodified eroticization of heterosexual femininity', the majority of women are extremely alert to 'acceptable' amounts of muscle. Problematic issues with the notion of the ideal body mean that girls and women often obsess over this as the end result, rather than embracing the emancipation that sport can provide (Cahn, 1994).

Cockburn and Clarke (2002) conducted research which concluded that girls often performed in overtly 'girly' ways, asserting their understandings of feminine identities. They explained that 'it is highly unlikely that girls can achieve being both physically active and (heterosexually) desirable, so they are often obliged to choose between these images' (Cockburn and Clarke, 2002: 661). With-Nielson and Pfister (2011) found that, due to the dominant and accepted norm of sport being masculine, girls that were seen

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<sup>18</sup>. The private body related to the socially accepted gendered body, as opposed to the athletic body, which prioritised the needs of the body for the sport women participated in

to be good at sport could easily find themselves being branded as tomboys unless they managed to successfully demonstrate feminine traits at the same time as they projected sporting ability related to masculinity. The notion of the 'tomboy' is discussed in Renold's (2009) ethnographic research with 10 to 11 year-old primary school pupils in the UK. In her study, she found that some girls embodied hegemonic masculinity and detract from hetero-sexualised femininities. Girls 'queer' commonly accepted gender and sexuality norms by assuming themselves as tomboys. This created a space considered to be transgressive, one that separates the duality of sex and gender. Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) also found that a number of students in their study, predominantly females, resisted hegemonic norms, regarding PE as a site to recreate gendered bodies. Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) labelled these: 'borderland bodies', whereby the understanding of their bodies was outside of dominant discourses. One girl valued the skill that could be learned and fostered within PE, and others considered their body shapes as different to the desirable norm but recognised female muscularity or larger bodies as important and desirable nevertheless. This challenged common notions and dominant discourses surrounding females within physical activity settings (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006a). Azzarito and Solomon (2006a: 221) conclude that 'physical education can be empowering if it is constructed as an educational space for the body to be, to positively transform, and freely express the self'.

Young (2005) discusses how some women limit the physicality of their bodies in certain ways due to the impact of power relations within society. A study by Clark and Paetcher (2007) concerning 8-9 year old girls found that girls were extremely aware of their bodies and how they portrayed themselves within physical exercise. Girls generally withheld from the full exertion of their bodies, but even when a group of girls deemed one girl as 'really fast', they continued by considering that she looked 'scary' when she exerts herself like this. This begins to relate back to traditional femininity and the need to avoid being overtly physical (Clark and Paechter, 2007: 269). Boys were also seen to demonise girls who demonstrated intent and competitive desire, name calling one such girl as 'vicious' when she played a ball game with them. This overt external gaze, coupled with an internal self-surveillance often leads to girls accepting feminine ideologies and failing to fully exert themselves within activities for fear of seeming

unfeminine (Clark and Paechter, 2007: 269). Most notably, Young (2005) explains how girls do not throw a ball with full force since they do not motivate their whole bodies in the action, instead, they simply use their arms to throw, whilst the rest of their bodies remain stable. Young argues that this way of performing the action is a result of an embodied and learned anxiety around becoming injured or enduring pain. Yet, Macdonald, Rodger, Abbott, Ziviani and Jones (2005) also explained how both the boys and girls within their study endorsed a concern with not getting hurt when playing sport, whilst Malcolm (2006: 505) described how female, preadolescent or adolescent, USA female softball players in her study were ignored by coaches when they expressed pain, or encouraged to 'shake off' the pain and endorse a traditional softball attitude to pain, rather than a traditionally feminine one. Additionally, a number of female rugby players in Ezzell's (2009) study, played through pain, heavily contacted other players (sometimes with dirty play), and did not show remorse if an opposing player had to go to hospital or ended up unconscious. They demonstrated no fear of pain and embodied masculine traits, showing resistive practices with regards to gender norms.

A number of studies have shown how women and girls present their bodies in certain ways to compensate for participating in masculine activities. For example, Cahn (1994), Sisjord and Kristiansen (2009), and Ezzell (2009) explain how some female athletes assert their femininity off the field, in order to compensate for participating in masculine activities, wearing make-up, jewellery and dresses or skirts for social occasions (Sisjord and Kristiansen, 2009; Ezzell, 2009). In Sisjord and Kristiansen's (2009) research into female wrestlers, one participant explained the need to do this: 'we are to look pretty also. When you are a wrestler, you get shoulders, and with short hair, you look like a man' (Sisjord and Kristiansen, 2009: 242). Cooky (2009) also found that, within her study of 13 to 15 year-old girls taking part within a recreational sports program, a number of girls went home between a sports game and the award ceremony and changed into fashion-conscious clothes with their hair styled and make-up on. This was similar to the way in which one girl acted outside of PE in With-Nielson and Pfister's (2011) study. She negotiated her identity in complex ways, explaining a desire to succeed in sport and still maintain her identity as 'one of the girls'. Participants in the PE setting described her as a 'wild girl' because she dressed and acted differently to other girls within PE, but

they accepted this difference since she acted like a 'real girl' outside of the PE setting by chatting with other girls and correctly gendering her appearance (she wore skirts and styled her hair).

Presenting the body in an 'appropriately' gendered way can also be seen on the field within specific sports settings. For example, Grindstaff and West (2006) found that many girls that they interviewed liked the 'girly' parts of the cheerleading, such as short skirts and make-up, and had no desire to instead wear gender neutral clothes. Grindstaff and West (2006: 510) found that 'female cheerleaders have absorbed the lessons of a culture that strongly emphasizes the display of sexy, athletic bodies'. This is also true of female figure skaters, with girls presenting gender through their make-up, hair, movements, gracefulness and music; wearing short, sometimes low-cut or backless dresses that bear flesh (Adams. 2011).

Men and women are not only expected to present their gendered bodies differently in sport and physical activity, but opportunities also differ with regards to participation in general.

### **3.4 Gendered Sports Participation**

Studies reveal that boys and men are more likely than girls and women to be supported to partake in sport; more men than women take part in structured sport; and the coaching and organisation of sport is dominated by men (Mansfield, 2006; Messner, 2011; Cahn, 1994). The overt connection between sport and traditional masculinity aids the notion of male supremacy (Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000; Dunbar, 2000; Cahn, 1994), and leads to sport being likened to a 'male preserve' (Sheard and Dunning, 1973; Mansfield, 2006; Azzarito and Solomon, 2010; Dunning, 1999; Cahn, 1994). Messner (1992) argues that sports promote accepted notions of heterosexuality and a space to emphasise masculinity, which is no doubt a contributory factor to the underrepresentation of women in sport (Wachs, 2003). Research within physical education settings often shows how girls feel disadvantaged (Evans, 2006) or reluctant to abide by traditionally masculine characteristics required within most sporting competitions (Cockburn and Clarke, 2002). Clarke and Paechter (2007) also explain how girls within their study thought that playground football was rough, and since 'being nice' was a strong factor in securing female friends, the roughness of football

became a deterrent for girls' participation. Cahn (1994) and Wright (1995) suggest that for women and girls alike, physical activities that revolve around fitness and provide an alternative to competitive mainstream sports, provide a space where exercise can be enjoyed and does not create alienation. Yet, Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) argue that this once again emphasises difference and reaffirms essentialism. They maintained that physical activity participation for girls needs to go further than non-competitive fitness activities which simply reassert feminine appropriate exercise.

Despite the difficulties that came from the maintenance of sport as a male preserve, the rates of participation for women in sport have increased in recent years (Mansfield, 2006; Dunning, 1999; Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000). This is even the case within contact sports such as boxing, rugby, and bodybuilding whereby the obstacles have been most difficult to overcome (Dunning, 1999; Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000; Hargreaves, 2000). Additionally, some women have asserted the positive outcomes of sports participation for women and girls. Female responses to sports participation have included improved self-assurance, self-reliance and self-respect, illustrating the more complex nature of sport as an oppressive practice (Mansfield, 2006; Cahn, 1994), sport can be liberating (Clark and Paechter, 2007; Hargreaves, 2000; Cahn, 1994). Despite this, the degree to which men and women experience sports as restrictive or emancipatory is dependent upon the socially specific situation of an individual (Mansfield, 2006).

Broad (2001) explains how the female rugby players within her study used their chosen sport as a potential arena to resist traditional and accepted femininities. Azzarito (2010) describes how female athletes have come to portray strong athletic identities, something she recognises as 'alpha femininities'. She explains how girls can develop fit identities focused on success and physical accomplishments, aligning with work completed by Scraton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel Heras (1999), Theberge (2003), Heywood and Dworkin (2003), and Adams, Schmitke and Franklin (2005), who all suggest that high-level female athletes increasingly exhibit passion, dedication and ability. When exhibiting these traits, women are able to contest essentialist ideas which associate women with weakness and submissiveness (Ezzell, 2009), and challenge taken for granted 'natural' gender differences (Butler, 1998). This does not

mean to say that male superiority is soon to be a thing of the past (Messner, 1988; Clark and Paechter, 2007), but adults and children alike can challenge gender norms through sporting activities and participation (Hasbrook and Harris, 2000; Cahn, 1994).

Considering the oppression often discussed within sport, it would be wrong to assume that the dominance of men over women, the maintenance of the power of masculinity over femininity is a one way transmission. Similarly to the way in which power is not a static entity, women have the power of agency to resist norms and hegemonic values (Hargreaves, 2000). In this respect, some groups of women can be partially to blame for their continued subordination. Continued preservation and reaffirmation of the hegemonic gender structure, and the upheld normativity of the gender binary within sport, is somewhat reliant upon the consent and complicity of various women. In this respect, women are aiding their continued oppression (Laberge and Albert, 2000; Mansfield, 2006). For example, Ezzell (2009) describes how some of the female rugby players in his study identified with male dominants, dismissing *normal* women as passive and weak.

In addition to studies generally showing that girls tend to have less opportunity than boys to play sport (Cooky, 2009), they also demonstrate how different sports or physical activities are often categorised as female or male appropriate (Chalabaev, et al., 2013; Azzarito and Solomon, 2009; Macdonald, Rodger, Abbott, Ziviani and Jones, 2005; Adams, 2011). Velija and Kumar (2009) found that female GCSE students in their study described activities as girls' or boys' activities, demonstrating the explicit notion of gendered activities, and With-Nielson and Pfister (2011) also discuss how a girl in their study was reluctant to participate in 'boys' activities' in PE. Velija and Kumar (2009) explained how 'such gendering of activities is related to tradition and teacher ideologies about appropriate sports which give the girls the distinct impression that some sports, i.e. football is not a sport for them' (394). Research into female rugby has even shown how the two male coaches within this study made it clear to the female players that 'real' rugby players were men, and made it clear that the female version of the game was secondary to the superior male version. Hills and Croston (2011) recognise that binary thinking and discourse was reappearing throughout their student interviews. The notions of boys doing this, and girls doing that, were clearly



emphasising hetero- normative and hegemonic traits of masculinity and femininity, and the gender divide. This is emphasised through multiple studies which found that boys or men tend to like competition (Sirard, Pfeiffer and Pate, 2006; Warner and Dixon, 2015), whilst girls prefer the social aspect of sport (Sirard, Pfeiffer and Pate, 2006; Hills, 2007; Cooky, 2009). McDonagh and Pappano (2008), Tolvhed (2013) and Adams (2011) explain that it is due to the very fact that most sports are gender segregated, that differences between the sexes become taken for granted; strict gender binaries are then maintained. This is similar to assertions by Shilling (2004) and Young (2005) who argue that gendered bodies are shaped by, and also shape dominant gender discourses. Modern day competitive sports are said to 'reinforce a male model of (heterosexual) physical superiority, and at the same time, operate to oppress women through the trivialisation and objectification of their physicality and sexuality' (Mansfield, 2006: 1878). Bethes (2002) discusses how female athletes are sexualised, infantilised, trivialised and familiarised by the media, and other literature focuses strongly on the media influence in objectifying and sexualising female athletes with an unspoken accent on heterosexuality, whilst underplaying the sporting expertise of the athlete (Mansfield, 2006; Wright and Clarke, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000). Additionally, male athletes in female-appropriate sports and female athletes in male-appropriate sports are overlooked by the media (Bethes, 2002). Duncan and Hasbrook (2002) completed textual analysis into surfing and basketball media coverage, and they concluded that sport 'symbolically denies power to women' (91). They found that the media recognised female athletes with uncertainty, sometimes attributing key sporting characteristics such as strength and skill to them, and otherwise trivialising their performance or implying lack of suitability, effort or skill. Female surfers were often sexualised, and women's basketball was presented as the lesser sister to [male] basketball. Previous research demonstrates how, in hours of coverage, or number of words, female athletes and women's sport is greatly under-represented compared to their male counterparts (for example Birrell and McDonald, 2000; Rowe, 2004; Fuller, 2009; Duncan and Hasbrook, 2002). Azzarito (2009) argues that the images we see within the mass media of ideal masculine and feminine bodies influence social institutions such as school physical education. These images are usually unrealistic and reflect a homogenous body (Liimakka, 2011). She suggests that our society is full of

images and thus highly visible bodies which convey messages through the mass media, specifically mass media coverage of sports, health and fitness. In contrast to the power and influence of media discourse, it is argued that research into less commercialised, pre-media attention sports can provide an insight into the potential for unconventional gender relations within sporting spaces. Speculation is prevalent around the idea that men and women who are not fond of the values and philosophies within mainstream, mediated sports could, in fact, turn to nonmainstream sports in order to fulfil different gendered understandings (McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000).

Chalabaev, et al. (2013) recognise that expressive activities such as gymnastics and dancing have frequently been deemed as feminine, whilst sports that involve fighting have strongly been associated with masculinity. They suggest that the understanding of differences between the sexes are commonly shared within western culture and are adopted from early childhood. For example, research has shown how girls and boys embody gender appropriate physical activities and behaviour (Azzarito and Solomon, 2009). Research by Azzarito and Solomon (2009) found that girls rejected basketball within a specific school context since it was seen as a predominantly male practice which was not accepting of girls. Grindstaff and West (2006: 501) explain how female appropriate sports such as gymnastics and dance related activities are tightly bound to ideas that correspond to femininity and do not disadvantage the fact that women are 'naturally' weaker and slower than men. Additionally, within this study, participating in a 'female sport' meant that male cheerleaders were often assumed to be gay by people outside of the sport. Grindstaff and West's (2006) interview respondents explained how they had heard male cheerleaders being called a 'fag', a 'sissy', or a 'fairy' due to their participation (511). This is similar to research by Adams (2011) who found that male figure skaters were often considered 'gay' (63), and that figure skating was seen as a 'girls' sport' (64) or had a reputation as a 'sissies' sport (26). Due to this stereotype, a number of participants in Grindstaff and West's (2006) study were seen to express 'compensatory hypermasculinity', by emphasising heterosexuality. For example, one male cheerleader stated,

Football players roll around in the grass with other males, shower with each other, and slap each other on the butt... and then you look at me, I'm hanging around with some of the hottest, in-shape young ladies that the school has to

offer. I'm touching them and holding them in places you can only dream about. Now let me ask you, who's gay? (Sean in Grindstaff and West, 2006: 511).

Additionally, in a study by Clark and Paechter (2007) girls that went ahead and played football despite the dominance of boys, were often seen as deviating from the socially accepted norm of heterosexual femininity (Clark and Paechter, 2007). Plummer (2006: 135) also found that for the young men within his Australian study, 'homophobia appears to mark an intragender divide between appropriate peer-endorsed masculine behaviour and a lack of masculinity (a failure to measure up)', he went on to explain that, 'by making men fearful of transgressing its bounds and of being associated with the abominable 'Other,' homophobia provides a mechanism for patrolling developing masculinity – to the point that even dangerous and antisocial masculinities are positioned as preferable to this disgraceful alternative'.

Sexuality is often considered when theorising gender within sport (Mansfield, 2006), since there are not many institutions that reassert and uphold a male heterosexual power with the strength that sport does (Walk, 2000; Rowe, McKay and Miller, 2000). Within the literature, it is argued that heterosexuality is maintained as the acceptable norm in a sporting world, whilst homosexuality is seen as deviant and intolerable. Heterosexuality becomes common-sense and the notion of homosexuality is muted (Mansfield, 2006; Pronger, 2000). This heterosexism<sup>19</sup> is rife within sport, and ingrained into sporting structures (Hargreaves, 2000; Cahn, 1994). Many sports feminists insist that this heteronormativity and oppression of homosexuality plays an important role in the maintenance of women's oppression within a sporting context (Hargreaves, 2000; Cahn, 1994). The link between masculinity and sport, and thus the association between female athletes and 'butchness', has a firm link to deviant sexual preferences and lesbianism (Cahn, 1994).

Hall (2002) and Griffin (2002) assert that heterosexuality is closely linked with femininity. Girls and women are therefore expected to monitor the way that they look and act all of the time in fear of being considered homosexual, since any female that

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<sup>19</sup> Heterosexism is the term used to describe the 'oppressive system of dominance based on the pivotal idea that heterosexuality is the only 'natural' and valid sexual orientation and that homosexuality, in contrast, is 'abnormal', 'unnatural', 'deviant' and 'sinful' (Hargreaves, 2000: 134).

displays masculine gender is labelled a lesbian (Griffin, 2002). The heterosexism in sport asserts an intense burden on women, both homosexual and heterosexual, to emit heterosexuality in fear of being ridiculed (Hargreaves, 2000; Cahn, 1994). Despite these arguments, within the last twenty years an increased number of gay and lesbian athletes have 'come out', and many gay sports clubs, leagues and organisations continue to grow (Pronger, 2000). However, the improvements are not in the larger mainstream institution of sport and its ideologies (Pronger, 2000). Dashper (2012) argues that 'the presence of men and women in the same competitive context is important for beginning to break down the persistent homophobia of sport that contributes to the ongoing sporting subordination of both women and gay men' (1110).

There are various influential structures and actors that impact upon perceptions of gendered activities. Studies have demonstrated how parents (Warner and Dixon, 2015; Wellard, 2009) and physical education teachers (Chalabaev, et al., 2013) can impact upon gender-related understandings of children. Nevertheless, physical education classes are not enclosed spaces whereby the only transfer of knowledge is from the teacher to their students. Instead, PE provides a space where social norms and ideologies are learned and constructed, providing an intricate arena for development (Azzarito and Solomon, 2010; Wright, 1995).

#### *3.4.1 Influential Actors in Children's Sport/Physical Activity*

In a study completed by Fredricks and Eccles (2005), they concluded that stereotypical views and understandings of gender appropriate behaviour are often learned during childhood from those with strong influence, particularly parents. Yet it would seem from research conducted by Cooky (2009) that when parents were supportive with regards to their daughters' participation, transporting them to relevant places and staying to watch games or training sessions, the girls responded positively. Importantly, one girl within the study was particularly enthused by the parental support, explaining that 'when I win or lost [sic], they would tell me, 'Good job, you can do it next time.'" (Cooky, 2009: 269).

It is also interesting to note the gendered nature of parental involvement, in their children's sporting activities. Messner (2009) explains how his research within the US

led him to believe that mothers tended to become 'team moms' (who made banners and took part in supporting roles) whilst fathers tended to become assistant coaches (which involved refereeing games). Essentially, a 'sex category sorting process' (47) took place which allocated men and women to their most suited roles, and gender neutral terms such as 'team parent' or 'team manager' were not generally used. Additionally, within this research most head coaches were men, and the general consensus was that this was 'normal'. Messner (2009) also discusses the 'gender-sorting system' (95) which explains how masculine ways of coaching are more conducive to gaining the opportunity to coach boys and older/higher level juniors, this system valued more loud or aggressive types of teaching. Female (and 'narrowly masculine male') coaches are expected to use more of the empathetic and feminine coaching techniques, often meaning that they are only granted opportunities at younger level coaching, where sporting skill is not as crucial, and general engagement in the activity is promoted, even if their coaching technique is more effective (Messner, 2009). This showed similarities to a study by With-Nielson and Pfister (2011) who found that PE teachers reinforced the notion of male dominance in PE. They complied with 'normal' gender roles with the female teacher helping beginners and the male teacher taking the higher level students. Students also perceived the female and male PE teachers to expect higher levels of performance from boys compared to girls. This complies with a study by Wright (1995) who explains gender difference in PE teaching, with female teachers emphasising a discourse surrounding positive social interactions, and reasoning behind instructions, skills and activities in order to support personal growth and educational reasoning; whilst male teachers demonstrated a discourse simply asserting the acquirement of skills and the importance of competitive success. Within PE settings, physical activity is still understood in typically gendered ways (Azzarito, Solomon and Harrison, 2006), with girls often being viewed as 'the problem' within these settings (Flintoff and Scraton, 2001; Velija and Kumar, 2009). For example, Parker and Curtner-Smith's (2012) study in America, found that teachers are often agents reinforcing the same forms of male dominance and female compliance. In an attempt to motivate 'problem' female students, teachers used language that encouraged and persuaded them in a continuous flow of discourse, whilst discourse for boys consisted of limited direction whilst they were left to self-motivate (Wright, 1995). Yet, Nicaise, Bois, Fairclough, Amorose and Cogérino (2007) found that boys felt that

they received more negative feedback than girls within PE settings, and the boys also felt that teachers ignored them more than the girls. They also suggest that boys usually dominate interaction with the teacher during PE sessions, sometimes starting discussions in class in order to engage the teacher, often gaining negative feedback due to disruption in class time. Additionally, teachers were found to criticise girls less. Despite this, Cooky (2009) suggests that coaches hold agency within structures of sport, which can act to reproduce or resist cultural norms and structural organisation to some degree (Cooky, 2009). Cooky (2009) concludes that,

increasing structures of opportunity alone is not enough to achieve equality. This is because structures are imbued with meaning in part by the agency of the participants within those structures. In addition, structure is intricately linked with ideology, and ideology shapes the ways in which social actors interpret and make sense of their worlds (Cooky, 2009: 280)

Therefore, to create equal opportunities for participation for both sexes is not enough, as coaches, teachers and parents within these settings have understandings that they transmit to the participants.

These understandings often reflect notions of ability, with common assumptions that men are more 'able' than women. Hills and Croston (2012) suggest that 'discourses of gender were interwoven with other prevailing discourses around competition, ability, physicality and hetero-normativity. Untangling these discourses is crucial to efforts to undo gender' (602).

### **3.5 The Importance of Ability**

Clark (2012: 1179) argues that 'discourses of female sporting achievement are complicated by social constructs of 'ability' as a highly gendered and thus discriminatory sorting mechanism'. Wellard (2009) explains that, within social tennis playing, he found that, very able players and less able players, were managed by forming mixed sex teams, acting in the same way that pairing strong players with weaker players would. He also suggested that all players learnt where they fell within the ability hierarchy, with little opposition to their positioning. This was similar to a study by Hills (2007) who suggested that pupils recognised where they fell within a hierarchy, based on skill and ability, demonstrating 'scaling bodies' (a concept coined by Young, 2007). Their position in the hierarchy was made clear as captains chose players one by one for their teams, and

players could then realise how valuable their skilled, or relatively unskilled body was. Wellard (2009) continued to explain that certain learned codes of behaviour became apparent between mixed abilities/sexes such as,

the good male players would not try too hard, which meant, for example, not hitting the ball too hard or directly at the woman, or not playing a drop shot or acute angle which would be considered to be too far out of the reach of the female opponent (Wellard, 2009: 44).

Wright and Burrows (2006: 289) explain that ability can be considered as ‘the embodied capacities to perform movements that are located and valued because of their relationships with particular cultures and societies’. Whilst Hay (2012) suggests that ‘the enduring manifestation of a view of ability as differing degrees of talent or capacity to perform in sport, rather than as competence, is perhaps a consequence of its comfortable congruence with the practices and cultural characteristics of sport. These include the keeping of scores, the awareness of winners and losers and the celebration of and fascination with sporting excellence’ (87). Clark (2012) found that the girls investigated during her study illustrated how important ability discourses were when framing their choices with regards to sporting participation or physical activity, aligning with work by Wellard (2006, 2007), Wright and Burrows (2006), Evans, Rich, Allwood and Davies (2007) Hay and MacDonald (2010), Williams and Bedward (2002), and Azzarito and Solomon (2005) who assert that ‘ability’ contributes highly to sporting participation and perception of young people. Gender becomes particularly important here as Miller, Ogilvie and Branch (2008) explain how girls in their study questioned their ability more, whilst boys tended to overemphasise and exaggerate their ability (also see Clark and Paechter, 2007).

Evans (2006) asserted that when girls felt disconnected from physical education lessons, it was often due to a feeling of inadequacy when fulfilling the tasks at hand; a physical inability. Clark’s (2012: 1181) research into young secondary school girls also agreed that ability was often the perceived cause of marginalisation of girls in physical activity, ‘the current emphases of youth sport on ‘talent’ and ‘ability’ may be particularly exclusionary for young women as they operate within the gendered contexts of school and peer settings’. Clark also discussed how school spaces were impacted upon by wider social influences and held values related to masculinity, whilst

girls' bodies were attributed value related to how they looked, meaning that girls had to negotiate between discourses centred upon ability, and body shape and size. Clark (2012: 1190) suggested that 'sports participation was often seen to set girls apart from their peers and therefore the need to both prove one's physical abilities and to sustain social friendships and norms could be particularly difficult for girls'. To remedy the 'unable' identities that Clark argues that girls can experience through perceived exclusion from sports, adults and peers should continue to encourage girls in inclusive environments, making their physical enjoyment a priority during equitable participation. Hills and Croston (2012) also argued that 'the presence of able girls is potentially a form of resistance that challenges the pretence that girls and women are less skilled in sports as well as the perception that girls and boys cannot effectively do sports together'. They go on to explain that,

the potential importance of ability in interpreting girls' experiences provides a starting point for considering ways to 'undo gender' in the sense of potentially providing an expanded vision of female physicality and more effective cross-gender relationships (Hills and Croston, 2012: 595).

While a study by Wright (1995) suggested that boys approved of skilled girls that had similar approaches to them, a later study by Hills and Croston (2011) found that boys did not pass to girls in mixed PE classes, even if the girls were as skilled or better than the boys, instead, the boys still perceived them as inferior. Within their study, Hills and Croston (2011) state that some girls resisted traditional ideologies of femininity by asserting themselves to boys they were playing against, yet Azzarito and Solomon (2010) suggest that lower level or less skilled girls may continue to draw negative experiences from sport, thus deterring them from participation, potentially for life. PE lessons, on the whole, still bred customs of teasing and emphasised the importance of winning and skill (Hills and Croston, 2011).

Issues of ability, and taken for granted notions of male superiority are often reflected in the way in which sport is usually gender segregated. The common-sense idea that males and females need to be separated in competition is considered the norm in most sporting spheres.

### **3.6 Sporting Segregation of Men and Women**



Where there normally exists gender separation within sports, the male version of the sport is often the main focus with a larger cultural following (Tolvhed, 2013). Differences between men and women justify the division, as women can then be protected from the dominance of male athletes within competitive sporting spaces, who would otherwise wipe-out female athletes within competitive environments, leaving them with no place in sport (Dashper, 2012). Clark and Paechter (2007) agree and suggest that girls need segregation from boys' football in space and time that is their own, thus attributing them with some ownership. It is difficult to compare male and female sporting performance due to normalised gender segregation, and thus, general comparisons are made when considering directly measurable units, such as time and distance, where men often perform better than women (Chalabaev, et al., 2013). Grindstaff and West (2006) and Adams (2011) explain how sport reinforces 'natural' differences, emphasising physiological differences between the sexes, rather than focussing on specific gender regimens. It is harder to compare the performances of men and women within events that are less measurable, such as their performances in team sports and games that are not always objectively quantified in the way that many racing and athletic events are.

Equality in sport has previously concentrated on giving women equal opportunities but keeping them separate from men. Cooky (2009) explains how, to investigate whether efforts to improve gender equality have succeeded, researchers need to consider *whether* girls and women have been included in sports institutions, but also *how* they have been included. Perceived disparity between the sexes has meant that different sports are more readily accessible to different sexes, and rules and equipment difference are reflected in sex-specific formulations of games (Wachs, 2002; Cahn, 1994). Adams (2011: 197) explains how men and women are not only frequently separated in competition, but rules are often different for male and female competitors, 'In gymnastics women and men perform on different apparatuses. In golf, men's tees are further from the green. In tennis, men play more sets in the major tournaments. In hockey, women are not allowed to body-check'. Wachs (2002: 302) argues that 'in most sports, then, difference remains the base from which equality is provided'. As, in the USA, some sports such as Little League Softball have been adapted to 'accommodate'

girls' participation in sports, questions begin to arise regarding the reality of equality when there is also a visible and intentional division between girls and boys, or women and men (Messner, 2011; Wachs, 2002). Uncertainty arises from the claim of equality running alongside the reinforcement of difference, which is reaffirmed in games such as coed softball through rules that stress an equal number of men and women<sup>20</sup>, amongst other sex-based rules. Whilst asserting regulations that promote positive development for women, assertions of equal numbers of men and women also uphold notions of male superiority, with an underlying assumption that women need such rules in order to be selected for teams/squads (Wachs, 2002). Whilst researching adult softball teams, Wachs (2002) identified a number of rules that are aimed at 'assisting' female players with the implication that they would logically be inferior to the male players<sup>21</sup>. For example, all of the five leagues that she was studying ruled that teams could play with four men and six women, but not the reverse. In spite of the reaffirmation of gender essentialism that rules such as these may promote, they also reinstate the legitimacy of women to compete with men, and in turn women become visible in this context, experiencing and practising physical activity alongside men (Wachs, 2002; Hills and Croston, 2011).

The assumption of the superiority of the male physique somewhat fails to be challenged on a regular basis through the limited opportunity women have to perform directly against men. For example, within a school environment, Physical Education (PE) is often the only, or at least the most frequently reoccurring subject to be taught to boys and girls separately (Hills and Croston, 2011). Mixed or coed sport could arguably aspire to demonstrate intersections of equal gender performance and ability (Wachs, 2002; Messner, 2011). If boys have the opportunity to think of girls and women as equals, rather than subordinate others, then society as a whole could begin to improve (Messner, 2011). Anderson (2008) concluded that male cheerleaders who competed in mixed cheerleading environments had greater respect for female athletes,

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<sup>20</sup> Similarly korfbal emphasises difference by trying to create equality. This is especially significant with regards to the segregation of men and women within the game and the rules – men only mark men and women only mark women. This also begins to raise questions regarding degendering – it could be asserted that in its present form, korfbal supports gender binaries of men and women.

<sup>21</sup> For example the batting order rule that asserts an alternation of sex each time; the rover must always be female; and the two-base walk. See Wachs (2002) for more detail.

fuelled by the fact that they had to work with them directly to succeed. Seen in this light, mixed sports have the potential to de-gender sporting activities and bodily experiences, as well as combat gender inequalities (Laberge and Albert, 2000). Thorne (1993) argues that to remove binary thinking and notions of hegemonic masculinity and femininity, PE lessons should promote inclusive practice, equality between girls and boys, reflect cooperation and teamwork between all, and in turn visibly demonstrate to students that gender inclusivity is achievable, thus leaning towards a change in social thinking. Although coed sports are not a regular occurrence in the world of sport, sports such as coed softball can present a wonderful terrain on which to investigate gender, bodies, interactions, and how these aspects are played out through notions of equality and fairness, but also diversity (Wachs, 2002). Researching into cultures of mixed sports can help to uncover paradoxes as the struggle for equality confronts dominant and embedded gender ideologies (Wachs, 2002); relational studies would help to consider the reproduction of masculinities and femininities alongside, rather than independent of each other (McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000). In a study by Hills and Croston (2011) several girls, including girls with a lower ability, discussed mixed PE as being preferable, and suggested this works best when games are played that hold little significance as a 'boys' game' or a 'girls' game', for example, Dutch rounders was suggested by a female student, rather than football or netball.

Therefore, it may be that coed sports that are not pre-assigned a gender, may offer better chances of integration.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has recognized and discussed a range of key problems related to gender and sport. It has provided an academic context to the broader discipline that korfbal resides in, and has recognized findings from numerous examples of empirical research, as well as realizing theoretical explanations of gender within sport. Important themes that have emerged include the reproduction of gender difference through common biological discourses and notions of essentialism. These, in turn, have both led to, and continue to be reinforced by, taken for granted gendered traits, presentation of the body and actions, including participation in sports.

This chapter has also explored possible opportunities to resist gender norms within sport, acknowledging the performative nature of gender. As well as discussing the importance of media influence on preconceptions of specific sports, the influence of temporal and spatial contexts of sports, and the limitations that gender segregated sports provide with regards to improving gender equality. The research questions address whether korfbal can offer something different to traditional mediated sports, and whether it can achieve equality between the sexes and, or, gender neutrality. The mixed format of the game, with rules that arguably promote gender equality, provides a different space for sport to be practiced, away from mediated sports which somewhat enhance gender inequalities. This chapter has helped provide a context to which the findings from this research can be compared and discussed, when responding to the central research questions.

Having established a theoretical frame, the next chapter will describe and explain the methodological approach and methods used to collect data within this study. It will recognize contemporary discussions of methodology, and aim to justify why such an approach was undertaken in this research. It will also provide a description of the research site –the korfbal club - as well as participants within this study. It will also provide a detailed description of research process including data collection, analysis and the importance of reflexivity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Methodological Considerations**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Having presented literature and findings from previous empirical studies related to gender and sport in chapter three, as well as providing a background to korfball and the values embedded in its creation in chapter one, and an acknowledgement of relevant theoretical explanations which will be used to help explain and theorise findings in this study in chapter two, this chapter will go on to discuss the research process undertaken and methodological considerations within this study. While the previous chapters provide a context, this thesis aims to discover to what extent korfball provides a space for gender equity, and the intention is to explore *in* the field in order to generate further knowledge about gender and korfball by exploring the experiences of 'others'. To respond more thoroughly to my research questions, I needed to capture the experiences of those taking part in korfball. Consequently, this thesis has aimed to explore junior korfball players' perceptions of gender within the sport, as framed by research questions in the introduction to this thesis. As indicated in the introduction, the research questions are as follows:

- 1) How successful is junior korfball at attaining sporting equality between the sexes?
- 2) Does junior korfball promote gender neutrality?
- 3) Can korfball offer an alternative culture and different values to traditional, mainstream, mediated sports?
- 4) Do the original aims of korfball maintain relevance/influence in the game today?

This chapter explores the epistemological and ontological positions adopted within this study, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis considered most appropriate in order to gain data that helps respond to the study's research questions. This chapter will also detail the participants within the study, explains the research process, as well as excerpts from my research diary drawing on reflections

during the data collection and analysis phase.

#### **4.1 Introduction to Qualitative Research**

In considering the focus of this research, methodologies that reveal the rich meanings and lived realities of these participants are most appropriately employed. As Vidich and Lyman (2000) remind us, qualitative research was born out of the need to understand 'the other' and has evolved to become an umbrella term used for methodologies that recognise the complexity and multidimensionality of human life. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 4) define qualitative approaches to research as 'a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible'. For them, emphasis is placed on uncovering the subjective experiences of individuals within their social worlds:

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 5).

Certain philosophical assumptions underpin qualitative research. Rather than adopt a realist or external ontology that assumes a singular objective reality exists independent of the person (as would be the case in quantitative approaches), a 'relativist' or 'internal' ontological position is adopted that recognises that the world and how we understand it is constructed by people (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Gubrium and Holstein, 2008; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This approach allows social reality to be seen as 'fluid and multifaceted' and for multiple subjective realities to exist (Sparkes and Smith, 2014: 11). Importantly, for the discursive framework employed in this study, this ontological position maintains that although individuals are acted upon by a number of social forces, behaviour is not always understood as a result of causal relationships. Rather, individuals have the potential to demonstrate agency and respond to normalising or oppressive forces in active ways (Moses and Knutsen, 2007).

In terms of epistemology (the nature of knowledge) and questions concerning the nature of the relationship between the knower, or would-be knower, and those involved in the study, qualitative researchers propose a '*subjectivist, transactional and constructivist*' position (Sparkes and Smith, 2014: 8; emphasis in original). What is studied is not independent of researchers, but inseparable from what is being studied

(Smith, 1989). Importantly, qualitative research is participative, positioning the researcher in the world of 'the other' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Indeed, the researcher themselves is seen as the main 'instrument' throughout the entire investigative process from gathering and analysing data, making interpretations, and making decisions on how best to represent findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). As Sparkes (1994, cited in Curtner-Smith, 2002) illuminates, in qualitative research:

throughout the whole process of investigation it is the researcher who is the primary research tool and the main data gathering, collecting, analysing and interpreting instrument [...] interpretive research is an intensely interactive and personal process of engagement that relies heavily on the social skills and creative capacities of the researcher rather than a set of technical competencies (Sparkes, 1994, cited in Curtner-Smith, 2002: 14).

These philosophical assumptions inform how qualitative researchers understand and represent the world in which they and others live. For Sparkes and Smith (2014) qualitative research is characterised by:

- A focus on meanings, context and process
- Engaging with others and interacting extensively with them in their natural settings
- A reflexive stance is adopted throughout all phases of the research
- Textual data are prioritised as is purposeful sampling and naturalistic generalisations
- The use of both inductive and deductive reasoning
- A tolerance for complexity and flexible research designs

These philosophical assumptions and characteristics inform a number of traditions that operate as 'qualitative research'. These include ethnography, phenomenology, life history and narrative studies, grounded theory, and critical or openly ideological research (Cresswell, 1998). These approaches are concerned with capturing the 'essence of experience' (Wolcott, 2005: 2) and are generally concerned with empirical data collection that elucidate and analyse people's words, views, and actions within naturalistic settings. Materials are often multiple (Flick, 1998) and may include ethnographic fieldwork (observations, interviews, archival data), case studies, reports, media representations and interactional and visual texts. Resultantly, an analogy of a

*Bricoleur* has been used (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) to recognise multiple interpretive practices used by qualitative researchers to piece together complex and layered social realities. In this study, therefore, multiple methods and methodological approaches are used in an attempt to 'secure in depth understanding' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 8) of junior korfbal players' experiences, behaviours and gender constructions. As will now be discussed, I mainly draw upon ethnographic and openly ideological research in responding to the current dearth of empirical evidence on junior korfbal players.

## 4.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is an investigative practice used to describe a group of people or culture. The researcher immerses themselves in the worlds of those being studied. Ethnography is therefore a highly participative and personalised process that occurs within naturalistic settings. According to Wolcott (2005), ethnographic methods are multiple but involve participant observation, interviews and analysis of archival research. For him, it is the role and responsibility of the fieldworker to 'portray experience' (5). Importantly, in order to attempt any meaningful interpretation, the ethnographer must become part of the others' social world for a credible period of time. For O'Reilly (2012) therefore, ethnography is best understood as:

...a practice that evolves in design as the study progresses; involves direct and sustained contact with human beings, in the context of their daily lives, over a prolonged period of time; draws on a family of methods, usually including participant observation and conversation; respects the complexity of the social world; and therefore tells rich, sensitive and credible stories (O'Reilly, 2012: 3).

Ethnographic fieldwork is, therefore, a deeply human, holistic and dialogic process that aims to capture 'the fuzziness' of human experience (Agar, 1996) and offers much strength in uncovering the lived realities of junior korfbal players. As Sands (2002: xix-xx) suggests, ethnography has the power to 'open up vistas of cultures and groups inaccessible to other qualitative methodologies'. Ethnography was particularly useful and relevant for this study for the following reasons:

- I. It helped respond to the empirical dearth of knowledge on junior korfbal players
- II. As research was conducted *with* children, rather than *upon them*, which has been a critique of previous investigations (Barker and Weller, 2003), junior



korfball players were included in the construction of knowledge

- III. As interactions took place within naturalistic settings, ethnographic interviews and casual conversations could be recorded
- IV. As I began to further understand (and comply) with the accepted norms within the korfball culture, my presence became normal and I stopped standing out (I was not unnoticed as such, as I was still visible as an adult/coach). Sands (2002: 22) describes this process as becoming 'culturally invisible by becoming culturally similar'
- V. What participants said could be checked with behaviours and performances acted out in the field
- VI. Rich accounts were collected as they happened
- VII. Quiet or silenced voices could be explored through addressing what is being done rather than what is being said. This is particularly useful in research with children who may not be able to adequately articulate their experiences.
- VIII. From the richness of the data collected, a variety of investigations could be explored in response to emerging results (Wolcott, 1999).

Considering these merits, ethnography was considered uniquely positioned to investigate the gender perceptions of junior korfball players and discover whether korfball can promote gender equality within sports settings. The main field site for this research was a junior korfball club in which I immersed myself for 12 months.

#### *4.2.1 Access*

I have a long involvement in korfball cultures having started playing at a junior level when I was 13 years old, and subsequently playing for two senior korfball teams and for the county representative side. During this time, I had previously built a close friendship with the Chairman of the club (Peter) that formed the focus of the research. Peter acted as the central 'gatekeeper' who was prominent in granting me initial access to the setting and providing me with support in gaining relevant information (Cresswell, 1998; Berg, 2004). As Sands (2002) identified, building a close and sustained rapport with a gatekeeper is important and helped reveal new participants, emerging phenomena, and further territories for investigation.

Although I had not played korfball for several years, my knowledge of the game (acquired through experience at both junior level and senior level) along with my association with Peter eased my access into the senior team where I began to play once again. In doing so, I was introduced to the junior team manager (Ruth) who also played on the senior team. In turn, Ruth introduced me to the Head Coach of the junior team (Zoe) with whom I later met in order to discuss the potential for research and to outline the aims and objectives of the study. Zoe was a schoolteacher looking to do her Master's Degree and appreciated academic research, and the need for research in the area. Ruth was also the team manager for the under 14s national side, and she invited me to help chaperone the national juniors to a tournament in Belgium. This gave me the opportunity to gain standing in junior korfball settings in general.

One evening in September 2011, Zoe introduced me to the junior team as an experienced korfball player who would help the coach during training, and would support the team at matches and tournaments along with the coaches and parents. Knowledge of this background assisted my integration through explicitly highlighting my usefulness to the group, and providing a certain amount of kudos and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Furthermore, these access roles allowed me to get 'up close and personal' with junior players on court as well as opening up numerous further social spaces for data gathering, including on transport to and from games and tournaments, mingling with parents on the side of the court, during annual socials such as bowling at Christmas and the end of season party. The end of season party was for everyone involved in the club, which meant there were some difficulties with regards to data collection. The parents of the juniors assumed that I would be socialising with them; they offered me drinks and engaged me in 'adult' conversations, whilst the junior players found their own space to socialise, away from the eyes and ears of adults. This was not a problem during the bowling social, as the space was a lot smaller and fewer parents attended. I found it easy to mix with the juniors in this setting, but parents were also very near (they were stood just behind the lanes, but in earshot if they wanted to listen).

#### *4.2.2 The Korfball Club*

The main site for research was a junior korfball club located in the South East of England

that participated in a regional league. The team were labelled as 'Under 13s', but ages ranged from 11 to 13 years of age. Most junior players joined as a result of playing korfball at an after school club, or because siblings played. All junior players in this study were white and predominantly middle class. When discussing korfball with a senior player, she explained how korfball was perceived to be a sport for the white middle class, possibly as a result of its strong university level following (which is where many of the senior team players first played it). The korfball club was established in the late 1940's, initially as a sports club for adult players, and has since become a well-established and successful club in terms of longevity and sustainability. The club was relatively large, with six adult teams (therefore in excess of 60 active senior players), and junior teams playing at under 19's, under 16's, under 13's, under 11's and under 9's level. There are three junior coaches, the junior head coach was female (Zoe), and the other two coaches were male (David and Frank). Zoe was an ex-first team player who temporarily stopped playing due to injury, and therefore got involved with junior training. David is also the club's head coach and an international coach. Frank is a large man with a long history of korfball knowledge and previous experience, but is no longer a player; his size limits his movements even as a coach.

The under 13's team had six girls regularly attending training (only five of which were involved in competition), and six boys regularly attending training and matches. Training took place once a week on a Thursday for an hour and a half, and matches took place on sporadic Sundays during league time, which runs from October to May. One or two day tournaments also took place occasionally over weekends throughout the summer, during 'out of season' months. These tournaments included a number of shorter matches, often 20 minutes, spread throughout the day, rather than league or cup matches which usually consisted of two halves of 25 minutes. The general feel of tournaments was different from league or cup matches, with a more relaxed attitude of enjoyment taking over the sometimes aggressively competitive match situations.

#### *4.2.3 The Sample/Participants*

Korfball is a mixed sex sport, so both boys and girls participated in the team. Below is an introduction to some of the key participants that emerged as the study progressed:

- Charlie (13) was one of the best players in the under 13's and therefore played

for the under 16's too. His younger sister also played in the under 13's (Lorraine), and their mum was one of the parents that sat on the sideline during training and matches. Interview data demonstrated that he knew that he was one of the best male players in that team.

- Lee (13) was also one of the best players in the under 13's and therefore played for the under 16's too. He also had a younger sister who played in the under 13's (Lucy), and their mum sat on the sideline with the other parents but although confident, was generally quieter than many of the other parents. He appeared to be more mature than most of the other under 13 players, maybe due to his age, and he seemed charming towards older female players at times.
- James (11) had less korfbal ability. His dad played in the senior team, but not at a high level, and he was the only father that sat with the mums and watched from the sidelines, forming an integral part of the parental group, but as the only male. James was much quieter than most other players, and physically a lot slower. James demonstrated a lack of confidence and a general shyness.
- Ralph (11) was an average player with no other family members participating in korfbal, but his mum was one of the louder parents on the sidelines. He was the one character that would be inclined to mess around during training and could be seen to be a bit of a joker, which often got him in trouble with the coaches.
- Lilly (11) was a lower ranking girl that did not play every match. Her older brother played in an older junior team, so I think she attended because it was easy. She was a bit of a 'tomboy', often wearing shorts during matches rather than skirts, and sometimes during matches too (unlike the other girls). She was definitely one of the quieter girls.
- Sophie (11) was the ablest female korfbal player, and the best player when Lee and Charlie were playing in a higher age category. She was also part of the national Academy (meaning that I got to know her a bit more than some of the others through my trip to Belgium with the national Academy). Her mum (Ruth) was the team Manager and a senior level korfbal player, and also the key adult in the sideline parents group. Her dad was also a senior player, and

her older sister played for the under 16's team (and national under 16's). She did not tend to mess around and clearly took her korfbal development seriously. She was a confident player.

- Lorraine (11) was the second best female player in the team, after Sophie. She was Charlie's younger sister, so her mum was one of the sideline parents. She was bubbly and 'girly' most of the time, cartwheeling around at training, but she was also sporty, capable and confident playing korfbal and in general.
- Gemma (11) was a competent female player who had skills from netball, a sport which I think she favoured. She had an older brother that played in an older junior team, and her mum was one of the quieter parents from the sideline parents group. She was extremely confident and would talk to anyone: adult or junior player.
- Lucy (11) was a competent female player who was sporty and capable, and her older brother was Lee, so her mum was part of the sideline parents. She seemed confident on the pitch at training amongst her friends, but less so in matches or when in a situation with people she did not know. She was easily led astray and messed around during training if someone else instigated it, but if left alone would try hard and concentrate.

As Wolcott (2005) suggests, ethnographies utilise relatively small sample numbers and are usually more concerned with the length of time the research takes place. Long-term, personal relationships were developed with the sample of participants, which Wolcott (2005: 60) emphasises is the 'rationale for the whole endeavour'.

### **4.3 Data Gathering Techniques**

Although the field was entered with the objectives of discovering if korfbal could provide examples of gender equality in sport, alternative avenues and methods for investigation arose as the study emerged. The following methods were used throughout the complex and unstructured terrains of data collection:

#### *4.3.1 Participant Observation*

Participant observation, or 'the act of perceiving the activities and interrelationships of people in the field setting' (Angrosino, 2007: 3), is central to ethnographic research.

In particular, I concentrated my observations on the following:

- I. Interactions and actions within korfball cultures, including the social dynamics between junior players and players; coaches and players; players and parents; coaches and parents
- II. Particular comments and performances relating to gender and sex
- III. Interpretations of individual players
- IV. The impact of certain events on certain players

I used Sands' (2002) guidance when completing observational field notes; I recorded a description of the day's events including what was said and what types of behaviours were exhibited. In particular, I attended to dominant cultural scenes and phenomena such as the way in which coaches and players were very tactile with each other; something that I considered unusual at a time when moral panic surrounds the way in which nonrelated adults touch children in their care, yet it was apparent that this was very normal in this environment. Parents were not visibly worried, it was a frequent occurrence, and it happened with many female players and all of the coaches, it was not gender specific to coaches. 'Scratch notes' (Sands, 2002) were made on pieces of paper or on my phone whilst *in the field* and after important encounters with others. I dated these notes and wrote them up as more 'detailed notes' (Berg, 2004) as soon as possible. Often, I would add a description to these notes from recent memories.

Alongside my field notes, I also maintained a research diary where I reflected on observations, making personal impressions, feelings and theoretical and methodological notes. The following is an example excerpt from my research diary, dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011:

*I am sitting on the bench at the side of the training pitch. Ralph and Lucy are sat near me, watching the training match that is going on, and waiting to be subbed in. Ralph is having a conversation with Lucy, it is initially korfball related. Soon, though, he switches the conversation to the way that Sophie looks, exclaiming: 'Sophie might be bossy but she's got a nice pair of legs'. Lucy retorts with: 'you're so weird'. I can see Lucy squirm in her seat as Ralph casually and easily comments on Sophie's legs, she looks uncomfortable with the conversation and clearly does not know how to respond, so does so with an insult. I get the impression that the insulting response is a defensive reaction to a situation that she does not want to be in, one where she does not really know*

*what the right or appropriate thing to say might be. Ralph quickly switches his attention back to the game, still talking to Lucy he converses: 'James, that was the best goal he has ever done, I give credit to that'. I can quickly see how at ease Ralph is with girls, and how confident he is to declare his opinions and feelings about the way that other girls look. On the other hand, I get the impression that Lucy is less confident in a situation where someone from the opposite sex is relaying opinions of desirable looks. She assumes a more awkward, unease of the unknown (the immature desire between boys and girls) which I would expect from this age range. I find myself shocked at Ralph's ease, yet complacent about Lucy's response.*

The reflections in my research diary were particularly useful when I experienced 'culture shocks' in the field. According to Agar (1996), this arises when the ethnographer is suddenly thrust into the unfamiliar life worlds of others. Although in many ways I was able to empathise with junior korfbal players due to my previous participation as a junior korfbal player, there were times that I needed to remind myself of the world through a child's eyes. For example, considering an excerpt from my research diary, dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011:

*There is a match going on at the end of the training session. I am watching from the sidelines, with Frank (the coach), cheering on players when they make a good move. Lorraine is marking Sophie very tightly, and as Sophie attempts to pass the ball to a teammate, it is intercepted by the opponents. Frank shouts over to Sophie: 'you panicked! You panicked and did a bad pass!' Sophie responds to Frank by grumpily shouting back: 'I don't even know why we are doing this! There's no point!', and then she starts crying. She pulls her top up from her belly to her face and leans into the wall with her top covering her face. Her mum comes over and cuddles her, telling her to come and get a drink and they walk to the other side of the hall. I could see that Lorraine was marking her well, and the players on Sophie's team were not providing her with good opportunities to pass to them, I suspect that she was frustrated and angry, rather than sad.*

As an adult, my immediate feeling was that Sophie was massively overreacting by crying as a response to a bad pass and a comment from the coach. To try to better understand from the perspective of Sophie, an 11-year-old, female korfbal player, who was normally one of the best players in the team, I had to place myself in her position. I had to try to better understand the situation through her eyes, realising that her team were not offering her opportunities, understanding that Lorraine was doing a very good job of marking her when she was used to being the best girl on the pitch, and recognising that the comment from the coach only served to highlight her inability to deal with the current situation. I had to understand her frustration, which she could

clearly not contain, and resulted in crying.

#### 4.2.3 Interviews

Interviews for research should be seen as a 'conversation with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102). Interviews, therefore, seek to reveal individuals' 'thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and experiences' by asking them questions (Taylor, 2005: 39). Through supplementing observations with semi-structured interviews, it was hoped that deeper meaning of junior korfbal players could be illuminated. This is particularly important for Atkinson (1998):

I have felt that it is important, in trying to understand others' positions in life or description of themselves and their relation to others, to let their voices be heard, to let them speak for and about themselves first. If we want to know the unique experience and perspective of an individual, there is no better way to get this than in the person's own voice (Atkinson, 1998: 5).

The interview strategy I employed resonated with the empirically driven nature and theoretical framework of the study through employing both ethnographic interviews (in the field) and extended semi-structured interviews in mediated settings:

- I. ***Ethnographic interviews:*** Interviews have traditionally been pre-arranged affairs, often occurring outside of naturalistic settings. However, conducting interviews whilst in the field can yield highly meaningful data (see Gurium and Holstein, 2009). Informal interviews in the form of casual conversations were therefore held 'live' in the field. This was a particularly useful strategy when seeking information from junior players as data was collected in small, manageable sound bites in settings familiar to the child rather than a long, daunting and potentially tiresome interview in unfamiliar formal settings. Furthermore, researchers have previously documented the power relationships between adult researchers as 'expert knowers' interviewing children (see section on Field Relationships). Conducting more casual interviews in the field allowed children to feel more comfortable than they may have done in a formal interview situation. For example, Ralph and James used this environment to talk about chat up lines that they had used on girls at school, and I was able to talk to them about this. Additionally, it also gave the opportunity to have group conversations where the interactions of children could be observed outside of



korfball training or in a match situation. This happened one time when I was talking to Lorraine and a number of other players came over. We started a conversation that led them to discuss homosexuality and portray their understandings and feelings about the subject.

- II. ***Semi-structured interviews:*** Mediated Interviews supplemented ethnographic inquiry acting as an open invitation for extended narrative. These more formal interviews were useful as they provided an opportunity to check my interpretations of phenomena, allowing for sensitive or embarrassing subjects to be discussed in further detail, and creating settings where differences between articulated opinions and actions became evident (Kvale, 2007). A semi-structured interview guide was adopted that attempted to embellish rather than detract from participant's own stories or venture toward preconceived theoretical ideas (appendix one). Questions were based on previous observations during my time conducting the study, and research literature in the field. As Wolcott (2005) suggests, questions were short and to the point and were designed to initiate prolonged, unguided responses. Periods of silence were allowed for reflection. Interviews were planned around a few big issues that were initiated by 'grand tour questions' (Spradley, 1979) and subsequently broken into sections that aimed to elicit stories around particular themes relating to gender (Patton, 2002). In order to better understand children and represent an accurate account of their everyday lives, researchers have adopted participatory techniques that are innovative, fun and resonate with children's own concerns and routines (O'Kane, 2000). As observations progressed and new ideas generated, further transcripts were constructed. Considerations of Wolcott's (2005) interviewing techniques were taken into account, for example, I recognised that listening was an active role as I checked for meaning.

Interviews were completed face-to-face with six girls and four boys and were recorded using a dictaphone. Participants were formally interviewed once, approximately 10 months into the study. This timeframe was useful as I had the opportunity to build

rapport with the players and put them at ease. It also meant that I could discuss certain events that had happened during the time I had been conducting my ethnography with the players. Finally, I had some knowledge of each child so I could act around them in a way that would mean they felt at ease and would encourage honesty. For example, some of the boys were shyer, such as James, whilst Ralph would happily talk about girls in quite a sexual manner, and would easily divulge information about korfball love triangles and relationships. Berg (2004) emphasises that the length of an interview is relative to the interview scenario or environment and that the interview must focus on significant issues. For her, a succession of short interviews may best fit in with research settings, especially when conducting more fluid ethnographic interviews. Within this study, interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 45 minutes, after which time players often demonstrated evidence of being bored and wanting to get back to their friends. Interviews took place either at training, before the session formally started (as many players arrived very early) or, most frequently, during breaks between games at tournaments.

#### *4.3.3 Interviewing Children*

Discrepancies in age between myself as the researcher and the child participants was particularly important to examine in interviews. Mayall (2008: 110) contends that children generally believe that a 'central characteristic of adults is that they have power over children'. Relationships of power between myself and child participants, and the construction of knowledge, therefore, need elucidating further. For example, I was reflexively aware that my education, training and experience as a researcher; my being an 'adult' may risk positioning me as the 'expert knower' or in a 'one up' position assumed by the scientific hypothesis tester (Agar, 1996). However, by implicitly adopting this position in research practices without considering the contextualised epistemological knowledge through which the child participant has constructed an understanding of the world, there is a danger of generalising experience, incorrect interpretation and exploitation<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, this would have an influence on what and how articulations were made in interviews. As a result, I made attempts to assume

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<sup>22</sup> The privileged position of being an adult researcher brings with it a moral responsibility that should be taken seriously, which I reflect upon in section 4.5.

a 'one-down' position (Agar, 1996), meaning that I took a subordinate role during interviews. Here, power was repositioned and the opportunity was made for the junior player to lead the conversation. Below is an excerpt from the semi-structured interview with Gemma, which demonstrates how we started talking about the difference between boys and girls and her understanding of physical strength differences, and how she moved the conversation on to discuss how she felt when boys or girls cried as a result of a korfbal interaction:

*Interviewer: So do you think that boys are stronger then?*

*Respondent: Some boys, like James isn't, because if you like touch his face he'll start crying, and Michelle, Michelle is like really tall and everything and she's acts all strong but if someone says something to her like meanly, she will start crying.*

*Interviewer: What do you think about that, about those two crying if you say anything mean?*

*Respondent: Because like, when just then like, Michelle started crying because Ruth told her off for doing mean faces at Frank when he gave her some advice about passing into people, I think she passed it over their head and a girl caught it and then, erm... so Frank said 'don't just rely on your height' and then she was like grrr and did a face at him, like a mean one, and then, so, so Ruth came over and said, I think, 'that's damn rude that you did that in front of Frank's face, he was just giving you some advice', erm, and then she started crying. If that was me, yeah I'd feel a bit sad, and then I'd say sorry to Frank, sorry to Ruth as well, and then I wouldn't start going off crying and getting a strop.*

*Interviewer: I see... what do you think about that then?*

*Respondent: Erm, I think it's just a bit strange.*

Agar (1996) reminds us that the ethnographer is often seen as a 'child' themselves:

The ethnographer is also part of an asymmetrical relationship, especially at the beginning of her work. The difference is that she, not the informant, is in the "one down position". This initial one-down position is reflected in two of the metaphors ethnographers sometimes use to explain themselves – *child and student* [...] both child and student are learning roles; they are roles whose occupants make mistakes, which is perfectly acceptable as long as they don't continue to make the same ones (Agar, 1996: 119).

Furthermore, taking a 'one up' non-reflexive approach to interviews further

problematizes some of the assumptions of the knowledge generated from this method. Indeed, the validity of the interview alone as a method has been subjected to considerable criticism in recent times. As Kellehear (1993: 1) suggests 'There is today, in social science circles, a simple and persistent belief that knowledge about people is available simply by asking. We ask people about themselves and people tell us'. Indeed, for Atkinson and Silverman (1997: 248) this has resulted in the formation of the 'interview society'. Therefore, many scholars have critiqued interviews as a one dimensional and assumptive method of attaining knowledge that are employed for ease of use by novice researchers (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Kvale, 2007; Markula and Silk, 2011; Taylor, 2005), with some suggesting that interviews objectify and manipulate respondents, treating them as 'numbers rather than individual human beings' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 373).

The assumption that children will tell me how they feel is particularly important to critique. James was very shy with me throughout the study, and even during his interview which was particularly short compared to the others. It was not until the very end of my time with them that he started to open up to me, such as the time he used tournament downtime to discuss with me chat up lines that he used on girls at school. It was worth considering whether the male-female relationship that I had with the boys in my study may have impacted upon their reactions to me, as a female in her late twenties. I did not ever get the impression that the boys in the study thought of me as anything other than an adult more akin to their mothers, than any kind of love interest. The boys talked about girls their own age and relationships in a very fickle way, with Ralph explaining how he went out with one female player for five minutes, and describing the complex, very short term, relationships that they had all had between them. Alternatively, I felt that Sophie, one of the players I spent the most time with, was more mature when talking to me, maybe because I knew her mother, or maybe because we had spent more time together when she attended adult training and when I saw her during the national trip to Belgium. Yet, even with this enhanced relationship, I could not assume that she would tell me everything that I wanted to know, for example, other players told me how her and Shane (a player from another team) had feelings for one another, yet she did not disclose this to me when I asked her about

relationships and love interests of players in the team. Therefore, considering some of the highlighted issues of inviting children to mediated interviews, it was important to recognise that these interviews supplemented ethnographic interpretation.

Like all human interactions, interviews are subject to many questions of power and resistance (Nunkoosing, 2005) and are 'inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically, and contextually bound' (Fontana and Frey, 2008: 117) which presented many difficulties in distinguishing truth from authenticity. Constant questions that I asked myself were:

- I. How does the intimacy of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee affect what is discussed? Am I coach/adult/friend of parent/club korfball player? Ultimately, I am not in their group due to our age difference.
- II. How does the child's grasp of language and storytelling capabilities influence what is said? Including their understanding of gender experiences.
- III. How does embodiment (my gendered, white, adult, heterosexual body and the embodied experiences of the interviewee) affect interactions? I presented myself in sportswear to try and embrace similarity.
- IV. How much of what is said is an insight into the self or a replication of culture and expectations of what the interviewer may want to hear?
- V. How would responses change over time? Taking into account age and maturity, experiences and interactions inside and outside of korfball, and ever stronger rapport with me.
- VI. How does the interview environment influence what is being said? Some semi-structured interviews were conducted on the side of the pitch whilst other players took shots and ran around before training started. Interviews at tournaments were more informal and natural, resembling conversations rather than questioning. The informal nature meant that others sometimes joined in, but that was often advantageous as I could see their interactions with each other. Here is an example from the end of Ralph's interview:

*Ralph: No he punishes them because kind of like he wants us to be the best but I think he needs to learn that we can't become the best instantly but over time*

*[Lorraine and Sophie walk over]*

*Lorraine: Ralph you do realise that Sophie...*

*Sophie: I think she's recording it*

*Lorraine: Yeah I know*

*Sophie: Oh*

*Lorraine: [laughs, then talks to Ralph] nosey, let me get it [she is talking about Ralph's phone, which they have been using]*

*Sophie: I deleted it, I was texting all the way up though, yeah, [she talks to Ralph] and then they said it was you*

*Ralph: Ok, shoo shoo shoo shoo, this is my moment. Ok carry on.*

*Interviewer: [laughs and then asks Sophie] so... what? You've done what? You've written I love...*

*Lorraine: Lorraine!*

*Sophie: Ralph gave me his phone*

*Ralph: and this leads on to the other question of boyfriend/girlfriend, I thought we were just kind of like having a joke about really. Yeah, erm, that's just what I think really.*

*Interviewer: How did you feel Lorraine when err, he err, when you first thought that Ralph was the one to say that he loves you? [As opposed to it being a joke that Sophie instigated]*

*Lorraine: I wanted to punch him in the face! Ralph: Oh you're nice!*

*Interviewer: [laughs]*

*Lorraine: [laughs] I actually did*

*Ralph: I would never do that*

*Sophie: She wanted to punch you in the face all because of me [laughs]*

*Interviewer: [laughs]*

*Ralph: You're nice Sophie*

Attention was therefore paid to the uniqueness of interaction and not idealising interviews as 'the way into 'lived experiences' or the true, absolutely reliable understanding of the interviewee' (Markula and Silk, 2011: 82). Indeed, as a result of these anxieties, there has, in recent times, been a move to see interviewers as an active, collaborative and dialogic process that is dependent on situation and context

(Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Fontana and Frey, 2008; Holstein and Gubrium, 2003; Sin, 2003). Interviews may, therefore, move away from objectifying and pathologising origins to become a 'method of friendship' (Fontana and Frey, 2008: 240), where the very act of sharing stories develops social bonds that make it more difficult to marginalise people (Denzin, 1997). For example, during informal interviews and conversations, Gemma and I bonded over her broken arm as we had both broken bones playing korfbal (I broke a bone in my foot during a match as a junior player); I also built bonds with Sophie as I spent a lot of time with her on a weekend trip to Belgium with the national Academy. We sat together on the coach there and back and played with photos on the iPad, I talked to her in the stands of the korfbal stadium, and therefore I built a friendship with her during these informal interviews.

#### *4.3.4 Transcription*

Interviews were transcribed verbatim at the first opportunity after each interview (see example transcription appendix two). Emphasis was placed on the significance of how things were said in addition to what was said, so notes of silences, pauses, laughter, and facial expressions were noted in order to truly represent the data collected.

### **4.4 Field relationships**

Although participative research holds many advantages, it also raises multiple methodological and analytical considerations which I discuss here. Throughout, I maintain acknowledgement of my own body in the field, including presentations of my own gender constructions and performances.

#### *4.4.1 Researcher Roles*

Within the field, the ethnographer has important decisions to make on the level of interactivity, and his or her effect on the production of social behaviours. Roles range from non-participant observation where the researcher participates from the 'outside' to participant-observer where the researcher is active in the phenomena being studied (see Table 1).

<b>Participant Observer Role</b>	<b>Description of Role</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Complete participant	Wholly concealed, thus covert. The researcher is as an ordinary participant with total immersion in the culture, or already a member of the group that they decide to study.	Allows study of otherwise inaccessible environments. 'Experience' the environment.	The researcher is involved in existing social practices and expectations, which can be limiting.  Hard to optimise all data collection opportunities.  May 'go native'
Participant-as-observer	Overt. The researcher is a fully functioning participant first, and an observer second.	Allows questioning and investigation.	May 'go native'.  Challenging to retain detailed information.
Observer-as-participant	Overt. Observation with little participation. Often mainly an interviewer.	Can set the context for interviews. Can offer a level of detachment if needed in research	Risk of not gaining a deep enough understanding of the setting and people within in.
Complete observer	Covert or overt. Researcher has no contact/interaction with participants.	Useful for certain phases of fieldwork.	Questioning may be impossible. Limits what can be observed and rigorously tested.

**Table 1: Gold's (1958) four participant observer roles (adapted from Bryman, 2008)**



Choosing what role to undertake, and when to be more active or passive in research, therefore required careful consideration. On the one hand, I wanted to 'get nosy' and ask more about certain issues, but on the other hand, I realised the need to let behaviour develop naturally without my intervention. As Wolcott (2005: 95) reminds us 'in the simple act of asking, the fieldworker makes a 180 degree shift from observer to interlocutor, intruding into the scene by imposing onto the agenda what he or she wants to know'. I, therefore, had to choose the right time to seek information that I wanted to pursue, for example, a group conversation between Ralph, Sophie and Lorraine led to a conversation on lesbians, despite sexuality not being something that I intended to delve into. Additionally, I gained information about perceptions of girls that got emotional at various times (which I recognised through my observation), by waiting for interviewees to bring it up, and then probing further, as I did not want the interviewees telling the girls that showed emotion that I had been talking about them; I was fearful that this would break their trust with me. Deciding when to be an observer, and when to be a participant observer, therefore, required consideration and was also circumstantial in some cases. Whilst cheering at matches, I was observing, and also when I was not needed in training; at other times I was fully involved.

When initially gaining access to the group, I maintained more of an observer role, often as a 'spectator' with parents. This was useful as I got an overview of the juniors from observation and also built rapport with parents, which meant that I gained the children's trust and also heard parents' conversations regarding coaches and players. It also meant that I could make notes about occurrences on my phone rather than a laptop, tablet or on paper. The use of phones was so normal, it was a discrete note taking method.

However, retaining a complete observer role was sometimes problematic. As time passed I was assigned more formal roles as coach by Zoe (Head Coach). During training I helped with practises set out by coaches, standing at the korfbal posts and feeding the ball to players to shoot, or performing a number of different tactical plays (running in shots, veering shots, etc.). This role established me as a participant observer. Over time, I acted out my more formal roles more of the time. Being a participant

observer as a supporter at matches, and coaches' 'help' during training held many advantages, such as:

- I. I was near enough to hear conversations and interactions between players during matches and team talks
- II. I was able to record conversations occurring within wider social spaces (on transport to and from matches, during lunch breaks, at social events, and during tournament 'downtime')
- III. I gained cultural capital as I could demonstrate knowledge of korfbal, legitimising my position in the group and assisting my entry into the inner circles of players
- IV. I could build rapport with players, coaches and parents so that they opened up to me in conversations, for example when letting the junior players paint my face in team colours before supporting the juniors in a cup match
- V. I gained access to parent and coach interaction
- VI. Observations provided further questions to be asked during interviews (Markula, 2004)

I took on a number of roles within the team. I helped the coaches, but despite taking on this supportive role, I do not believe that the players attributed my supportive role to any kind of submissive, gendered action. Not only did they know about my years of korfbal experience and my association with the national Academy, but they were surrounded by strong female figures. The mothers on the sidelines were all strong personalities, none of them seemed like particularly shy or reserved characters, and the Head Junior Coach was also female, in addition to a number of the female participants being some of the strongest members of the team. Players were generally all respectful to all adults and coaches. Boys and girls treated me the same in coaching spheres, for example, if they messed around, they acted that way for all of the coaches from time to time.

Despite this, at relevant times I made time to distance myself in order to reflect more privately on behaviours as they evolved. For example, rather than comforting girls as they got emotional when coaches were critical of their performance, I let parents and other players comfort them, and I used my slightly distanced position to reflect on

how I interpreted and understood their reactions. Additionally, my position as more of an observer during matches against other clubs, meant that I had time to consider how I felt about actions and reactions that I was observing, taking into account my possible bias as a strong supporter of the korfbal team I was studying. It meant that I had time to recognise the actions of the players I was studying, and also consider how I may favour the actions of this team when playing against opponents. This frequent change in position, from coach interacting with players on the training ground, to observer on the match sidelines watching their actions and reactions, helped me retain a critical perspective of utmost importance (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Over time I felt accepted and my presence in the field as a researcher was no longer obvious to participants in the field. As Sands (2002: 22) suggests, 'the more time spent with the culture and the more participatory the fieldwork, the less intrusion is felt by the fieldworker and cultural members'. Indeed, researchers have previously acknowledged that the key to successful participant observation is to accept the paradox that you must understand the community as a participant, yet have the ability to observe the culture as a researcher (Sands, 2002; Quinn-Patton, 2002). Thus there exists a dichotomy between insider and outsider roles which will shift in different circumstances (Sands, 2002). It is important to recognise the evolving nature of being on the inside. I made more of an effort than other coaches to talk and mingle with children during downtime, and developed alternative relationships with them which were less formal than coach relationships with players. I asked players about their weekends, I talked to them about school, I looked at photos on their mobile phones. I showed interest in their lives outside of korfbal, I laughed with them, I empathised and agreed, and I listened to them.

Regardless of the role undertaken, it is important to consider that my entry into the field will always have an impact upon the subjects I was researching. From the beginning, I was aware that I would form part of the production of social behaviour. I frequently spent time making a conscious effort to critically reflect upon how my presence was affecting social behaviour. By attending training and matches regularly, I aimed to learn about the cultural norms and expected behaviours within the research site and, in doing

so, decrease my visibility in the field (Wolcott, 2005; Angrosino, 2007; Agar, 1996). I knew rules and the culture having been a junior player; I understood Avon Tyrell (korfbal summer camp), national trials, broken bones, tournaments, and friendships gained in the 'korfbal family'. The feeling of being part of a small community unknown by many; a special community where camping as families, coaches and players was normal during two-day tournaments, meaning entire weekends spent together. Additionally, my skills showed knowledge which meant I fitted in. My friendship with managers and parents gained my access to the group. I also had respect from Zoe, the Head Junior Coach, due to the academic nature of my research, and I also knew David (the Head Coach for the Club, who coached the juniors in addition to the top senior teams) from my days playing as a junior. Therefore, I fitted into the scene relatively quickly and easily.

This presents another advantage of spending prolonged time in the field. In longitudinal studies, the researcher can begin to understand the lived experiences of individuals, which can sometimes mean that the researcher can help the participants to avoid misrepresentation of phenomenon (Sands, 2002). I was able to clarify themes, go back to participants and ask further questions. Indwelling over a long period of time has therefore been identified as important, and may be particularly so, considering both the fluidity of discursive construction and change, when conducting an ethnography with children. As MacPhail and Kirk (2006) illustrate:

As a research strategy, ethnography is ideally suited to investigating dynamic and complex activities such as youth sport participation. This is because, in addition to generating thick description, ethnography requires regular in-depth contact with a research site and with the people in it over a prolonged period of time. Prolonged immersion in a research site assists the researcher to begin to recognise routine and repeating practices, cyclical and seasonal processes, and the complex patterning of social practice (MacPhail and Kirk, 2006: 61)

For example, my time spent with the team meant that I witnessed Ralph taking a break from korfbal and then returning with a different attitude. I got to see changes in captains, friendships, attitudes, and developments in skills and abilities. I was involved through the indoor season when cup and league matches were taking place, and also the more informal outdoor, summer tournaments.

#### 4.4.2 *Ethnography and Children*

Conducting an ethnography with children resulted in many considerations and research dilemmas, such as:

- I. Would I be able to gain access to their 'inner circles' as an adult?
- II. What social spaces would be available/unavailable for research?
- III. What influence would there be from the supervisory eye of parents, and the powerful influence of social performance in front of peer groups?
- IV. Would I be exploiting potentially vulnerable children?
- V. What research methods should I use?

This presented me a list of ethical, moral dilemmas and tested my social skills, not only in working with child participants but also adult coaches, parents and officials. For example, I responded to particular situations in a reactive way and a way that I perceived would cause the least amount of unease. I was more professional and serious with fellow coaches; I was more fun loving and laid back with the parents, joking with them, as they tended to use korfbal as a social space where they joked with each other. During interviews with the children, I tended to sit cross-legged on the floor with them so that we were on the same level, and responded to their joking with laughter as I asked affirmative questions. In informal conversations I usually followed the junior player's lead or asked easy questions about how they were, what they did at the weekend, how they felt about forthcoming korfbal matches or those that had taken place recently, or things that we had previously discussed, and on occasion they would lead me to topics that I could then ask further questions about. Importantly, the knowledge gained from child participants should be treated with sensitivity, and further credit given to their accounts of experience. Recently, calls have been made to listen more to children's voices and reconstruct the knowledge. Here, both the adult researcher and the child participant are considered as 'partial knowers' (Brown 2007: 4), and children's knowledge should be viewed with respect:

It is part of our new conceptualisations of children, therefore, that we credit them with knowledge, rather than with the relatively transient and flimsy 'perspective', 'view' or 'opinion' (Mayall, 2008: 109).

For example, through listening to children, full, rich and meaningful narratives of their

diverse life experiences empowered them with the confidence to talk more openly and in-depth. This was illustrated in discussion with James when he explained the secret love interests between the players:

*Interviewer: Ok erm, with like the girls and the boys in the team, have any of the girls and the boys in the team got like girlfriends and boyfriends and things like that?*

*Respondent: Well there are a few of us who fancy each other*

*Interviewer: Oh really?*

*Respondent: Yeah*

*Interviewer: Dish the dirt, who fancies who?*

*Respondent: Erm, Ralph fancies Lorraine*

*Interviewer: Ahh, I thought that, you know, something went on earlier and I had my suspicions [laughs]*

*Respondent: Erm, Lorraine, I don't know if you remember a boy called Alex or not*

*Interviewer: I don't think I do*

*Respondent: No, erm, Sophie used to fancy Alex and so did Lorraine*

*Interviewer: Oh ok, yeah, popular Alex [laughs]. How do you know when people fancy each other?*

*Respondent: Because like they kind of like tell you as a secret*

*Interviewer: Oh really?*

*Respondent: Like they tell you not to tell other people and all that*

*Interviewer: Ahh, and then do you keep the secret or do you tell people? [laughs]*

*Respondent: Sometimes, you try and keep it a secret but it kind of gets out*

#### **4.4.3 Rapport**

Gaining a sense of rapport and intimacy with informants and participants has been highlighted as central in 'good' ethnographic research as doing so aids our interpretations of 'the other' and provides claims to authenticity (Springwood and King, 2001). As Wolcott (2005) illuminates, 'our knowledge of everything or everybody else (and of ourselves as well) is invariably partial and incomplete. Part of the art of fieldwork lies in being attentive to and able to acquire ordinary, everyday

information, rather than letting our assumptions fill in the gaps' (73). However, as Sands (2002: 22) recognises, there are multiple difficulties in gaining rapport with a new community and learning how to behave in that community 'until accepted as part of the social landscape'. In this study, interactions developed over time, as players became more used to my presence and I spent time and effort engaging juniors and trying to demonstrate that I was 'on their level', rather than a strict member of the formal coaching team.

Attempts to foster rapport included:

- I. Gaining an understanding of key cultural influences/agendas in children's lives, for example, I noticed that the brand of clothes that many junior players wore was Hollister. I also discussed other sports and activities they liked doing, such as shopping and gymnastics (Lorraine), netball (Gemma), skateboarding (James), and got to know that Gemma loved the popular boyband 'One Direction'
- II. Recounting my own experience of junior korfbal (including national trials and outdoor tournaments), I discussed many of their experiences from my own historical involvement as a junior korfbal player, playing at under 12's and under 14's level in the South East many years prior to my research. I also used my inside knowledge of Avon Tyrell (a week-long korfbal camp that takes place in the summer for junior korfbal players). This collective remembering fostered a close and mutual bond.
- III. Learning cultural codes, for example, humour. Many players laughed about 'farting', and Lorraine had a conversation with me about someone 'farting' in her mouth at a sleepover. She laughed as she recalled this experience, so I learned to laugh along with players as this issue was discussed or enacted.
- IV. Taking an individual approach to recognising and responding to alternative personalities.
- V. Repeatedly attending training, games and social events.
- VI. Providing support and positive encouragement, such as cheering from the sidelines, feeding the ball as they shot in training, wishing them luck before games and telling them they played well after games.
- VII. As Wellard (2009) explains, playing alongside participants increased my closeness

and their respect based on my ability as a korfball player.

After a few months, subtle exchanges gradually became more natural, validating reciprocity, and the development of rapport. For example, to begin with, James was very shy, yet by the end of my time with them, he was openly discussing chat up lines that he uses at school.

I would not say that any relationships broke down during my time with the team, they only really grew as time went on. Despite this, some relationships flourished quicker than others; for example, I built rapport with Sophie early on as I also saw her at national Academy events, and occasionally at senior training with her parents. Gemma and I also built a bond after she broke her arm playing korfball, and still attended training. We often sat together and talked as we watched players train, and we bonded over the fact that I broke my foot playing korfball as a junior too. Finally, Ralph seemed open and willing to talk to me from the start, something that I attributed to his general confidence and desire to be the centre of attention, and James and I developed a relationship much more slowly, but one that was easy by the end of my time with them. Nevertheless, there were difficulties with my relationships with them, such as the fact that I did not feel that it was appropriate to join in text message conversations or Facebook communications, despite the fact that they all interacted with each other in this way. Additionally, I never got the impression that any of them felt the desire to text me anyway, I maintained my distance in all areas outside of the korfball spaces.

#### *4.4.4 Reflexivity*

Any interpretation of 'the other' made in the qualitative research should be done reflexively. That is, my own biography, my cultural background, socialisations, political lenses and my sexed and gendered body's presence in the field influences the entire research process and interpretation of participants (Usher, 1997; Sands, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). 'Being reflexive' therefore involves reflecting upon and outlining our influence and agendas as researchers, and making explicit where we are located in relation to our research respondents. This is, therefore, central in 'creating, interpreting and theorising research data' (Mauthner and Daucet, 1998: 121). Being reflexive, therefore, allows me to openly accept that I am also part of the world being



investigated (Berg, 2004). As Moses and Knutsen (2007) assert, qualitative researchers are not simply objective communicators of truth.

Researchers should consciously endure an internal dialogue, an ongoing conversation that considers what they know and how they discovered this knowledge (Berg, 2004). This is particularly important when doing research with children. According to Woodhead and Faulkner (2008: 13), caution should be taken in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data where adult researchers are not self-reflexive of their position of power over child participants: 'power relationships in the research process are traditionally weighted towards the researcher as the expert on children, and on how to study children, and on what to study about children and about how to interpret what children say and do'. Such power relationships directly impact on how children are listened to and understood. Research agendas controlled by adults conceptualise children as objects rather than participants, and their narratives can be 'edited, reformulated or truncated to fit our agendas' (Roberts, 2008: 264). Being reflexive of my 'adulthood' was, therefore, important to consider, for example as I considered the immaturity of girls that cried when they were told off. In my head, I was rolling my eyes and thinking what an overreaction it was, embarrassed for them, but I quickly reflected on how they must be feeling. Potentially unable to manage their feelings in a mature way, possibly due to hormones or other significant things going on in their lives, and how they may still be embarrassed as a result of their actions, I consciously empathised with them rather than judged their immaturity or dramatic behaviour.

Therefore, my reflexive position is continually outlined in analysis, interpretation and presentation of participants' realities, for example:

- I. Notes were taken that revealed my thoughts and feelings at given times and as a reaction to given situations.
- II. I considered the impacts of subjectivity during fieldwork, data collection and data analysis.
- III. I thought about my own experiences and how they may influence my immediate responses to events.

The reflexive account 'provides a critical conceptual resource for interrogating the

production (writing) and consumption (reading) of research texts' (Usher, 1997: 36). The individuality of a researcher lends itself to biases which cannot be banished by simply acknowledging them and embracing a specific methodological approach. These biases are ingrained and pure neutrality cannot be established, even after such biases are labelled and considered, 'they are the marks or trajectory of our desires and emotional investments in the research act' (Usher, 1997: 36). Acknowledging that I could never be unbiased, it is worth noting that I was seeking responses that highlight if korfbal is more inclusive of gender, and whether it creates ontological space for performances of alternative presentations of gender in sport.

#### *4.4.5 Withdrawal*

I withdrew from the korfbal club at the same time that the head junior coach also left the team to concentrate on her own korfbal participation. There was therefore quite a practical implication regarding the need for adults to coach the junior players at the time that I withdrew. Additionally, my own withdrawal had an impact on my life and feelings. I had spent a lot of my personal time with these players, which was no longer filled, leaving a sense of emptiness and lack of purpose to some extent for a short time. I would have liked to see the team progress as I had developed a strong interest in the combined team and individual players, particularly Sophie and James. Just before I withdrew from the club, James told me that he would not be playing from the next season as he was starting High School and would have to negotiate his homework and his other hobby, skateboarding. I felt a sense of sadness when I learnt that he would no longer be playing, and hoped that he would not lose the friendships he had built within the korfbal team, although I could see that it was likely that he would. Being 'friends' on Facebook with both Sophie's mum and James's dad means that I still see photos of them from time to time, and I still feel nostalgic as I see how much older they look. I also left the senior part of the club when I withdrew from the junior team. I moved house and relocated further into Surrey, meaning that I could no longer get to training or games for the adult team who were based in South London. So the end of my research meant something very final for me.

I suspect that the players would have been affected by me leaving, particularly at the same time as the head junior coach. I explained when I started my research with them

that I would only be with them for a season and I reiterated this near the end, in an informal way, to individual players. I am conscious that time may seem to go slower for children, so it may have felt like I was with them for a longer time than I realised. In this time I chatted with them, built a strong rapport, and gained enough trust to learn their secrets, and their feelings; very important aspects of their lives, particularly at this age.

#### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

Ethnography should be approached carefully, stringently, respectfully, and represent 'the irreducibility of human experience' (Willis and Trondman, 2002: 394). In the first instance, approval for this study was obtained by Canterbury Christ Church University Institutional Research Board. This included recognition of children's consent, parents' consent, and both being fully informed about the study prior to consent being sought. It also included the recognition of anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time, confidentiality and storage of data. I made it clear that I would never be alone in a room with only one child, and I made it clear to parents and players that their participation would not in any way affect team selection.

Subsequently, consent was obtained from all participants and parents. Parents were aware of the research I was conducting, and the methods I intended to use through information sheets and consent forms (appendix three), in addition to informal conversations. Participants were also given the same information sheets and consent forms as the adults, and the research was explained to them. Information sheets were written in basic language so that players understood clearly before giving their consent for participation. Participants were assured that the interviews would be private, with transcripts and recordings saved to a computer in a locked file, and the laptop and paper records in a locked location throughout the duration of the study, and wiped clean on completion of the final written report. Participants were informed of their right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time.

Further steps were taken to protect confidentiality including assigning both places and people's names with pseudonyms (Fontana and Frey, 2008). The details of club location have been kept very broad and I have not included any photos in this thesis, as during my time with the club I was always in club colours, which would clearly mark the

team that I conducted my study with. Korfbal is a relatively small community, and if the team became clear then the players personalities would also become clear in my discussions, meaning that they would be at risk of being identified. Additionally, when the top scorers were recognised, and the sizes of the boys and girls were referred to, it makes it easier to identify who I was describing, especially due to the low number of male and female players on the team at this age.

Due to researching minors, parents or legal guardians were provided with written consent for the junior players to take part in the research project. People are entitled to give informed consent so that they are aware that they are being studied, and so that they can willingly agree to participate in the research project (Berg, 2004; Sands, 2002). This was a relatively easy journey since the parents, children and coaches were all like family, and to my knowledge, ethical issues were never raised or considered. That being said, players did speak about their families, and at times disclosed information that parents' may not have wanted to be discussed, such as when Ralph told me and other players that his auntie was a 'lesbian'. The players' immaturity, preadolescence and mainly pre-high school nature, meant that deeper conversations of sexuality did not occur. Similarly, discussions of gender were often not commented on unless referring to particular questions I asked them in interviews. Nevertheless, asking them questions that made them consider gender, and their understandings of gender, may have had implications of which I was not aware. In an attempt to remain ethically true to my participants, rather than taking a traditional ethical approach, such as utilitarianism or principlism, I took a reflexive ethical approach (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Sparkes and Smith (2014) draw on the work of Cannella and Lincoln (2011), Denzin (1997 and 2010), and Mauthner et al. (2012), and criticise the traditional ethical approaches as overlooking the contextualised power relations and not recognising participants as being part of dialogue; instead, seeing them as separate and isolated. They suggest that these ethical stances are rooted in ideas that the researcher can be 'morally neutral' or 'value-free' (207). Rather, the reflexive ethical approach meant that I found importance in remaining 'sensitive to the interactions of self, others and situations' (212), and considered potential power relations between myself as the researcher and the participants. I also endeavoured to recognise responses to a

research-based situation, reacting in a 'responsive, ethical, moral way, where the participants' safety, privacy, dignity and autonomy are respected' (212). An example of this was when Lucy and I were discussing girls wearing skorts. Lucy explained how girls prefer to wear skorts because they look more 'ladylike', unsatisfied with the lack of explanation I probed further and asked her to explain why she preferred to wear a skort. Lucy then assertively retorted, "because I was born a girl, so I just want to be a girl!", and at that point, I made the decision to not probe for any further detail as she was agitated by the questioning.

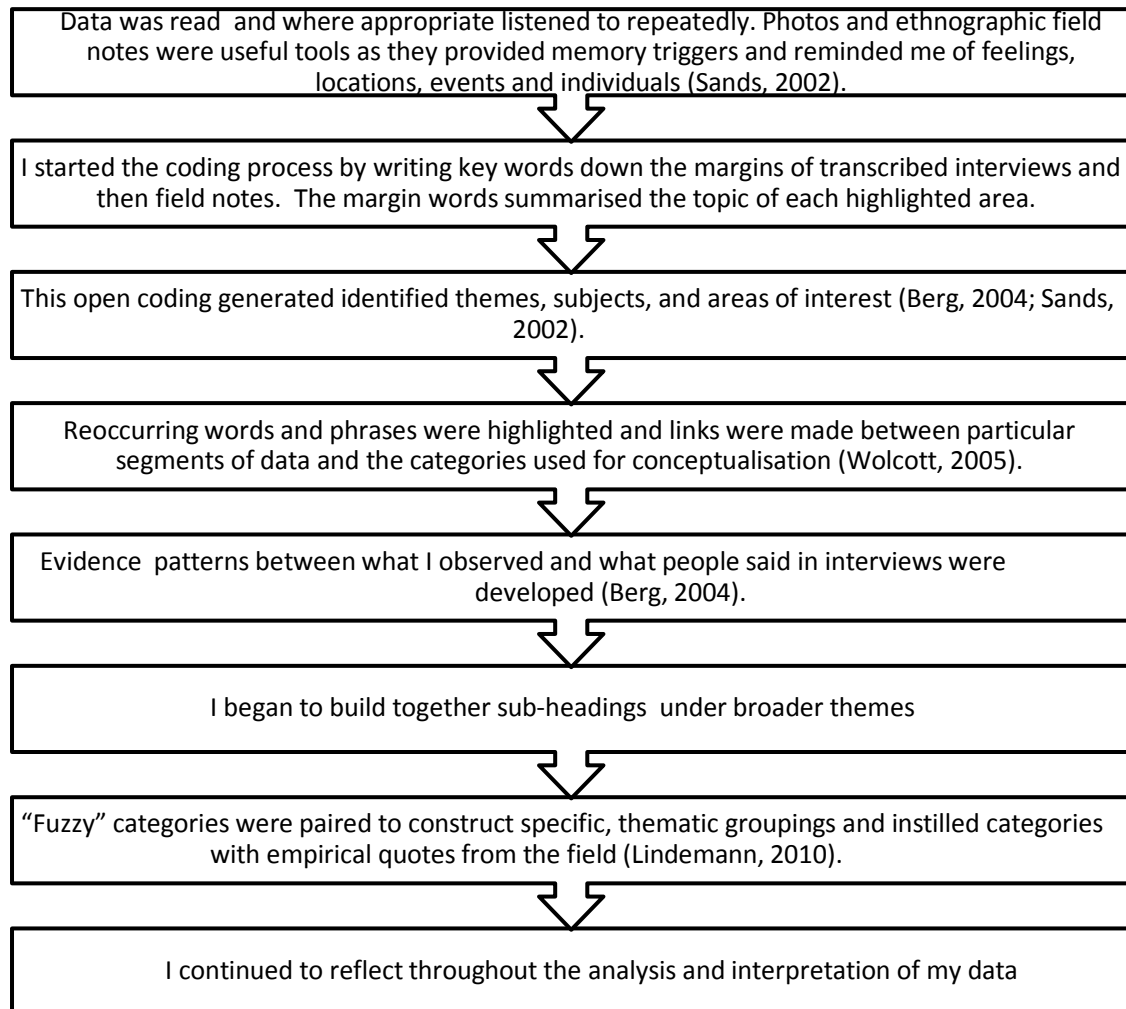
Ethics does not just rest with analysis and interpretation, but also in what and how participants' realities are represented. Sands (2002) argues that it is not ethnographic research that negatively impacts upon people, instead, it is the unethical manipulation and handling of data that could have harmful effects on individuals. Therefore, in this study, I took measures to ensure that the representations I made were representative of children's perceptions of reality. I did this by reading back interpretations I had made and checking responses, and also reflected about my adulthood throughout the research. Through the time I spent with them, hopefully, I accurately presented the thoughts that they discussed with me.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

Data were collected in the form of field notes (which included reflections), photos, web pages, and transcribed interviews. Qualitative data analysis is not rigidly standardised, can take many forms, and is flexible to fit individual studies. There is no 'right' way of approaching qualitative data analysis (Cote, Slamela and Abderrahim, 1993), but it must be ultimately reduced to create a unified image of the phenomena. Data analysis began immediately after entering the field, and was an on-going *process* thereafter (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009), allowing research design to emerge over time, and providing direction for further data collection (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Maxwell, 1996; Silverman, 2000). Gaps and inadequacies were filled by collecting more data (Holloway, 1997), such as, by holding informal conversations.

For the purpose of this study, a thematic analysis was employed. Here, data were identified and analysed into themes that could be richly described. This was not done by addressing how many times phenomena occurred, nor did I search for the 'right'

themes, but recognised them for what they were; links between particular segments of data and the categories used for conceptualisation (Wolcott, 2005). To systematically analyse written notes from observation and transcribed notes from interviews, a methodical process of coding took place. Themes that I deemed important were chunked together in the following way:



This procedure was completed for every interview and important ethnographic findings, and then compared and contrasted, providing refinement of themes (Holloway, 1997). Reoccurring themes and subthemes looked like this:

- **Vocal** – guiding during training and matches, motivating, loud
- **Distraction** – physically distracted, verbally distracted, interested in other things
- **Coach** – interaction with players, reaction of players towards, player thoughts about
- **Emotion** – aggression, upset, pain, happiness

- **Player interaction** – friends, physical and verbal interaction, korfbal being less rough/having less contact than other sports
- **Family interaction** – family feel, verbal interaction, physical interaction, parents, siblings
- **Aesthetics and body** – clothes, deodorant, tomboy
- **Laziness and effort** – tired, physicality, enthusiasm, competitive
- **Useful attributes** – height, age, speed, technique, experience
- **Mixed, equality and difference** – stereotypes, tactical need for separation, comparison to other sports, mixed rules and roles

During this process, it is important to understand the difference between analysis and interpretation. Analysis is concerned with examining, sorting and synthesising data in accepted ways. As Wolcott (2008) ascertains, interpretation begins when we start to make sense of the data in meaningful ways. Interpretation is, therefore:

not derived from rigorous, agreed-upon, carefully specified procedures, but from our efforts at sense making, a human activity that includes intuition, past experience, emotion – personal attributes of human researchers that can be argued endlessly but neither proved or disproved to the satisfaction of all (Wolcott, 2008: 30).

Interpretation required judgement about what was really significant and meaningful in the data and was approached inductively as themes emerged from the data itself (Patton, 2002).

I became satisfied with the depth of data when new data successfully fitted the existing coding system without the emergence of new themes (Cote, Slamela and Abderrahim, 1993). Then I began writing about my themes and comparing to previous literature where appropriate. I also applied Foucault's ideas in order to help explain phenomena and individual actions. Data and prominent themes then formed the basis for structuring chapters five and six, and a number of Foucault's most relevant ideas were applied to the themes and particular empirical quotes in order to explain power relationships relating to gender and korfbal. Wolcott (2008) suggests that theory should be used to 'breathe life' into findings, and although Foucault provided me with a toolbox of theory, the central concern in this study is empirical findings and

thick description. Theory helped me explore some of these themes in more detail and ask more questions.

Some possible limitations of thematic analysis include losing the context of what was said by extracting sections of data. This can also lead to the fragmentation of data and loss of narrative flow (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). I tried to avoid this by re-reading the sections of interview scripts and observation field notes before explaining the specific themed areas, rather than simply extracting parts of scripts and grouping them together out of context.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have outlined the key methodological and epistemological debates that have influenced my research design. I have aimed to utilise ethnographic and epistemological approaches that will enable an accurate investigation of the complexities of gender and other performances, and general power relationships within korfbal. The chosen approaches are arguably most suitable in order to find answers to my research questions providing thick description and depth of understanding regarding sex equality and gender neutrality in korfbal, and an explanation of the korfbal experience. This chapter also recognized the importance of a reflexive approach to conducting this research, in an attempt to present player perspectives and events as accurately as possible, whilst acknowledging the interpretivist role of the researcher.

Data analysis culminated in the creation of themes which will be compared to previous literature, and theoretically explained in the next two discussion chapters. Chapters five and six present my research findings along with an ongoing theoretical analysis. The first of the two discussion chapters, chapter five, will now go on to consider and explain the korfbal experience, utilizing a Foucauldian lens for analysis. The ways that korfbal is performed and adult roles within the environment are both deemed important when understanding the experience of korfbal, and thus, answering research questions three and four regarding the culture of korfbal compared to other sports, and the continued influence of korfbal's original aims. Additionally, sex equality is arguably an integral part of korfbal's historical and



contemporary values, which is evident from historical information and recent international governing body assertions (see chapter one). These ideas will also be acknowledged in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Applying a Theoretical Lens to the Experience of Korfball**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

During the period spent participating and collecting data, it became evident that participants viewed the experience of korfball differently to other sports. In this chapter, Foucault's explanations of relationships of power, as discussed in chapter two, are applied to the specific site of korfball. By doing this, the experiences of korfball players are considered by taking into account the understandings of the participants through ethnographic observation and interviews, a method that Foucault did not utilise when discussing discourses.

Throughout the research, korfball players asserted the difference between korfball and other sports, yet korfball literature explains rules, internationalism, and the desire for mediated coverage, marking it as similar to other sports (see chapter one). Consequently, in order to respond to research questions three and four which focus on the culture and values of korfball, it was considered important to look at korfball spaces and investigate whether it can offer something different, or whether, in the broader lens of sport, it is very similar. Additionally, research question one asks whether korfball can achieve sporting equality between the sexes. As identified in chapter one, korfball is provided as a sport where men and women can play in unison (Crum, 2003b, 1988), and the rules arguably maintain equality between the sexes (IKF, 2006), this chapter will begin to investigate these ideas in practice.

Participants implied that the rules of the game, and often, more importantly, the informal practices, gave korfball an appeal that was not offered anywhere else. Consequently, it became clear that the whole package (Wellard, 2013) of korfball involved knowledge of certain ways to perform the sport, and that a big part of the korfball experience can be attributed to the impact from a number of adult roles. However, the korfball experience could not be completely disassociated from the 'bigger picture', away from the korfball pitch. The whole package of korfball was evident as players discussed a number of important aspects that arguably made the sport different, such as specific rules of the game, gender, the body, and other social

aspects (gender will be discussed further in chapter six). It was not only playing that created the experience, so, in addition to discourses, it was useful to discover what it was about these experiences that made it different or not. In this chapter, the experience of korfbal is documented in order to provide an understanding of both the differences and similarities to other sports which constitute the whole package of korfbal, focusing on the junior players' construction of knowledge, power relationships within korfbal, and power relationships beyond the korfbal pitch.

## **5.1 Construction of Knowledge**

Within the whole package of korfbal, participation and interview data demonstrated how there were certain ways to perform korfbal, which related to knowledge of the game. It was clear that particular structural aspects were deemed key parts of the game, such as being vocal and interacting with other players, rules that prevented contact with anyone on the opposing side, and the requirement of teamwork for success. Players pointed towards the importance of each of these key themes as they impacted upon the way that korfbal was performed, and in some instances, the players asserted that these factors contributed to making korfbal different and preferable to other sports. During this research, it was also fundamental to try and ascertain how junior players understood the mixed aspect of korfbal, and whether players agreed with the IKF's (2006) assertion that korfbal presented an equal playing field for both men and women, and what differences they felt occurred between the sexes. Understanding knowledge constructed around these key themes meant that the research could begin to uncover whether korfbal can offer an alternative to mainstream sports, whether it can promote sporting equality between the sexes, and whether the original aims of the game still have relevance today, as per the study's research questions.

### *5.1.1 Understanding Gender Difference*

Despite the support for mixed-sex sport, both sexes often agreed that separation between the sexes should be maintained on the pitch, a korfbal rule which was confirmed in 1905/07 (Van Bottenburg, 2003). James suggested that it would not seem right for boys and girls to mark each other, and Gemma explained that she would not be able to mark a boy because "boys are a different level to girls, they, like, push you over and things, and then like, girls are just like not as aggressive" (Gemma). There is

some demonstration here of 'the other' as described in Foucault's (1988) explanation of the madman, who could only exist when compared to the man of reason. Here, both players consider male physicality to overpower female physicality, revealing a gender divide and considering a difference between the sexes. As Gemma describes how "boys are a different level to girls", we get the impression that girls can be seen as 'the other' when in sporting environments where boys are more powerful. Sophie also made it clear that she could not mark a boy due to physical differences between the sexes,

I think it's a good idea because erm, because like, it's a bit difficult for me because I'm a really small girl and you usually get boys, you don't really get small boys, like you might get one out of five but, like, they would be like this around me [gesture implying boys are taller], so it's going to be difficult to try to move (Sophie).

Sophie's comment was interesting because she implied that boys had a natural height advantage, similarly to ideologies of biological determinism which portrays men as innately possessing characteristics that make them better at sports. Discourse related to embodied gender difference can shape the subject, making them susceptible to workings of power. Biological differences are marketed as scientific truth and commonly accepted, and, in turn, subjects discursively reproduce these notions. This is visible in Sophie's assertions of gender difference, making her a compliant subject within the network of power relations. Additionally, it is worth noting that height advantage is something that the IKF (2006) argue that korfball combats with the separation rule. Sophie clearly acknowledged that this rule was necessary (height advantage will be discussed further later in this section).

However, Ralph, Lorraine and Charlie took a more practical understanding of the separation rule and explained how marking both sexes would tarnish the current rules and workings of the game. They did not focus on gender difference as the determinant for separation. They described how, for example, letting everyone mark everyone would mean that players would be extremely limited with regards to gaining running in shots as there would always be someone ready to mark them,

personally, erm, yes and no, because erm, if boys can mark girls then it will make the sport a lot harder to play because you're always there... Yeah because there will always be somebody in the space to actually mark them (Ralph).

it just sort of goes better. It would be easy sort of thing if you could just switch on anybody... So if you're like under the post and you switch, you could just switch on anybody and then like, there'd be more like running in shots that would be defended, and it would be easier to defend a running in shot (Charlie).

These comments suggest that despite korfbal being a mixed sport, players were happy with the idea that they could only mark players of their own sex. The girls were not happy marking boys due to a difference in physicality, and a number of boys and girls argued that the game only tactically functions well due to marking restrictions. No players considered a divisive method other than sex categorisation to use as a separation technique so that the game still worked as intended.

It was interesting to consider whether the mixed match space could be understood as a gendered space. Following the rules of korfbal, boys and girls were even in number but only allowed to mark their own sex, creating some understanding of difference within the space provided. Yet, specifically within this space, there was very little verbal reference to gender or sex. The separation of sexes (which was implemented in order to remove the advantage of boys' physicality, see section 1.1), could be seen to contradict the lack of verbal reference to gender or sex difference. This might suggest how korfbal identity and values were often competing with gender discourse within the same space. A wider social surveillance influenced by gender discourse often had a differing perspective to surveillance regarding korfbal. This began to demonstrate how panopticism (Foucault, 1979a) does not really account for the power of competing discourses within the same space. The panopticon describes the appearance of an omnipresent, invisible gaze which theoretically manipulates behaviour; yet in this instance, there are multiple, conflicting gazes which the panoptic space would have difficulty in explaining.

The format/structure of the game demonstrated that frequently, either the boys or girls would feed the ball to the opposite sex (this avoided the opposing players switching and marking the player running in to shoot); so when a goal was achieved from a running in shot it was often due to a member of both sexes. Nevertheless, because of the role being occupied by one sex whilst the other was in the space 'out' from the post, the two spaces of 'post' and 'out' became 'owned' by one sex or the other, which again created a separation of the sexes. Despite this, equality was

deemed necessary for a team to be successful, and therefore all players could be observed to be surveying each other throughout the korfbal match. This revealed how players were acting as knowing subjects and knowable objects of observation at one time (Foucault, 1994); observing others' teamwork and use of both sexes, and at the same time being observed in the same respect by other team members. Many players did not obviously consider the opposite sex to be different, and instead, observation demonstrated how players worked as a team and used members of both sexes in an aim to succeed within the match situation. When Foucault (1979a) discusses the composition of forces, he explains how individuals work together, as components of a machine, to create an overall outcome. The way in which players seemed to disregard gender differences, and instead rely on overall teamwork, may be because players saw fellow team members as instruments of exercise within this multi-segmentary machine (Foucault, 1979a) that is a korfbal team, where the overall outcome was to score goals and win matches.

Despite evidence of less discipline within the training space, when mock games were being performed equality was seen to prevail in the same way that it did during real match situations. Players did not have to be told to use the opposite sex, and observation demonstrated that both sexes were utilised without prejudice. This could have shown that panopticism was present with regards to gender equality. Foucault (1979a) suggests that, within a panoptic environment, individuals become principles of their own subjection as they perceive themselves to be under an omnipresent surveillance from powerful others. He describes how individuals that believe they are being observed, will monitor and adjust their own behaviour at the prospect of this surveillance. Within both match space and training space, players may have become principles of their own subjection with regards to gender equality, due to the omnipresent surveillance from others within these spaces. Additionally, Foucault's (1979a) explanation of docile bodies, bodies that have been trained over time until they obey, may explain the way in which the junior players utilised both sexes without relying on dominant gender discourses of gender ability (see Clark, 2012; Miller, Ogilvie and Branch, 2008; Clark and Paechter, 2007). Within korfbal, players are trained to use both sexes equally, as this is the way that you are most likely to win a game. The

unquestioned acceptance of this equality may have resulted from players being trained until they mastered their bodies with regards to the utilisation of all team members; their bodies having been trained over time until they obeyed and became docile in this respect (Foucault, 1979a). This also demonstrates how embodied practices, such as korfbal, can resist dominant discourses related to gender difference.

The game of korfbal was considered to exist for both boys and girls (Lilly, Gemma, James), and James suggested that the game itself would not be as good if it was a single-sex sport (James). Literature explains how korfbal has been advertised as promoting equality between the sexes (Crum, 1988; 2003a; Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989), and how the format of the game means that you have to have an equal number of boys and girls on each team (Crum, 1988). For Sophie, this indicated equality within the game, “I think it’s quite equal because like, you get, you can only have four girls and four boys on a team. You can’t like have six girls” (Sophie). Ralph also emphasised the fact that the game gave girls and boys an equal chance and explained, “Equal really because you can always be, it doesn’t matter if you’re better than someone else, it’s all about taking part. You don’t want to win but, like, I would say you can’t have a korfbal team without a few girls and a few boys” (Ralph), and Charlie explained that the game was “completely equal” (Charlie). Assertions by Messner (2011) and Wachs (2002) about mixed sport demonstrating intersections of equal gender performance, are in some way illustrated in these comments.

As korfbal was unlike many single-sex sports, Lucy and Sophie suggested that it was one of the few games that girls could play, and considered many other sports to be for boys. They considered girls to be suited to certain sports, such as korfbal, but not many of the mainstream traditional sports. In this respect, girls were being labelled as ‘the other’ (Foucault, 1988), in comparison to boys who were more suited to traditional, mainstream, mostly single-sex sports. Foucault (1979a) explains how normal and abnormal individuals within society are separated into binaries, and specific and institutions observe and attempt to ‘put right’ the abnormal. Lucy and Sophie demonstrated how boys’ participation in many other sports was considered normal but implied that female participation in these ‘boys’ sports’ was abnormal. Their understanding and compliance with this notion demonstrates how institutions have

been successful in maintaining normality in this sphere, and how dominant discourse has shaped their understanding.

Both Lucy and Sophie liked that korfbal was for both girls and boys and not usually attributed to the male sex alone,

Erm, I think, I say both, but I think more girls do it because there's not many sports that girls are into. Like with boys, there is rugby, football, cricket, but not many girls are into them because they think of them as male sports, and so this is one of the few that girls are, they have to be in it (Lucy).

Err, I don't know. It's just like, when I look at like, erm, girls' football, there's not much interest in girls' football than there is boys football like, so everyone says 'oh England are playing tonight' but you don't go and watch girls play. So I just think that you can watch both girls and boys play at the same time (Sophie).

Lucy and Sophie indicated that some girls did not consider a number of the traditional, mainstream, male orientated sports as an option for them. They did not believe them to offer equal opportunities, yet korfbal needed girls as a requirement of the game, meaning that they were given equal opportunities and were encouraged to play.

Despite a number of male and female players expressing how korfbal promotes equality, some players did not believe that uncontested equality was evident in the game. Gemma explained how most boys perceived themselves as being better than girls at korfbal because boys were generally presumed to be better at sport, "they think they're all the best and everything" (Gemma). Gemma suggested that boys did not think that girls should play any sports including mixed sports, aligning with findings from Hills and Croston (2011) who suggested that boys perceived girls as inferior. Gemma did also explain that girls could be better than boys, explaining how the coach often told the girls to take the shots and therefore the boys were expected to support them, "I think mainly like boys, because Frank always tells the girls to go like, do the running in shots" (Gemma). Ralph also agreed that neither boys or girls were naturally better at the game than the other sex, "but like if, it should not be like that, because girls can be better than boys, and boys can be better than girls" (Ralph). Lucy, Lee and Charlie all agreed by saying that boys did not necessarily dominate with regards to strength or speed and that the game gave boys and girls an equal chance at success. When considering positions and roles within the game which depended on skill, as opposed to innate physical



characteristics, Lucy and Lorraine suggested how the roles of feed and collect, and the number of shots taken and scored were evenly spread between the boys and girls in this team,

I think like, cos normally in a game we'll switch about, like twice like, in our first we'll switch like. It'll be attack, then we'll be in defence, and then in attack. In that attack for the first lot we'll have like one lot of plans, like say me and Gemma, or me and the other girl will be shooting, and then we'll switch around, so it's always fair (Lorraine).

This aspect of the game supports Crum's (1988) suggestion that female players disagree with notions of male supremacy, and Thompson and Finnigan's (1990) assertion that men shoot more than women. Where ideas of equal skill and ability are considered, it demonstrates how particular embodied practices have the opportunity to alter dominant discourses. With assertions from both boys and girls suggesting that they have equal ability, comes the opportunity for a discursive practice to resist taken for granted assumptions of gender difference and alter discourse.

Charlie, conversely, argued that girls predominantly fed the ball from the post and the boys then took the shots, which supports findings of research conducted by Crum (1988), Thompson and Finnigan (1990) and Summerfield and White (1989). Charlie did argue, though, that equality was more prevalent at higher levels of korfbal,

Girls would act as feed for boys, but, like, the higher sort of you get, the more you sort of spread out between. It's like the higher difficulty the game would be, the more you think about like using the girls as an attacker, and positions they're in (Charlie).

I don't know really. It's sort of happens when you start. Ever since I've started the sport really. In a game, the girls would be like feeding the boys, and it was very rare that the girls, unfortunately, get the girls, sort of thing. As the higher up it gets, as I say the more, the girls will shoot more, the girls will be more like yeah (Charlie).

To ensure equality between the sexes at all levels, Ralph proposed the need for two captains, one girl and one boy, so that both sexes would have a captain and the game would be increasingly equal,

personally I think there should be two captains: one for the boys, one for the girls, because girls don't know what the boys are capable of, but, and so like, boys know what boys are capable of, and girls know what, so if I had to have

two captains, Sophie and George (Ralph).

This very suggestion showed how some of the players were aware of tactical inequalities in the game. Within this team, though, no one sex was dominant in this regard, since they had had both a male and female captain at different times in the same season.

### *5.1.2 Key Components of Korfball Performance*

In addition to the assertions of equality with the performance of korfball, players explained that there were other important factors within the whole package of korfball, such as being vocal and interacting with other players, the rules that prevented contacting anyone on the opposing side, and the requirement of teamwork for success. Players pointed towards the importance of these key themes to the way in which korfball is performed, and in some instances asserted that these factors made korfball different and preferable to other sports. For example, although many team sports rely on a degree of communication in order to perform strategies and tactics, this is often no more than players shouting to signal that they are available to receive a ball or to communicate the way forward for tactical play. However, in korfball being vocal has become an integral part of the game, and is embedded deeply into the way it is played. 'Calling' to inform teammates what their opponent might do next so that said teammate can defend to the best of their abilities, is a very normal and necessary part of the game. As a defender, if the attacking opponent takes a position at the post in order to feed the ball out to other attackers, the marking defender will call "girl feed" or "boy feed" so that fellow defenders are aware of their players running past them to receive the ball and shoot. If an attacker takes the collect position under the post, their defender will shout "tight" so that fellow defenders mark tightly in order to stop long shots from taking place. Finally, another key verbal signal is "party", which is shouted by a defender as they intercept the ball, and signals to other defenders that they should no longer mark their players and instead should turn their attention to getting the ball to their attacking section.

As suggested, the necessity of being vocal is deeply embedded in the game of korfball. Tactically, 'calling' provides teammates with the best opportunity to defend, and therefore provides the team as a whole with a better chance of success. This would

imply that those players that 'call' most frequently, could also be considered good korfball players to some extent (this idea is further explored later in this section). Vocal players also hold a lot of court presence; the noise that they make means that they stand out from less vocal players and often dominate the game. Additionally, they should have confidence in their knowledge of korfball in order to make the calls, so it tends to be the stronger players that do this. Therefore, within this study, it was important to discover who the players deemed to be the most vocal. It was also useful to consider the previous research by Thompson and Finnigan (1990) and Summerfield and White (1989) who suggested that men tended to be more vocal than women in the findings of their studies.

When players were asked who was the most vocal, interview data generally demonstrated that female players were considered. Sophie and Lorraine were described as shouting the loudest and most often, contradicting the research by Thompson and Finnigan (1990) and Summerfield and White (1989):

Sophie shouts the most often, erm, me and mainly Lorraine, because Lorraine just loves shouting, I don't know why? (Ralph).

Not just because she's my sister, but the fact that wherever you are on the pitch you'll be able to hear her, even if you're in like the dugout sort of thing, and she just shouts for anything really (Charlie).

yeah cos like when we get the ball I make sure every single time I shout, I'll literally scream "party!" (Lorraine).

Lorraine went on to explain that part of the reason she is so vocal is because she made sure that she instructed other players on tactics, both the boys and girls in her section,

then I'll say that, "if James, you go for the collect, we can do a four-zero". I'll say to Gemma, and we can go out, and if we start a four-zero, and then like, sometimes I'll like go around and say all a bit of the plan and I think it helps cos like then we sort of know what we're doing, and then I'll sort of like, if that doesn't work we'll re-set and then we'll do it again (Lorraine).

Both Lorraine and Sophie agreed that they were both the two most vocal players in matches. In the same way that Lorraine explained her vocal nature being related to her tactical instructions, Sophie suggested that they were most vocal as they were the most passionate players, and were willing to direct others if they need to be directed:

but obviously I think me and Lorraine are like, we're quite happy to shout out, and we'll get angry at people or tell people like "make sure you defend that person next time", or "do this next time", we're not that like hid behind, like not worried (Sophie).

Lorraine and Sophie's confidence to shout instructions more than other players on the pitch may have been due to their high level of ability, and their knowledge and experience of the game. From observation, it was clear that other players generally recognised calls that Lorraine and Sophie were making, and responded with the appropriate actions. Lorraine and Sophie's respected ability indicated how able girls may resist the notions that girls are less skilled than boys in sport (Hills and Croston, 2012), using embodied practice to resist dominant discourse related to gender norms in sport.

Despite the general consensus that either individual girls, or girls more generally, shouted more than boys (Lucy, Lorraine), this was not generalised to all of the female players. For example, Sophie described Michelle as being quiet and not shouting during matches, "I don't really think Michelle talks a lot, erm, I don't think that's just the kind of person Michelle is, like she's not one of these people who's going to shout out" (Sophie). James suggested that some of the boys, including himself and Ralph, did not tend to shout as much as the girls as they got worn out and did not have the energy. By separating boys and girls within this context, James demonstrated an implied difference between the sexes. Previous player comments that named individuals as being loud or quiet on the pitch, did not make generalisations about traits being specific to either boys or girls, instead they silenced gender difference. When discussing discourse, Foucault (1990) explains how silence can both maintain existing discourses, but also destabilise it. Where gender difference is silenced in this context, and generalisations are not made between one sex or the other, there begins an element of destabilisation within the korfbal setting. A destabilisation of existing gender structures and taken for granted gender differences. Yet, James did acknowledge gender difference, and this acknowledgement of difference lent itself to a number of Foucault's suggested techniques of power. Firstly, by dividing the sexes into male and female, he abided by scientific discourse of classification; Foucault (1994) gives an example of this when explaining the comparison of diseases in the nineteenth century. Foucault explained

that classification, utilised by the human sciences, creates universal categories of people, and objectifies humans in this process (Smith Maguire, 2002). James went on to explain, specifically, about himself and Ralph not shouting very much:

Erm, there's quite a few people that don't shout very much. Erm, sometimes I don't shout that much, I don't know why, but sometimes I feel like I don't really want to express myself, because, like, when you get worn out and stuff like that... he [Ralph] just gets really worn out as well (James).

This was also evidenced by observation. James and Ralph were both frequently seen to look tired, and they displayed less energy than the other players. The coach would often recognise this and shout at individuals to “put some effort in!”, or direct them to “come on!”, “push!”<sup>23</sup>, or “call it!”. These instructions from coaches regarding decreased effort or lack of ‘calling’ during training and matches, could be seen as judgements of transgression from the acceptable or normal high energy, very vocal, and effort enforced sporting activity. Foucault (1990) explained how discretion was granted to ‘normal’ sexualities within the Victorian era, and anything ‘unnatural’ within the field of sexuality was deemed to transgress from the norm and was therefore judged and reprimanded. Discretion to the norm and judgment of transgression were techniques used in normalisation processes. Within korfbal, it is desirable for players to put in the utmost effort and to ‘call’ to their fellow players, so the coach could be seen to judge those that transgressed from this korfbal norm, in a hope that the play could be corrected, normalised. The judgement of transgression from the coach is one way that players construct korfbal knowledge, and learn how to act within a korfbal environment.

Interview data has shown how a number of the girls were seen to dominate the vocal format of the korfbal game, and how some of the boys were sometimes too tired to be vocal. These findings do not align with the findings from studies conducted by Thompson and Finnigan (1990) and Summerfield and White (1989) who suggested that male participants were more vocal than the female players. Evidently, being vocal is key to playing korfbal, and is tactically beneficial, and because of this, interview data

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<sup>23</sup> “Push” was often the term used to request that players put effort in when shooting. It was used in the context of “push the ball”.

showed how shouting and being vocal was seen to be a positive attribute to have as a korfbal player, and it was often seen to be something that players considered to make a good player. A high number of players discussed how shouting and 'calling' made specific players good players. For example, Gemma deemed Lucy to be the best player because she ran around and called a lot, and Lilly explained that both Charlie and Sophie were good players since they both got to the ball often and also shouted and encouraged players.

In interviews, it was also implied that being vocal was an attribute of a good captain. Assuming that captains are usually there to tactically lead a sports team and motivate them to succeed, a korfbal captain would need to vocally provide both of these roles. Sophie had started the season as the team captain, but half way through the season George was appointed captain by the junior coach (speculative reasons for this were raised by players and will be acknowledged in due course). When considering who the captain of the team was and why, Lilly explained that Sophie was given the captaincy because of her competitive nature which influenced the way in which she guided the team and gave instructions. Lilly put an emphasis on Sophie's spoken guidance, rather than her general korfbal ability, as the reason that Sophie was captain. Gemma agreed with the importance of a vocal captain, explaining how Lucy should have been captain because she ran a lot and also shouted often, "because she's like all energetic and she shouts the most like "come on, you move over there! Come on! Quickly, quickly, quickly! Pass, pass, pass, pass!" and everything" (Gemma). Calling tactics and instructions obviously made players more eligible for captaincy; yet, the more recent captain, George, was seen as being motivational but not instructional (Gemma), and players even explained how he often got calls wrong (Ralph),

Yeah, but then like, quite a lot of the time he's quite funny because he doesn't know what he's saying. He'll shout like "tight, tight, tight" even if it's the wrong [laughs], even if, because he's just starting, well not just starting, but like, he's done it for about a month I think, a month or two (Lorraine).

Taking into account that George was given captaincy, yet players readily acknowledged that he did not always instruct the team accurately, he would need other traits that made him a good choice as captain. From interviews with the junior players, it was evident that being motivational was also seen as a positive korfbal characteristic.

Players frequently considered this type of vocal interaction with the team to be more important than discouraging remarks or evidence of frustration with play. For example, Gemma explained how Lucy gave directions in a positive and kind way, and therefore encouraged players to keep their heads up,

she like, after a game, say we lost, she's like really good. She says like "well you did well, don't be sad" and she starts smiling [laughs] and then, erm, it's quite fun with Lucy because it's not like, all like, "you have to do this now", it's more like "ok guys you have to do this, come on lets go", and in a nice voice instead of like a horrible voice (Gemma).

James agreed with the need for positive instruction rather than anger, and explained that he liked George being captain due to his supporting character, rather than the harsh instructions of the previous captain,

yeah he kind of like tells us where we have to be, but he doesn't really like, intimidate us because of it, whereas I found that Sophie did a little bit... She would like say to us "move!" [forceful tone implied] and she'd give you a dirty look kind of thing (James).

Lorraine also agreed that George made a good captain due to his nature and motivational encouragement:

well he like, he always makes sure we keep our heads up. He's like "come on", like "don't worry about it, come on". Erm, it's hard when you're not on a pitch, cos you hear what they say. Erm, "don't worry", err "next goal" or something like that, and just keeps you like, motivated (Lorraine).

Lorraine explained how vocal encouragement made George a good player and a good captain.

When James explained his disdain for Sophie's intimidation, it may have been that he uncovered the reason that she was replaced by George as captain. Her harshness and lack of support may have been her downfall. Despite this suggestion, Sophie did not seem aware of the intimidation that some players felt whilst she was captain. She explained how she had tried to motivate and encourage to the same extent as George, "obviously with me being captain before George came, erm, I was very much like George, like, well I tried to be, I'm not sure if I was but I tried to be" (Sophie). Considering Sophie was demoted from captain and described as intimidating and not motivational, but George was promoted to captain despite not giving directions or

'calling' correctly, it would suggest that being motivational was more important for a captain than being directional. Despite the ambiguity over various key, vocal attributes, it is important to acknowledge that this team had adopted both a male and female captain during the season. This differed to findings from research conducted by Summerfield and White (1989) which suggested that all of the teams they studied had male captains and coaches.

As discussed, being vocal and interacting with members of the same team is an extremely important element of korfbal. Essentially, vocal interaction is important because it enhances teamwork and awareness of what is happening for other team members. Literature expresses the importance of teamwork in korfbal (Crum, 2003b; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated; IKF, 2006), and this was supported by the responses in interviews. When Ralph considered player interaction within korfbal, he described how teamwork was an extremely important part of the game and was also part of the reason he enjoyed the game so much. Ralph also played basketball, and explained how the solo play in basketball was not allowed in korfbal, which he considered a positive aspect, "it's kind of like a really fun sport to play [korfbal] because you have teams and work together. It's not like basketball where you dribble and all that" (Ralph), suggesting that it might offer an alternative to traditional, mainstream sports. He continued by explaining the importance of teamwork in korfbal, "it makes the sport challenging, so that you know you've got to help this person, but I'll maybe get in the collect so that she can run in and take it, or the boys run in" (Ralph), and,

if you see the under sixteens like, they used to be, erm, they used to be a really strong team, and they still are erm, so yeah, but they still help each other, like "you move out, I'll come back, collect, and you run in". Like if you saw the game over there they were always like, like quickly maneuvering off each other like "I'll get, I'll get in the collect". So yeah, that's really it really (Ralph).

James also explained how the team generally had a supportive ethos,

Erm, I like the atmosphere. Whereas as like other teams [in other sports] kind of like, they kind of pick on each other kind of thing, whereas we don't. We kind of all stay together, and there's always like loads and loads of support (James).

Evidence supported the need for teamwork and the positive attitude of the players



regarding this necessity. This could suggest that korfbal may remove gender binaries and promote gender inclusivity, since cooperation and teamwork between boys and girls in a sport setting is said to aid this (Thorne, 1993). Yet, outside of korfbal, the players' attitudes towards each other were not so unified, and they were not such an integrated group.

Another significant theme that emerged during the performance of korfbal, was the way in which male and female players interacted with each other within korfbal spaces (at training, during matches, in social situations, and at tournaments over weekends). This was in addition to the tactical vocal interaction during matches and extended to more social interactions as opposed to strategic ones on the korfbal pitch. Players were asked about their friendships within the korfbal team, and a number of them firmly asserted that gender did not suffice as a tool to choose friendships. Sophie, Lorraine and Lilly all described how the male and female junior players all got along well as friends. For example, stating:

I'm not more of a friend with the girls than the boys, I like them all the same (Lilly)

every now and then we all have a little joke around, but like everyone will make up in the end, we're all friends (Lorraine)

I mean like [girls are] just fun to have around really, like they joke around with us boys really, it's just fun to really, you know, bond... Sophie, Lorraine all that, we always get along really well. Like at Kent we have a joke around. We just have really good fun and that... just with really, you know, naturally really (Ralph).

well I think it's more or less boys in one, but then girls in one, but then when we come to play korfbal we're just like all one group (Lorraine).

Lorraine's last statement reflected the way in which the boys and girls tended to socialise with their own sex outside of korfbal, but when they were within a korfbal space this was no longer the case. Lefebvre's (1991) assertion that the body is influenced by the space that it occupies may explain the differences between the players' interactions in different spaces. When in a korfbal space, one that promotes equality and interaction between the sexes, the players tended to socialise together; but in wider society, where the same values are not necessarily enforced, the players

tended to socialise with the same sex. Alternatively, this can be explained by Foucault (1994) when he suggests that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates. This means that when the players were at korfball, the korfball gaze, promoting equality and mixed-sex interaction dominated over the gaze from wider society, which relies on dominant gender discourse and notions of difference.

There was evidently a feeling of united friendship between players when at korfball training and matches, even if this was not the case outside of this environment. This was also emphasised by Ralph with his response to a question related to the differences between boys and girls; he explained that he did not really see a difference between the sexes when they were at korfball, “no, I really don’t see it because we have a laugh” (Ralph). Ralph continued by explaining how the mixed aspect of korfball was simply more enjoyable than single-sex korfball could be, explaining that korfball means that girls and boys can bond and have fun together, so the mixed structure was very important to him,

Yeah, I, I think girls, you need a few girls, because if it was all boys, erm, it just don’t make it fun. You all chat about when... really if it was girls you can like start to bond, play well like, I think, it’s just funner with girls. I, like, I don’t really think korfball would be the same without girls (Ralph).

James and Charlie also agreed that korfball would not be as good if it was played without girls, “I prefer like, the fact that there is, everyone’s sort of so friendly and like, and I do like it that there’s boys and girls, not just boys” (Charlie). As a female player, Sophie also liked the fact that korfball is mixed,

yeah I think it’s really fun because, erm, I think it’s good that you have two girls and two boys in the same like section. Like, you can’t have a section of girls and a section of boys, because, I just like to play with boys because it’s different (Sophie).

Junior players all spoke fondly of the mixed format of the game, commending the chance to interact with the opposite sex, even if they were not provided with this opportunity outside of the korfball environment (equality and the mixed format of the game will be discussed further in section 6.5). These comments could enhance Thorne’s (1993) suggestion that equality between girls and boys within a sports setting may demonstrate that gender inclusivity is achievable. Less the acceptance, than the endorsement of the mixed-sex format in korfball, demonstrates how knowledge has

been constructed within this setting, which normalizes korfbal's mixed rules. Akin to Foucault's (1978) description of the concealment of sex, one can apply the same logic to the notion of gender parity in sport: concepts can be forced to become discursive, in this case, through outlets like korfbal. As mixed sports become discursive practices, they offer resistance to dominant discourses of gender and sport, where 'natural' difference is usually maintained (Messner, 2002; 2009; 2011).

Linked to the interaction between players, junior korfbal participants often referred to the non-contact aspect of the game as being something that made it preferable to sports that accepted or encouraged physical contact. When asked what they liked about korfbal, players willingly considered physical interaction without prompting and discussed situations related to a preference of non-contact sports such as korfbal, for varying reasons. Literature reinforces the ethos regarding korfbal contact and suggests that contact should be limited, and only happen within a very controlled way (Crum, 2003b; Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). This is promoted by rules such as protected possession of the ball, meaning that others cannot take the ball without it leaving the hands of the player that has possession (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). Many players considered the non-contact aspect of korfbal a reason that they played, or a very positive aspect of the sport. Lorraine and James both explained that the non-contact format of korfbal appealed to them because it meant that they were less likely to be injured,

I play this because it's non-contact, so I don't get hurt as much, which I like [laughs] (Lorraine).

I don't really like to get hurt in sports, and there's no contact in korfbal so it's quite nice (James).

James and Lorraine's fears of getting hurt are similar to those of both the boys and girls in a study by MacDonald, Rodger, Abbott, Ziviani and Jones (2005). James explained that korfbal rules meant that it was not as rough as sports such as football and rugby, but the presence of girls also enhanced this. Seemingly, he attributed more of a natural roughness to boys and realised that girls were less suited to physical contact as a sporting norm. A comment by Lorraine accentuated this idea as she indicated that she

did not only worry about getting hurt, as implied in the quote above, but she was also very aware that she did not want to hurt others:

I don't like being tough to other people because sometimes I think that if I am tough on other people, I sort of like, get the ball off of them. But in korfbal, it's easier to stay friends because, like, if it was a contact sport and I hurt them, then they might think "oh she's done that on purpose", even though I might not have (Lorraine).

Lorraine, as a female player, was grateful for korfbal being non-contact, as she was obviously worried that physical assertion could be misinterpreted as aggression and this might mean losing friendships. Clarke and Paechter (2007) suggested that being 'nice' was a strong factor in securing female friendships, and that the participants in their study were deterred from playing playground football because it was too rough. This is an example of embodied practice being produced discursively. Lorraine realizes that she must use her body in certain ways in order to comply with the norms of female friendships, which are also influenced by dominant gender discourses which do not associate girls as being competitive and aggressive. This also reinforces ideas that, without physical contact, korfbal can be seen as 'gentle' and 'nice'; although, this is arguably a reason that growth, and the chance of korfbal becoming a 'topsport', is limited (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated: 12). Interestingly, none of the male players acknowledged, or seemed worried about, losing friends through contact within sporting environments.

Despite the non-contact structure of korfbal, as with all physical team sports, contact can still happen, intentionally or otherwise. For example, Gemma explained how boys were more likely to be intentionally physical than girls. She explained that "they more, like, pull you on the floor, like, start punching you on the arm..." (Gemma). She continued by describing an incident when James broke her arm: "Yeah, because I scored once, James came up to me and went *bash*, and that broke my hand! [laughs]" (Gemma). Despite describing this incident, Gemma found it funny, which would indicate that she knew James did not aggressively intend to hurt her. From the time spent conducting this study and getting to know the players, it would seem highly unlikely that James would hurt anyone intentionally. Charlie emphasised the notion that when contact occurred, it would not be with the deliberate aim to hurt someone.

Instead, he suggested that when contact is evident it is often due to determination, “Yes, because they’re determined to get the ball” (Charlie). It would seem that contact between players occasionally happened accidentally or in jest, but all players asserted that they had not experienced contact in a malicious way, or with an intention to break the non- contact rules. Considering this, the general lack of physical contact between players was exhibited as a valued aspect by players when performing korfbal, and something that a number of players asserted as making korfbal different to other sports.

### *5.1.3 Sporting Attributes*

Within this research, specific attributes were seen to be valuable for korfbal players. Being able to shoot successfully was strongly described as a positive attribute, and one which was normally assigned to girls. For example, Ralph described how Sophie took the most shots, and also scored the most goals due to her technique, which James agreed with,

[Sophie and Lorraine] have got good skills, and they’ve got good shooting techniques, and they’ve got good movement around the pitch and stuff like that (James)

Lorraine and Lilly also agreed that Sophie’s technique was what made her better at playing korfbal than other players,

Yes, because she’s a bit more confident than me, like at shooting, but then like at some things I’m a bit more confident than her, than she is than me (Lorraine)

She’s [Sophie] just got like a technique with her hand, it’s like double hands, she just goes [shooting action made], and it’s in (Lilly).

Being able to shoot accurately and score goals was an attribute that meant players could be successful korfbal players. When players described Sophie as being a good player due to her shooting ability, they did not mention any other physical attributes that may have aided her korfbal skills, such as height or speed. Shooting and accurately aiming seemed to be an isolated skills in this sense. The presence of Sophie, a very able player, could resist the idea that girls are generally less skilled in sports than boys. The visibility of skilled and able girls could begin to demonstrate how boys and girls can play sport together effectively (Hills and Croston, 2012), once again, suggesting a way that

embodied practices can alter dominant discourse of female inferiority. Despite girls, particularly Sophie, being the *main* focus for shooting skills, Charlie also discussed how Lee was an excellent player due to his ability to shoot long shots. Charlie explained how Lee had the technique, accuracy and power in his arms to make him a good player, “so like, if his shot is a long shot, and like, more than like six in ten would get a long shot in, because he’s got like, really good accuracy and good power, so he just gets like, the long shots in” (Charlie). In this instance, other attributes became key to being a successful shooter, such as power, which was not something that was ascribed to the successful female shooter.

Running speed was deemed another useful skill to have. James argued that Gemma was good at shooting because she was quick; Lorraine argued that George was the second best player (after Sophie) due to his speed; and Lucy suggested that Lorraine was a good player because she was fast. Crum (1988; 2003) and Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost (undated) also state the importance of speed for either sticking to an opponent in order to defend them or getting free from an opponent in order to shoot. These assertions are particularly interesting as the IKF (2006) suggest that traditional sporting advantages, such as speed, are weakened due to the rules of korfbal, yet, previous literature and participants within this study suggest that it is an important factor for success, which is similar to many other sports.

The IKF (2006) also suggest that height advantage is eliminated due to korfbal rules, which could be why height was not considered to be an attribute that impacted upon players’ korfbal ability within this study. Gemma discussed how Frank, the coach, told Michelle to not rely on her height, and how she was making mistakes by doing this, “he [Frank] gave her [Michelle] some advice about passing in to people. I think she passed it over their head and a girl caught it, and then erm, so Frank said don’t just rely on your height” (Gemma). Only Lilly and Lee considered height as an overarching attribute which boys usually possessed over girls, “No because normally the boys are like taller than the girls, so if the girls, if the boys marking the girls, they wouldn’t be able to get to shoot or stuff like that” (Lilly). She explained that, since boys have a height advantage over girls, boys and girls should mark their own sex. Foucault (1990) would argue that these assertions act to reinforce gender discourses related to normalised

physical differences between boys and girls. Crum (2003a) agreed that the height advantage usually held by men makes them stronger when shooting or rebounding. Lee, conversely, did not associate boys with being taller and disassociated the link between height and sex. He suggested that height was a useful korfbal attribute, but he did not assume that it was a sex-specific advantage.

Lilly and Sophie both concluded that rather than the best players relying on height, it was actually better to be either tall or short,

It depends, because if you can't shoot and you're tall, then, but, it's also like, it's best if you're really small or you're really tall because when you're really small you can just go under them, and through them and stuff like that. Like, yeah, and when you're playing against other teams across the country, Rachel told me they're much taller, and all the little kids from our national team were just like, going under them (Lilly).

I don't know, because I would quite happily say that Lorraine's quite a good player, like. She's played for the national team and regional so I don't think she's like, and I think like a lot of people say if you're small, you're more likely to be quick, like, so I think you do need the small players, like the smallish like, but like so they can run, but you need the tall players like, to get the rebound and the feed, and stuff like that (Sophie).

Ralph considered that height may be an advantage sometimes, but maintained that it was not the main factor that made a player successful, and this was emphasised by James who explained an instance where someone shorter than him was a better player, "No because you can be, I was marking a really small child when I was under nines, and he was better than me" (James). James continued to explain that speed and stamina were more important than simply being tall, "yeah, and he put up more shots because he was quicker. He kind of had more stamina than me, and stuff like that, yeah" (James). Lilly also suggested that fitness played a part in becoming a good korfbal player and explained that, "you have to be like, you don't have to be like healthy, like a top athlete, but like, you have to like, have like, be fit enough to be running around the pitch", and "you have to have at least like muscles in your arms to be able to put your arms up and keep them up like that, and stuff like that" (Lilly). General fitness, and the ability to meet the physical demands of korfbal were considered key elements to being a good korfbal player.

When asked what attributes are needed to be a good korfballer Lilly discussed the

importance of speed. She suggested that Lorraine, who was the shortest player on the team, was very good because of her speed, implying that height was not actually the deciding factor in being a good korfball player,

Lorraine, who's Charlie's little sister, erm, there's like, there's something I think, something like, then she can just get the ball. I don't know, she just finds the way to mark the players even though she's really small. She finds a way to mark them... she's fast (Lilly).

Despite a number of players explaining how height had little value in korfball, and thus did not provide male players with a natural advantage, some of the female players acknowledged that the boys' additional strength meant that they were often likely to dominate over female korfball players,

Like size and physical things, because, erm, like, either because most boys are quite like, not faster, but like, they are a bit stronger, so like, if girls were going to jump with a ball, it's like, quite a few times I'll get it, but if it was against a boy they'll probably get it every time (Lorraine)

Lorraine obviously had some understanding of male dominance and boys' natural strength. The explanation that she gave suggested that a male player would always win the ball when competing with a female player. This idea would not comply with the korfball ideology of eliminating any physical dominance that men have over women (IKF, 2006). Instead, these ideas do comply with ideas of biological determinism, an ideology which suggests that men innately possess particular characteristics that benefit sporting participation (Mansfield, 2006). Lorraine's understanding of male dominance and natural strength advantages can be explained by Foucault's (1988) explanation of 'the other'. Foucault (1988) illustrated this example by stating that the man of reason could not exist without 'the other', the madman as a point of comparison. In this example, Lorraine describes male superiority in aspects of sporting participation, signaling females as the lesser other. Discourse around the innate physical superiority of males, shapes individual subjects and their understanding, and reproduces ideas that girls cannot be as strong as boys. Embodied sporting practices, as discursive constructs, often reinforce these ideas and 'prove' male superiority. These ideas can be seen being reproduced by a number of players within this study, and also by the korfball rules as they aim to reduce the physical dominance of men



over women, reproducing dominant discourse.

It also became evident from interview data, that different players had particular skills. For example, some players were better at attacking and some at defending, and within those roles they may be better at particular elements such as collecting the ball or taking shots. Ralph explained how it was important to have people with different capabilities so that the team as a whole could be successful, “it might be good, it can help, but like there’s some where you just think, I’m, cos they have different personalities. Like Sophie, she’s an excellent shooter but maybe not the most strongest at defending” (Ralph). He continued with this point and stated that,

that’s why you need a mix of personalities. Like I’m good at defending, James’s good at collecting, Sophie’s good at shooting, and Michelle is good at shooting. Lorraine’s a good like rebounder, and then you have, so we all play a different role (Ralph).

Charlie agreed with this and also explained that players having different attributes strengthened the team as a whole,

Erm, in a korfbal team you need everything, so you need a tall player obviously so they can get the ball, a fast player so they can get like the ball in, like good accuracy in a player so you can get the ball in the post sort of thing (Charlie).

The players that made these assertions did not attribute specific strengths to male or female players. Instead, Charlie spoke of tall players or fast players, rather than boys or girls, creating gender neutrality in this explanation. Both Ralph and Charlie silenced sex difference by discussing attributes rather than speaking of boys and girls. When Foucault (1990) discussed discourse, he explained how silence is not separate from the spoken word. Rather, silence and the spoken word work alongside each other and are relative to each other. Foucault (1990) recognised how talking about sexuality in the Victorian era was controlled through assertions of silence in certain places and at certain times, yet was discussed with consideration and caution in other environments, such as schools. This could also be applied to a korfbal setting if the korfbal aims were successful. Korfbal looks to promote equality within a sporting environment and remove advantages and physical differences related to sex (IKF, 2006), if done successfully, there would be no requirement to discuss gender difference within this environment, thus silencing it as Ralph and Charlie did. Yet, at the same time,

difference is marked through the way in which boys have to mark boys and girls have to mark girls, by the different clothes that they wear (see section 1.1), and by the 'calling' of 'boy' or 'girl' to fellow defenders when describing who is in at the post feeding the ball out to attackers. This, therefore, aligns with Foucault's (1990: 35) summary of sex and discourse where he explains, 'they dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*'.

Rather than matching specific sexes with certain attributes, Sophie explained how important it was to be able to judge the opposition and then play as a team, in a reactive way. This meant that the opposition's strengths were often matched by players with the same strengths in their team. Sophie explained that players would change their style of play in order to successfully compete against their opponent. For example, "It depends who you're marking, like if Charlie was marking someone like Shane, I'd think he'd be like, better not running in because I think Shane's faster than Charlie" (Sophie), and,

But then err, it, sometimes like Michelle might get a really tall player and I might get quite a small player, sometimes we have to change so we all have to learn how to play. Like the defence and the, erm, rebounds, because Lorraine might get an even smaller person than her, and Michelle might get a taller person, so you just need to know because obviously, Michelle can't go in the rebound then... well, she can, but she's more likely not to because she's got a taller player (Sophie).

She continued by stating that if her opponent was stronger than her then she would be less likely to take a shooting role, and instead she would feed the ball to others to shoot,

But erm, I don't think it really, it just depends I think, because if you've got someone like, if I was playing someone like Elise I think I'd be like better as a feed or something like that, because like, she's more stronger than me, like bigger than me (Sophie)

Alternatively, if she had a player that was weaker than her, she would take the running in shots, "Like if you've got a weak player, erm, then you can run on them because it's easier to run, and they don't really know what they're doing. It's probably being mean" (Sophie). Here is another example of how sex was silenced (Foucault, 1990) within korfbal. It was clear that physical attributes and different skill sets were used in a tactical way, but the tactics were often based on the opposition, and play is therefore

conducted in a reactive way. This reactive mode of play meant that sex differences became partially redundant. If the boys had all-round strong players, and the girls' opposition was weak, then it would be up to the girls to generate success. If this was reversed, then the boys would need to create opportunities for victory.

This section demonstrates a number of korfbal aspects that players see as important to their performance, such as being vocal, the type of player interaction that takes place, the non-contact rules of the game, and the importance of teamwork. It also demonstrates how some participants viewed the experience of korfbal as being different to other sports for a number of these reasons, despite evidence from chapter one indicating that korfbal is not so different when considering the broader lens of sport. This chapter has also demonstrated how players have constructed knowledge related to korfbal practice and success in the field, but that this also runs alongside knowledge influenced by broader social discourses related to gender and sport. It has shown that, as an embodied practice, korfbal can resist dominant discourses in some ways, but there is also evidence of subjects being shaped by wider social discourse, and forming part of the discursive process which reproduces dominant discourse. Nevertheless, when considering the players' korfbal experiences within the whole package of korfbal, it is not enough to draw conclusions based solely on players' roles and interactions; a number of adult roles also constituted a big part of the players' perceptions and understandings of korfbal.

## **5.2 Power Relationships with Korfbal**

As previously recognised, when considering the whole package of korfbal, participants implied that it was not only the rules of the game that made korfbal unique to other sports but also, and often, more importantly, the informal practices that meant korfbal could maintain the allure that it held over current players. These players recognised that, in addition to the tactical performances of korfbal that are discussed in section 5.1, the whole package of korfbal was strongly influenced by certain roles held by adults. A number of adults were involved in the korfbal scene and influenced the korfbal experience for the junior players. Firstly, three coaches were highly influential during training and matches but gained differing levels of respect from players (this is

discussed in more detail in section 5.2.1). Secondly, referees were seen to play an important role in the control of players within the match space (which will be discussed further in section 2.2.2). Thirdly, parents were also very visible during training and matches, and they were seen to play a highly important role within the 'korfbal family' (this will be discussed more in section 5.2.3). The under 13s players openly discussed how the coaches and parents all contributed to their experience of korfbal.

### *5.2.1 Coaches*

Coaches were seen as playing a very important role and having a relatively strong influence over players within the majority of korfbal spaces. Despite this, coaches were seen to have different attributes, meaning that certain coaches more readily influenced players, or alternatively, had less influence on the behaviour and korfbal performance of junior players. The Trinity under 13s team predominantly had one coach, Frank. Frank had experience of playing korfbal, but no longer played, and was a very large man who could not move around very quickly. The Head Junior Coach was Zoe, and she was usually seen in the same training space, but coaching the under 16s team at the other side of the sports hall. She was a current player for the club's first team and was respected by the under 13s for her knowledge and experience, which will be discussed later in this section. The hierarchy of Zoe being the Head Junior Coach and Frank being an additional Junior Coach contradicts findings from With-Nielson and Pfister's (2011) study into PE teachers, where findings indicated that male teachers coached higher level children, and female teachers coached lower ability children. Finally, David, the Head Coach of the entire club, also appeared at training and, again, he was usually also coaching the under 16s. David was also a national coach, which gained him a lot of respect from junior players, especially those that had been successful enough to make the national team (this will be discussed later in this section).

Despite junior korfbal players deeming korfbal to be different to many other sports, it is worth noting that korfbal coaches held many of the same roles that other sports coaches were responsible for. Coaches demonstrated power in the match space since they decided who would be in the team, although the rules state that there must be two of each sex in each section of the pitch. They also decided which positions the players should go in (half of the team attack first and half defend first), and guided

players throughout the match. This can be explained by Foucault's (1979a) description of the composition of forces whereby individual bodies, korfball players, in this case, can be seen as part of a multi-segmentary machine, which is the korfball team as a whole. A precise system of command exists, whereby the master of discipline is the coach, and the players are subjected to the coach's discipline. The coach subtly ranks and classifies the players by deciding who will be the captain, who is attacking first (tactically the best players were usually put in the attacking section first), and who is going to take free passes or penalties, both of these positions indicate the best shooters. Findings showed that the distribution of players was not a reflection of sex. For example, when this research started, the captain was initially Sophie, then later through the season, George was given the captaincy. Also, it was clear that the best shooters were given roles to take penalties or free passes, irrespective of sex; these players were usually Sophie, Lorraine or Charlie. There was a clear distribution of individuals within certain spaces, individuals were ranked and classified through their positions within the team. The art of distributions, which allocates individuals into spaces indicating classification or rank, and the composition of forces which places individuals in chronological order within a multi-segmentary machine, are two of the techniques used to create docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a). In this way, korfball can be seen to function like many other sports, reproducing sport discourse, but, at the same time, resisting gender discourse by eliminating gender as a factor in the hierarchizing mechanism, and seemingly silencing gender altogether in this respect.

Junior korfball players explained that the coaches had different attributes. All of the players viewed David and Zoe as the best and most favourable coaches, and this was often attributed to their high level of korfball knowledge, implying that knowledge led to increased power (Foucault, 1990). It was clear from interviews that players struggled with the way in which Frank (a very large man) spent a lot of time sitting down, whilst David and Zoe moved around often, demonstrating and correcting technique. Players made it clear that Frank's lack of movement was a problem:

Erm, [Frank] kind of doesn't really get up with us and move around a bit, like he kind of should (James).

because Frank don't like, really help, like get up and move around, because he

just sits on his bum... David will still get up and move around, and show it; do an example and everything. Like sometimes [Frank will] go and get it and we're just like "what?" and [Frank is] like, "you're meant to do it", and we're like "what are we meant to do? We don't get it!" and then [Frank will] just sit there until David comes over and starts saying "why aren't you doing your exercises?" and we're like "he hasn't explained it well" and then he's like "of course I did!" (Gemma).

Erm, this is probably being really horrible to Frank, but I don't think it's Frank because he doesn't like, get involved and show us what we've got to do. Like, David, like, is very like, erm, like he gives an example of what we need to do, he shows us, he don't just say it, but Frank doesn't, like, he just says "you've got to do this" (Sophie).

Throughout interviews it was clear that players had more respect for Zoe and David than they did for Frank. Part of this was due to Frank's limited physicality and the way in which he simply shouted from the sidelines, which players viewed as less helpful than physical demonstrations and corrections. These assertions demonstrated how the coaches were the knowing subjects, observing players, and correcting and training them in normalised korfbal techniques and behaviours; but at the same time, the coaches could also be seen as the known objects (Foucault, 1994). It was clear from interview responses that players were also surveying and judging coaches in their techniques and abilities.

The preference of Zoe and David as coaches will be explained further later in this section.

To gain an understanding of the way in which players experienced korfbal, they were asked to consider whether any of the coaches treated one sex differently to the other when coaching. This was to try and appreciate whether the promoted ideas of equality (IKF, 2006) were successfully being filtered down from the adult coaches to the junior players. In response, most players viewed coach actions and interactions as being the same for male and female players, suggesting "equal[ity]" and "fair[ness]" (Lorraine). This was explicitly agreed with by Lucy, Gemma, Lee, and also Charlie who stated that, "I think they treated them equally, they are all good coaches, they all treated everyone evenly" (Charlie). Sophie went on to explain that it was important for coaches to treat everyone the same because the mixed format of

korfball meant that both sexes would have to be able to master the same techniques and perform in the same roles, “the way that they teach includes everybody because, erm, because it is a mixed sport... I think all people need to know how to do... like all be able to do the same things” (Sophie). Sophie emphasised that the coaches, whether male or female, teach in a way that includes everyone, boys and girls. The coaches arguably create gender parity within the korfbal environment, and as masters of discipline (Foucault, 1979a) in this space, they influence players’ knowledge. If seen as a discursive practice, korfbal offers opportunities to alter players’ knowledge associated with dominant discourse, which could ultimately alter dominant gender discourse.

On the rare occasion that coaches were perceived to single out specific players, players did not explain it as relating to sex. For example, Charlie and Lorraine both suggested that David could be harsh to some players, but only those players that did not concentrate, they did not attribute harsher reactions to a specific sex,

I think [David] treats everyone equally. If you’re being like, if you’re mucking about he’ll sort of treat you like a, sort of treat you harder, but if you like listen and concentrate, he’ll treat you as equal as everyone else (Charlie).

yeah he [David] would, he would no matter what, like, cos David will always be aggressive [laughs] (Lorraine).

These responses align with findings from Messner (2009) which suggest that loud and aggressive coaching techniques are usually attributed to male coaches. Once again, the reaction from players also demonstrates how sex was silenced to some extent (Foucault, 1990), by the fact that coaches did not differentiate their coaching style based on sex. This was also emphasised by Lilly who asserted that David regularly told Ralph off, but this was not sex related, it was specific to *his* behaviour,

no, not shout like “do this, do that” like, he shouts at him like “come on Ralph! stop messing around” and stuff like that... yeah David treats Ralph differently because Ralph’s a bit of div sometimes... like he has to shout at him more (Lilly).

Thus, there was a degree of understanding that coaches would treat players equally with regards to discipline during korfbal practice and games. Yet, when Lilly was asked whether David would treat a girl in the same way that he treated Ralph, Lilly responded

with, “Yeah, but I don’t think a girl would do that” (Lilly). The interesting idea here was that coaches were understood to treat players equally, but Lilly presumed that girls would not provoke the same reactions as Ralph did, providing a division between assumed behaviour of girls and boys.

Despite general understandings of coaches treating the male and female players, in the same way, James did argue that,

sometimes the girls kind of like, the women speak to the girls much more like feminine... Erm, sometimes I feel like the men kind of like are a little bit hard on the boys because of, like, they know they won’t run off crying and all that (James).

The idea that women coaches are generally more empathetic and employ more feminine coaching techniques is one that Messner (2009) also discusses. The idea that female coaches interact with female players in a more “feminine” way, and that male coaches are harsher to the male players was not something that I observed during the research, and was not implied by any of the other players during interviews. James may have interpreted it this way because Ralph was frequently being shouted at, or it may have been that James took for granted the workings of social norms within the korfbal environment, and dominant gender discourse. Nevertheless, as a general rule, it would appear that equality was maintained by coaches within the korfbal environment. This could be because the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates (Foucault, 1994), and korfbal aims to promote equality between the sexes.

Despite the general equality that coaches project on to players, Lucy suggested that the female and male players act differently when they are being coached. For example,

I think the girls, we ask more questions because we’re interested, so we’re taught something, we’re interested about how we do it, like how it works and why, and boys just do it because they have to... some of them might not know why or how to do it properly (Lucy).

Lucy explains that, even when the boys are not sure what they are doing, they did not seem to want to ask questions or interact with coaches in this way. Conversely, the girls were more confident when it came to interacting with the coaches, and ensuring that they were performing to the best of their abilities. Sophie agreed with this comment



and suggested that “I prefer, preferably to have demonstrations to show how to do it and stuff like that, but I don’t think, I think the boys just want to get on with it” (Sophie). She then further explained this, implying that the difference was often not related to sex alone, but also the experience of some of the female players compared to the male players,

I don’t know it just depends like, erm, like err, with me and Lorraine being in the national team this year like, when we do the shooting we asked Frank to bring it on a step, and like go off one foot and stuff, and he was like “yeah”, but erm, I don’t think the boys have really asked that like, but I don’t think Ralph would have really asked that, because he hasn’t learned how to do it (Sophie).

This may support Summerfield and White’s (1989) research which suggested that men dominated the games that they observed, but that the men had been playing longer and had more experience than the female players. This could point towards knowledge of the game, ability and experience being an overarching factor, above and beyond sex difference.

During interviews, when players were asked whether coaches aimed their teaching more at one sex in particular, all players asserted that girls and boys were taught equally, with the exception of James and Ralph. Charlie explained how David treated everyone equally, “if you’re being like, if you’re mucking about he’ll sort of treat you like a, sort of treat you harder, but if you like listen and concentrate, he’ll treat you as equal as everyone else” (Charlie). Foucault (1979a) would explain the way in which the ‘abnormal’ korfbal players, the ones deviating from normal and accepted behaviour, are individualised. He explains how individuals within a disciplinary society are observed and evaluated, and where necessary they are ‘put right’. Sophie also explained,

I think the way that they teach includes everybody because, erm, because it is a mixed sport. I think both people need to know how, I think all people need to, both like need to know how to do different things, like all be able to do the same things (Sophie).

Sophie’s understanding of equal treatment was not endorsed by all players. For example, Ralph made a comment about boys being pushed harder than girls but then explained that this was only because the girls were already more knowledgeable. He

explained that the girls had more experience from regional and national level training (Sophie and Lorraine), and did not need pushing as hard as the boys because they could perform the practices already. However, James also suggested that the male coaches treated the boys differently, “erm, sometimes I feel like the men kind of like, are a little bit hard on the boys because of, like they know they won’t run off crying and all that” (James). This agrees with findings from Messner (2011) who suggested that coaches assumed that girls would be more emotional whilst boys would be more resilient, which altered the coaching experience for boys and girls. James obviously held a gendered understanding of the way in which coaches perceived circumstantial reactions from boys and girls, although he was the only player who assumed that the coaches held these understandings of gender.

A physical difference in interaction between coaches and female players, as opposed to coaches and male players, was observed during this study. Female players were often seen to be much more tactile with coaches than male players were. Sophie could be seen to cuddle David quite a bit; and Gemma, Sophie and Lorraine were seen to cuddle Zoe. There was a very tactile culture that seemed to arise, one that is usually forbidden in most adult-child environments. The tactile physicality could most notably be seen between the coaches and the female players. For example, David often tickled the girl, and threw Sophie or Lorraine around if they are being cheeky. The boys did not seem to encourage this tactile behaviour, and the coaches did not have the same mannerisms with the boys as they did with the girls. It could be argued that the girls’ femininity led to an accepted physicality that relied upon touch and bodily contact, whilst this was not the same for the boys. Within broader gender discourse, the embodied practice of non-sexual physical contact and an innate tactile nature is discursively produced as normal for women but not men. The acceptance of particular gendered actions can be explained by panopticism (Foucault, 1979a). Applied to gender, panopticism would explain how gender discourse influences the omnipresent, invisible surveillance projected from the rest of society on to individuals. Individuals are aware of this surveillance, and in turn, are persuaded to become principles of their own subjection through their perceived constant visibility. In this example, the male junior korfbal players may not be willing to act in the same tactile way that the female

players act, as they may be aware of the way in which this behaviour could be understood as feminine.

In addition to discussions related to the way in which sex impacts upon coach performance, coach-player interaction, and coaches' perceptions of players; coaches were also individually recognised for various traits and coaching abilities. Zoe, as stated previously, was the only female coach and predominantly the coach for the under 16s team, but was also the Head Junior Coach. She trained the under 16s on the opposite side of the hall so her presence was known, and she took the lead in training when both groups came together in practices. Occasionally Zoe would take the lead in training the under 13s team, whilst David trained the under 16s. Zoe also attended all of the under 13s matches and tournaments.

Only one player overtly acknowledged that Zoe's sex was a reason for liking her as a coach, demonstrating that sex was not always silenced by korfball players. Sophie suggested that she liked Zoe coaching the under 13s because it was nice to have a female coach amongst the male coaches. There were, however, a number of players that liked Zoe as a coach due to her general nature, which was seen as being more lenient and less harsh than the male coaches':

Zoe, because she jokes. She's fun to have a joke around, and if we do something wrong she won't be mad, she'll just keep going on (Ralph).

I think David is like an amazing coach, because he's like always on you. He wants you to get better, like he pushes you. But then Zoe, erm, like she just like talks to you more firmly, and like, even though she's not, erm, like pushing you, like she's still pushing you, but not (Lilly).

An explanation regarding differences between Zoe and the other two coaches included the idea that Zoe was a primary school teacher. A number of the players viewed this positively and explained how she "talks softly" (James). They described her as being "calm" (Lorraine), and "nice" (Sophie),

she's a really nice person and she's a teacher. She's really like, erm, and she teaches like young children, she's really like, erm, "try this", always makes us cheer up and stuff like that, so yeah, she's a good coach to have (Sophie).

yeah, but like everybody just loves Zoe because she's just awesome... Zoe, erm, like you just want to score the goals anyway, like just to make her like, proud

(Lilly).

Zoe is a teacher, like she's sort of like a bit more calm with us, and like if someone is messing around she'll say "right, Ralph, I need to talk to you for a minute", but with David he'll just say "right, listen, there's the door!", he'll say "stop messing!", like "there's the door! Stop messing around or you can get out of the door!"... he's a lot harsher (Lorraine).

From Lorraine's quote, it was clear that David was a more forceful coach than Zoe. Lorraine's comments show the perceived differences between coaching techniques of male and female coaches, with David being more aggressive and Zoe being more empathetic (Messner, 2009). David believed in extreme exclusion when players transgressed from the accepted normal behaviour (Foucault, 1988), excluding them from the korfball space in an effort to normalise players with respect to korfball (David's temperament will be discussed further in due course). It was clear from the interviews that players respected Zoe and wanted to do well to make her proud. It was also apparent from observation and interviews that players tended to respond well to Zoe's temperament and the way she guided and instructed.

Despite Lorraine, amongst others, recognising Zoe's positive coaching traits, she still valued David as her preferred coach. This implied that she accepted David's more aggressive coaching style. In training, observation showed that Lorraine did not tend to mess around very often, and therefore she was never in the direct firing line of David's wrath, which could be why she was not deterred by his coaching style. Foucault (1979a) explained that, within disciplinary procedures, the body is trained in order for it to respond and obey, creating a docile body. Lorraine had more of a docile korfball body than a number of other players. She had learned korfball techniques and also etiquette in training, and obeyed the coaches' instructions, making her less susceptible to punishment (Foucault, 1979a).

David was not only the head coach for the korfball club being studied, but he was also an international coach for an under 14s team. His knowledge, expertise and experience earned him respect from the junior players that had been accepted into the national academy, such as Lee, Charlie, Sophie and Lorraine, but also players who only played at club level, for example Lilly and Lucy. David's korfballing knowledge earned him power

within this environment (Foucault, 1990):

David because, David then Zoe then Frank. I think David because he's the [national] academy coach and he always knows what he's talking about (Lorraine)

like David, everybody listens to him because you know he's the [national] coach. He's like the top coach, you just listen to him (Lilly).

he's taught many other people and so he can always relate to them, and he's like, erm, because the old, the under sixteens are older, and the older groups, they, he always has stories, like say our spirits are coming down, erm, he can always be like "oh this person, he used to be like that, and now he is focused, and now they've come so far". So we can know that we can now have something to guide us (Lucy).

Some players expressed a desire to please David above all other coaches, and ultimately, this was often because he was the national academy coach with the final decision on who would make the national squad. Lorraine clearly wanted David to appreciate her korfbal ability and discussed how she wanted to succeed at practice so that David would see her do well. Foucault (1979a) explains how the gaze of those in power is internalised by those being subjected to this power. When explaining panopticism, he suggests that the individual who knows that they are within the field of the gaze, undertakes accountability for the restrictions of power, becoming the principle of his own subjection. Lorraine has shown evidence of being aware of David's surveillance, internalising accepted behaviour,

I want to put a lot of effort in so, cos I know that David watches me at training as well as at [national training]. So I know that [national training] is a lot more serious training, but like, if I just work... because sometimes I might just say to David, erm, "oh at [national training] the other day we done this, is this right?", and like, "can we do it in this training session, just so I can practice on it?", so, like, I get it right in the actual training session at [national training] (Lorraine).

Lorraine obviously valued David's opinion and wanted to be successful at club and national training too. It was apparent that David's position as a national coach made it more important for some players to impress him above any of the other coaches at club training.

David was also deemed to be an influential coach due to his ability to explain techniques

and practices extremely clearly, a trait that other coaches, arguably Frank, did not seem to have. Players generally had some expectation that David would be good at explaining due to the fact that he had been given the role as the national academy coach:

Erm, David because, well he's a [national] coach, and then he explains it easier than all the others (Gemma)

what I like about David, he goes through step by step. Like he'll do something easy and then like, ten minutes later he'll go do the next step, and then he'll go to the next step, and he'll go through it like what we did at [national training] like, but David made us start off just stepping back and shooting, and then we developed it into like, on the move, and then going back and shooting, and then... I would probably say David (Sophie).

I think David is the best, he nails the technique into you. Like at national training we did dancing to make sure we got our footwork right, for a good 46 minutes (Lee).

Lee's explanation of repeated practice in order to master technique is similar to the way in which Foucault (1979a) argued that trained, obeying, docile bodies are created. Yet, despite seeming to appreciate the way in which David taught, Lee stated how he was "not impressed" by the dancing practice. Here, Lee may be demonstrating his understanding of gendered activities (Grindstaff and West, 2006), by demonstrating his discomfort with dancing, a discursively produced embodied activity usually associated with femininity (Chalabaev, et al. 2013). His reaction may have been due to perceived panoptic surveillance (Foucault, 1979a) from wider society. He may have internalised gender norms, and thus, felt uncomfortable with this deviation. Yet, Charlie had a very similar response to Lee, suggesting that David explained techniques well and referred to the dancing, but he did not seem deterred by the use of dancing to develop understanding,

[David] puts effort into the, like, we've had many coaches but David is like, the one that thinks about the coaching sort of thing. He doesn't just turn up to training and say, "do this, do this, do that". He comes to training, he thinks about what we're going to do before the training, he explains it really well. He explains everything really well and like, he sort of gives you ideas to think about whilst your shooting, so like a dance move say, for like the hop shot, sort of thing (Charlie).

David used a number of punishment techniques to motivate players, including press-ups for training groups that did not win practices, or star jumps for players not putting

enough effort in during training; but physical punishments were not the only technique of discipline. When Ralph was deemed to have misbehaved he was told to 'sit off' until he could be sensible, a disciplinary technique of punishment centred upon deprivation (Foucault, 1979a) as he was not allowed to continue playing, but also a visible public humiliation (Foucault, 1979a) in front of other players, coaches and parents<sup>24</sup>. Ralph's actions did not fall within the accepted norm within a korfbal space, and therefore he was individualised by David, having transgressed from the norm, and punished accordingly, demonstrating normalising judgement (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1979a: 183) explained how "the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*". When David went back to Ralph later he asked him "do you want to be Spiderman or do you want to train? Because if you want to be Spiderman that's fine, but you can go out and buy a suit and be Spiderman, but it will be the last time you train with us". Ralph responded by apologising and stating that he wanted to train. Ralph relinquished to the coach's power, proving that the punishment served well. Punishment was not always so successfully deployed. Another time, when Ralph was messing about whilst David explained a practice, David told Ralph to demonstrate the practice so everyone else could watch him. Rather than feeling embarrassed or shy, Ralph said "yeah!" in an animated way and clapped his hands, excited to be the centre of attention. Ralph often demonstrated a lack of calculated constraint during training and was observed to possess the least docile (Foucault, 1979a) korfbal body out of all the regular players<sup>25</sup>. He was most frequently individualised through disciplinary techniques since he deviated from the accepted behaviour most often. The idea that Ralph negatively dominated interaction with coaches complies with research by Nicaise, et al. (2007) who suggest that this was often the case with boys in their study.

Punishment could also take more serious forms when delivered for deviation from

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<sup>24</sup> Similarly, another time, Gemma was threatened with being sent off if she didn't stop being silly and pick her performance up. Again, this shows that the punishment was not gendered, and transgressive behaviour was also not sex specific.

<sup>25</sup> Not taking Beth into account as she did not play in matches or tournaments and joined the team a long time into the season. See section 6.4.1 with more information on Beth.

normal korfbal behaviour, or resistance to power. Ralph was often the player being punished through public humiliation and verbal discipline. On one occasion David was observed to shout at him very loudly and aggressively, “what is wrong with you? It’s stupid! You are acting like a fool! Do it properly or go home, you and me aren’t doing this anymore”. Ralph continued with the practice until they were given a water break, and David then resumed the public scene, and continued, “you’re your own worst enemy, you never do as you’re told! I’m wasting my time with you. If I have to do this again you will go home and you won’t come back!” Once again, this demonstrated disciplinary techniques through punishment centred upon humiliation and deprivation (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1988) explained how the madman was confined, and excluded from society as a result of transgressing from social norms and causing disruption to the social order. Ralph was also threatened with exclusion from the korfbal club for causing disruption within the korfbal environment. Later in the season, David made a slightly less angry and aggressive, but still loud and forceful assertion towards Michelle, exclaiming that he had told her once that session already, and if he had to ask her again she would go home. This showed that punishment of this kind was not gendered, and neither was the misbehaviour. The threat of sending players home was a rare punishment, and in reality, publically being told to go home was possibly worse than the action of going home itself.

Unlike David and Zoe, Frank was often spoken about in a derogatory way by the junior players. They were less quick to assert positive aspects of his coaching technique and instead they tended to describe Frank, the main coach for the under 13s, in a less favourable way than Zoe or David. A number of negative views were expressed by players as they described various aspects of Frank’s coaching methods, and it became clear that a network of gazes existed where the coaches were both the subject and object of observation (Foucault, 1994), observing and training players, yet also being observed and judged by the same players. For example, Lorraine suggested that Frank was the coach that she least preferred. She explained that his weaknesses were a result of him not being a current player, and therefore she did not value his choices, “because like, he doesn’t really play the game. Like most of the time, he doesn’t really make the right choices” (Lorraine). His perceived lack of knowledge meant he held less power



(Foucault, 1990) than other, more knowledgeable coaches, such as David. In addition to Lorraine considering Frank to be her least favourite coach because he was not a current player, Ralph considered the different way that Frank coached the male and female players to be problematic. Unlike Zoe and David, Frank was described as not coaching equally. Ralph argued that Frank favoured the girls more than the boys, even though he may not have meant to. He then attributed this variation in coaching to the fact that the male and female players were just different, and the girls had more experience and knowledge. The experience and knowledge that the female players were described as having, meant that their korfbal bodies were more docile, and therefore they were subject to less punishment or correction, since punishment and correction operated to *create* docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a), but the female players had already mastered techniques and acceptable behaviour. The difference in the way that boys and girls were treated then became clear as Ralph explained how the boys tried hard, but Frank punished them when they were not as good as the girls,

the boys push themselves, but maybe, and then he still gets mad at us, and he does punish us. Like, say for instance the girls know it because they do [regional training], and that the boys, we do one step wrong, even if we're trying really our hardest, he'll make us do it again, and in a way that can be effective, but he pushes to an extent that we physically can't do anything else (Ralph).

On a number of occasions, Ralph explained how Frank was not his “kind of person”. It was clear that he did not particularly value Frank as a coach, and demonstrated a much stronger affinity for the other coaches, specifically Zoe who was mentioned as not getting angry (as discussed earlier in this section). From observation and interview data, it was evident that Ralph was the most disruptive of all the players, and was, therefore, the player most frequently being punished. During training sessions, it was usually Frank or David that punished Ralph, which could explain his preference for Zoe as a more lenient coach.

So far, this section has shown that both Zoe and David were respected coaches who held a degree of power over players, yet there was often less respect for Frank. This section will now demonstrate how interview data and observation data frequently revealed how Frank seemed to hold less power over players than the other coaches.

Players of both sexes were seen to display resistance at various times. For example, when Sophie was told to stand away from the line and run forward as the ball approached, she argued with Frank by shouting “but I can’t see then!” Michelle and Charlie were also seen to retort Frank’s instructions; when Frank told Michelle to collect the ball, she frowned at him and argued “the post is in the way!”, and when he told Charlie that if Lee is facing the other way he should drop back, Charlie told him “I did, I did!”. Despite the initial verbal correction from Frank and the resulting individualisation of the non-normal (Foucault, 1979a) as players were named and judged within the space, there was no visible corrective punishment to the resistance. Corrective punishment is a necessary means of correct training, and for bodies to become docile, non-conforming should be seen as punishable, and the punishment must be corrective (Foucault, 1979a). In this case, it was not, and therefore the players resisted and illustrated that they were not principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) within this training environment.

Players did not only use verbal dialogue to resist Frank, there were a number of occasions when the girls overtly resisted the coach’s power using their bodies. For example, in one instance Frank told Lucy not to stick her bottom out as she shot the ball at goal, and in response Lorraine teased Lucy by saying “Lucy”, whilst throwing the ball with her bottom excessively stuck out. This was a clear rejection of Frank’s instruction, and even when Frank told Lorraine to “throw properly! That was a bad throw!”, the girls (Lucy, Gemma and Lorraine) continued to play around by imitating Lucy’s passing whilst sticking their bottoms out, which could be seen as an embodied resistance. Within this example, the body was the object of power (Foucault, 1979a), however, the way in which the girls performed the technique incorrectly, showed little evidence of their desire to master their bodies. Once again, it demonstrated that the omnipresent surveillance of the coach was not enough to ensure that the players became the principles of their own subjection, internalising surveillance which promotes normality (Foucault, 1979a). Even when the non-normal was individualised, a form of corrective punishment (Foucault, 1979a), by Frank naming the offending player and attempting to correct them, the other girls became ‘non-normal’ and mimicked the incorrect action.

There were clear demonstrations of resistance to coach power, which could be related

to the way in which the players respected and valued Frank less than other coaches. Although the previous examples demonstrate quite a discrete resistance to power, with comments that imply disagreement, there were also more overt examples of resistance to power, usually by Ralph. An example of Ralph's resistance included an occasion where Ralph told Frank that he needed the toilet, and Frank replied "no, you went earlier". Ralph then not only argued back with "one minute!" but proceeded to stand up and walk towards the door. Frank relinquished power and said he could go for "one minute", and Ralph ran out tapping his hand over his mouth and screaming like a native American "wooooo, wooooo, wooooo". In this instance no mechanisms were implemented to punish Ralph's non-normative behaviour (Foucault, 1979a), thus reducing the chance of him being normalised with regards to acceptable behaviour in the korfbal space. On another occasion, Frank casually asked one of the parents if they were eating, so Ralph used this opportunity to run to grab a snack and say "I might as well take a bite". This was despite having already been told not to eat at training. Ralph then ran back on, and despite no-one saying anything, he shouted "I'm not eating" with his mouth full, emphasising his resistance to power. Usually, Ralph would use a combination of verbal dialogue and embodied actions to resist Frank's instructions and guidance, making his performance highly visible. When coaches did demonstrate a rejection of the players' resistance, they often reacted with a signal, such as silence, rather than reassertion, shouting or visible punishment. Foucault (1990) argued that silence is a tool that chains to transgression and to shame, making the transgressor feel punished himself. An example of this was after Frank had instructed Ralph to get low whilst marking, Ralph spoke back to him and retorted "you tell us to get low, but when you demonstrate you don't get low!", and Frank simply looked disapprovingly at Ralph but said nothing. This example also showed how the coach and the players could both act as the subject and object of observation (Foucault, 1994). The coach was often the subject of observation as they watched, judged and corrected players, but in this instance, the coach became the knowable object, observed and corrected by a player. Silence was also used as a tool when Ralph argued with Frank after Frank shouted: "catch the ball!" (Ralph often fumbled the ball or let it bounce before catching it). Ralph protested "I can't, it's too high!", the ball then went out of play and Ralph continued to protest to the coach, "I can't catch it up there!". Once again, Frank simply

looked at him in silence and Ralph recoiled, potentially in acknowledgement of shame and punishment (Foucault, 1988). Finally, Frank also reacted to an act of Lorraine's resistance with silence. After Frank had been explaining a technique to the players, Lorraine shouted at him "you spat in my mouth... You spat in my eye and then spat in my mouth!". Frank remained silent, so Lorraine shouted louder, but he did not react, so she simply grimaced and wiped her face. It was clear that both sexes received silence as a reaction to transgression from normative korfbal behaviour. Arguably, this silence, without making the transgressor a spectacle by shouting at them, gave the player the opportunity to feel shame in their non-normative actions (Foucault, 1988).

Coaches also used verbal signals to direct players, without explicitly giving instructions or corrections. For example, during one training session Michelle held Lorraine upside down (with ease as she is a lot bigger than Lorraine). In response Frank simply looked at them and said "girls", and in turn, Michelle put Lorraine down. Without having to explain what the problem was, or having to verbally correct them, Frank gave a signal which produced the required reaction. Foucault (1979a) explained how the creation of docile bodies is aided by a composition of forces whereby a precise system of command exists; in this case the master of discipline is the coach. The master of discipline and those subjected to discipline had a relationship of signalisation, which could include a few words, silence, or a glance, and all of these signals could contribute to an artificial, prearranged code (Foucault, 1979a). The signal 'contained the technique of command and the morality of obedience' (Foucault, 1979a: 166). In this case, a few words acted as the signal; a few words that labelled the players by their sex. If players were in the same sex groups they were often referred to as 'boys', or 'girls', not their names, which highlighted their sex above their individual identity. In a similar fashion, Zoe also used signalisation. During one training session, she was trying to talk to the group and Ralph was stood shooting by himself. Zoe simply stopped talking and looked at him without saying a word, he stopped shooting and came to join the rest of the group, again demonstrating the power of the signal.

It was clear that both sexes demonstrated less discipline within the training space than within the match space, and it was not reflected in a manner that could be generalisable to one sex or the other. It does, however, suggest that panopticism was not successfully

ensuring that players became principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) within the training space, despite their permanent visibility.

Other than signals, such as silence, coaches used various disciplinary techniques during training sessions and within match spaces, to maintain power and reinforce acceptable behaviour. The training space provided a degree of discipline since the coaches were often obeyed, contributing to the making of docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a). In this space, the composition of forces demonstrated a precise system of command whereby the coach was the master of discipline (Foucault, 1979a). This is normal practice in most sport environments. An example of a player frequently disciplined within the training space was Ralph. Ralph often sat on the floor as the coach explained techniques and practices, so coaches frequently told him to stand up, and he always responded positively to this command. Yet, the surveillance alone from the coach, and the permanent visibility of the players was not enough to have developed Ralph into the principle of his own subjection in this example (Foucault, 1979a). Yet, within another example, Ralph was seen to miss a shot during a training session, and as result looked at the floor upset with himself. In response, the coach told him to have a rest, and Ralph did as he was asked and stood out of the practice area for a short time. This instance revealed that the lack of skill and success from his korfbal technique led to Ralph being visibly unhappy. This may suggest that Ralph had recognised his transgression from skilled korfbal actions, which players had been repressed for in the past (through not starting games first, or through physical tasks such as sit ups as punishment when unsuccessful). In turn, his negative response could have been due to an internalised repression, a punishment in his own mind, in a similar way that Foucault (1988) discusses the internalised repression of the madman, which is necessary to normalise him.

During training sessions, the referee for games was usually the coach or an older player, and they did not receive the same level of respect as match referees (see section 5.2.2). When considering the composition of forces, which is the precise series of command which is important when creating docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a), it would indicate that the match referee acted as a better master of discipline than the training referee. For

example, on one occasion George threw a bad pass and it bounced back, so he and Ralph both tried to grab it. Ralph dived for the ball and tripped George up in the process, so the referee (who was the coach in this situation) gave the ball to George. Ralph exclaimed to Frank “it should be mine!”, so Frank explained, “you can’t dive on the ball!”. Here it was clear that the referee’s punishment was resisted with a contestation, during observation this was never seen in a match situation where an unknown referee was mediating the game. It demonstrated that Ralph did not possess a docile korfbal body, and showed little calculated constraint (Foucault, 1979a); instead, he shouted when he did not agree with the training referee’s decision. This would suggest that the formal match space was more disciplined than the training space, even when simulating the same situation. This could be because the players perceived the punishment of humiliation (Foucault, 1979a) during training to be less humiliating than punishments within the match space. Within the match space there were more people within the network of gazes, and many people that players did not know very well. The decreased number of people within the network of the gaze in the training environment could have meant that the players perceived themselves to be less visible, and since visibility assures power (Foucault, 1979a), they may not have felt as restricted within the power network.

Matches, on the other hand, provided a different type of space for coaches to maintain a degree of power. Within the match space, the team coach gave direction and tactics prior to the game, during half time, and after the game, as well as shouting from the sidelines during play. For example, he told Sophie to “get off the line” during a match (players are not meant to wait on the line for the ball as it gives the opposition an easy opportunity to mark, instead they are encouraged to stand back and run to the line as the ball comes their way). The assertive play of Sophie, who was already standing by the line ready to receive the ball, could be deemed as assertive masculine behaviour, it did not present the impression of a hesitant female within a physically active sporting environment. Instead, her embodied confidence demonstrated that of a passionate female player which is often a trait exhibited by high level female athletes (Scruton, et al., 1999; Theberge, 2003; Heywood and Dworkin, 2003; Adams, et al., 2005), and in this study, Sophie was a national player and one of the best in the junior team being studied.

The coach's directions to move from the space she was in to a space that he deemed to be the right space, demonstrated the use of correction, which is a technique used for the creation of docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a). Correction served to subject the player to power and ultimately aimed to develop players into principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) regarding rules and tactics. This concept is no different to traditional mainstream sport environments. Additionally, it could be that the lack of visible gendered behaviour, and the clear visibility of equal play within korfball, was a result of players becoming the principles of their own subjection with regards to korfball behaviour, docile in this respect. It may be that the visible surveillance from a number of sources, led to players internalising the action of gender equality within match situations (gender will be discussed further in chapter six).

### *5.2.2 Referees*

Coaches were not the only adults that had an influence on players' korfball performance within match spaces, match spaces clearly involved varying networks of power relations (Foucault, 1979a). During matches, referees often used their power to punish players if they deviated from korfball rules. Referees were seen to assert a high degree of control over the game, and players were never observed to deviate from the referee's decision. The referee demonstrated a hierarchical observation which was projected on to the players; the referee could be seen to 'coerce' through observation (Foucault, 1979a). One of the key rules within korfball asserts that players must only mark opponents of the same sex (see section 1.1), deviation from this rule leads to punishment being given by the referee, such as a free pass to the opposing team. This rule aligns with assertions from Wachs (2002) who discusses that mixed softball claims to promote gender equality, whilst maintaining rules that reinforce difference, thus supporting gender discourse. Although this rule suggests a separatist notion between the sexes, what was actually visible was the way in which a limited ability to switch markers (they could only switch with the other person of their own sex), meant that attackers had to utilise both sexes in order to achieve running in shots, which were the most prominent form of shooting. Within this study, the rule centred on only marking the same sex was never deviated from, and therefore punishment for a transgression related to this rule was not visible during the time of this study.

An example of referee punishment in a game was observed when George was given a free pass but held the ball for more than four seconds. There is a four second time limit to a free pass and so the referee awarded the other team the ball by way of punishment. No discrepancy was raised by George or any other player. This punishment specifically related to a penalty of time, which Foucault (1979a) discusses as one of the five parts of the penal mechanism that operates at the centre of a disciplinary system contributing towards normalising judgement. This punishment also demonstrated the way in which, through referee surveillance, the korfbal team was separated from a compact mass into individuals within a group. This observation of individuals rather than a mass is instrumental when trying to create docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1979a) recognised the importance of 'the scale of control' when creating docile bodies, which included singling out individual bodies and demonstrating a discrete coercion over actions and attitudes, rather than treating a collective mass of bodies at the same time. Time penalties and individual punishment are also common within wider sporting practices.

### *5.2.3 Parents*

The final group of adults that could be seen to play a part in the way which junior players experienced korfbal, were the parents of junior players. When players discussed the positive aspects of korfbal they often considered the support from parents as something which contributed to their enjoyment, and thus, the whole package of korfbal.

Players' parents were a regular feature of training, matches and tournaments. At training parents sat on benches along the side of the sports hall and chatted amongst themselves, watching the practices intermittently. It was clear that the parents all knew each other and socialised outside of the korfbal scene, and the players all knew the various parents. As mentioned by many players, there was a feeling and sense of family within the korfbal community, which will be discussed later in this section. As adults within the korfbal space, parents also contributed to the network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a). This was evident during a post-match team talk when Michelle rolled her eyes at the guidance that Frank was giving, an embodied resistance to what he was saying, and Ruth, a parent and adult player, assertively told Michelle that she



should not give Frank dirty looks when he makes suggestions. This happened in front of all the other players and whilst Frank was still talking. It seemed that Michelle had not realised that Ruth and the other parents were standing behind them watching the team talk. Yet, as with any panoptic space, this example showed “a permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance making everything visible, but itself remaining invisible” (Foucault, 1979a: 214). As a result of the punishment bequeathed from Ruth to Michelle, Michelle began to cry, demonstrating another embodied reaction<sup>26</sup>. This reaction potentially demonstrated her embarrassment at being disciplined in front of the team, or it may have simply been because she was upset that she had been punished. Either way, the punishment from disciplinary techniques had an effect on Michelle, demonstrating evidence of hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1979a) from Ruth as a parent. Ruth demonstrated evidence of normalising judgement (Foucault, 1979a) regarding Michelle’s behaviour, which she clearly deemed as a deviation from the accepted behavioural norm. She used trivial humiliation as a corrective technique in order to normalise Michelle within this environment (Foucault, 1979a). This example revealed the network of power relations that problematised the assumed power relationship from coach to player. It demonstrated the power of coaches, parents and players, and the way in which the individual bodies all worked within the multi-segmentary machine to develop a composition of forces, which refers to the way in which individuals make up a machine in order to create an overall effect or result (Foucault, 1979a).

Considering the network of gazes that was evident within the korfbal environment, it was not surprising that the coach’s power did not always go uncontested by parents. For example, when Charlie told his mum from the pitch “I just told the ref that Michelle’s player is barging her”, Michelle’s mum responded with “you are doing a better job than Frank then!”. This showed how the coach and individual players were both seen as subject and object of observation within the korfbal match space. They both served as subjects observing and judging, but also objects being observed and judged (Foucault, 1994). This example not only demonstrated some resistance from

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<sup>26</sup> Crying can often be seen as a gendered reaction for girls, gendered emotion will be investigated further in section 6.4

the player and parent towards the coach's expertise and responsibilities, but it also demonstrated a gendered action, whereby one of the boys acted in a masculine way to defend a female player who was not defending herself, a discursive action which contributes to broader gender discourse. Within society, there are often permanent effects of surveillance which, for example, focus on the correct gendered actions for each sex, even though the surveillance may not be continuous in its action (Foucault, 1979a). Within this example, Charlie may have presented a gendered action, without direction, due to the way in which he may have become the principle of his own subjection with regards to gendered norms. Although there were very few examples of gendered actions and differences between the sexes within the match space, this example showed how the korfbal identity, and discipline regarding korfbal identities, can conflict with wider social discourses such as gender discourse. It was, therefore, clear that a network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a) was evident within this setting. Surveillance could be seen to come from the bottom to the top (players to coaches) as well as from the top to the bottom (coaches to players) (Foucault, 1979a).

In a similar way that a number of writers (Fransoo, 2003; and Rodenburg, 2003) have deemed korfbal a family sport, players consistently explained how their korfbal team was like a family, referring to the parents that frequently watched at training and matches, and that camped with their children during weekend long tournaments, such as the infamous 'Kent Tournament'. They seemed to understand this family feel as something that marked korfbal differently to other sports and activities. Examples of references to the korfbal family include:

all korfbal teams, I mean Trinity is like a family, because like, I've known all the people here since I was about two (Lilly)

The social group, I think it's a lot closer than other sports because it's sort of like a family, all of us (Lee)

Yeah the parents come along all the time, they're very committed, it's like one big happy family (Lucy).

it's like a small community wanting to have just fun really (Ralph)

It was also clear that a number of players had siblings that played korfbal, or parents that either played or coached, complying with Rodenburg's (2003) assertion that

korfball can be played by the whole family. Sophie explained how her mum and dad, and two of her sisters played,

everybody can play, like my whole family plays so like, kind of we can all, like there's always games that we can go and watch, there's never like, well sometimes there is, but I can always go and watch mum and dad play, and then they take me down to watch me play (Sophie).

She also explained how korfbal was important to her family as they could all participate, and it was something that they could all do together. Sophie then went on to talk about her friend Shane whose whole family were also involved, "Oh, well, Korin comes from Holland obviously, and erm, Dave is like head [national] coach, and so is Korin, and erm, Shane does a lot of stuff at home with Dave and Korin" (Sophie). Sophie also explained how she too practiced korfbal techniques at home with her family, once again providing an activity that her whole family could be involved in and enjoy,

I don't even shoot that much, but erm, I do a lot of practice with, like, Rachel and Dad at home. Like shooting in the garden, well obviously not now because we'd be in the rain, but I used to, and Toby came round once to help Rachel and I was doing loads of shooting then, and they'd come round for like four hours (Sophie).

The potential for whole family involvement meant that the experience of korfbal was one that offered family involvement in many ways. Some parents played korfbal or helped administrate the team, whilst others were keen and loyal supporters baking cakes for matches and cheering on the sidelines.

Much of the family feel that players discussed during interviews, and the closeness that was observed during this study came from the way in which the parents dedicated their time to support and watch the junior team. During this study, parents were observed to watch training sessions, matches, and spend days at tournaments, sometimes camping for entire weekend tournaments. At important cup or league matches, they painted their faces, held banners and donned novelty inflatable items that were in the team colours. Parents also took their children to important senior competitions where the junior players and their parents would cheer on the higher level teams along with other supporters. Lucy and Gemma both stated that one of their favourite things about korfbal was the support that they got from the parents. This was evident from Gemma's response when asked what her favourite thing about korfbal was, she responded with:

“erm seeing Ruth cheer so much, and Susan, maybe Susan” (Gemma). The way in which parents rallied around and supported the team led to the family feel that so many players discussed in interviews (see section 5.3.2). Gemma explained how the junior teams all supported one another at tournaments and cup matches, and how they also supported the top senior team when they played in important cup and league games (which usually took place at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre),

Yeah it’s a lot of fun because we bring loads of banners, and we’re probably the craziest ones here because we’re all wearing different fancy dress clothes and jumping around, and we’ve got vuvuzelas and drums everything, and it’s so much fun (Gemma).

The way in which the whole club came together to support each team was clearly an important part of club bonding. Also, the type of support the juniors received seemed to be very positive and without the ‘win at all costs’ sport ethic that players associated with other sports,

Because korfbal’s more fun, and I enjoy it more because there’s more supporters, and if you lose for example, erm, they don’t get you down. Normally in football when you lose they are like “ooh, you could have won that couldn’t you?” (Gemma).

Comments from these players align with findings from Cooky’s (2009) research, where she discovered that parental support and encouragement particularly enthused players and girls in particular. The importance of motivational and supportive dialogue from followers and parents was consistent with players’ desires for teammates and the captain to motivate rather than reprimand during and after performances, as suggested in section 5.1. During interviews, a number of players referred to korfbal being ‘fun’, and sometimes it seemed like the more serious and competitive aspects of the game came second to enjoyment, which may have been linked to the players wanting jovial support rather than scolding lectures about performance or technique. Crum (2005a) suggested that korfbal is competitive enough to enjoy at a high level, but also straightforward enough to enjoy just for fun, and the latter of the two was seemingly endorsed by a number of players.

Interview data and observation during participation demonstrated how adults played a very influential role within junior players’ korfbal experiences. Coaches, referees

and parents were all present within the power relationships within korfball, and played a part in creating a specific experience within korfball spaces. Within the korfball realm being studied, the various coaches acted as masters of discipline and used discipline to varying degrees in order to regulate the actions and behaviours of junior players. Signals, such as silence or single words were used to indicate that players should modify their behaviour, and more overt punishment was usually only seen by male coaches, particularly the club's head coach and national academy coach, David. Despite this, resistance to coach power was most often witnessed when directed towards Frank, possibly due to the fact that players held less respect for him as he was less physical when giving directions, and he was neither a high-level player nor a high-level coach, assumed to not hold the level of knowledge which granted others coaches power. Players tended to indicate a greater respect for Zoe and David since Zoe was known to be a first team senior player within the club, and David coached the national academy. Referees were also seen to receive a high level of respect within match spaces, possibly due to the way in which the match space created the most enclosed and visible space for surveillance. Additionally, it could have been due to the discipline that referees were encouraged to give during matches, such as giving the opposing team penalties, free-passes, or sending players off if they made extreme transgressions of accepted normal behaviours, such as intentionally fouling an opponent. The sending off of players relates to Foucault's (1988) discussion of the madman who was excluded from society when their behaviours were deemed to transgress dramatically from the accepted norm. The sending off of players relates to Foucault's (1988) discussion of the madman who was excluded from society when their behaviours were deemed to transgress dramatically from the accepted norm. Their knowledge of the game ultimately gave the coaches and referees power within the korfball space, and both roles adopted discipline when korfball norms were deviated from. The use of Foucault's (1979a) concepts relating to normalizing judgement and the creation of docile bodies have been useful to investigate how power operates within the korfball field, but these analysis tools have also demonstrated how many of these procedures are not korfball specific, but similar to operations within multiple sports. Examples include the coach or referee acting as a master of discipline in order to promote sport specific norms; the use of ranking players,

sometimes subtly by the roles they are given, such as penalty taker; the use of correction for rule deviation of deviating from accepted training norms; and the individualizing of players when punishing, which can be seen, for example, when the punishable player is stopped, and the other team are given an advantage. So in many respects, korfbal can be seen as being similar to most other sports in these respects; teams arguably succeed when players exhibit sport specific docile bodies.

Finally, parents were also seen to impact upon the experience of junior korfbal players, as many players explained how the family feel and parental support they received was highly important to their enjoyment of korfbal. There were also clear examples of the parents being an integral part of the network of surveillance, disciplining the junior players on occasion (Ruth), and making judgements against coaches (Michelle's mum). Although they did support the team and bake cakes, these mothers did not seem to take on a traditional 'team mom' role (Messner, 2009), as they also disciplined players (not only their own), and commented on the behaviour of coaches. Thus, parents appeared to be fundamental to the power relationships within korfbal. Junior players also referred specifically to the positive aspects of parents' support and cheering, and their constant presence during training, matches, tournaments and social events.

Having considered how power relationships and knowledge construction are influenced, and influence, within structured korfbal settings (during training and match scenarios), it is now important to consider how players understand life beyond the korfbal pitch. Players had a specific performance and experience within the structured korfbal spaces but ultimately, the time spent at korfbal was minimal compared to the time they spent in other social spheres such as the home, or school. The next section will discuss power relationships beyond korfbal, considering how players act in an unstructured korfbal setting outside of the gaze of adults, how they interact with each other outside of the korfbal environment, and how they understand other sport settings. It is interesting to assess whether broader social discourses, such as gender and sport discourses, have a greater influence outside of the structured

korfball environment, and whether they recognize korfball as offering something different to other sports.

### **5.3 Power Relationships Beyond Korfball**

Considering that the junior korfball players' time off of the korfball pitch greatly outweighed their time impacted by korfball influences, it became important in this study to understand whether the players' performances in korfball spaces were specific to korfball, or whether they performed in the same way outside of the sport. In essence, they spent more time within wider social situations, and potentially party to broader social discourses, than acting under korfball norms and acceptable korfball performances. Therefore, it was important to take into account how their behaviour differed outside of structured korfball spaces. It was also interesting to see how the players generally interacted when they were not in match situations or playing within the boundaries of specific korfball rules, and whether some players still expressed a non- sex specific friendship circle outside of korfball (as a number of players suggested they did within their korfball team in section 5.1). Finally, although players did compare the important aspects of korfball to other sports in section 5.1, it is also interesting to see how players found fault with these sports compared to korfball, as well as how they discussed similarities and differences between korfball and sporting activities in Physical Education or wider society.

#### *5.3.1 Outside of the Structured Korfball Environment*

During this study, junior korfball players were not only observed during training and matches where they were expected to perform korfball in certain ways, but also in organised social environments. Within the space provided by korfball tournaments and socials, the juniors performed in a different way than when in the structured realm of training and matches. The spaces where korfball tournaments and socials took place had less strict surveillance from coaches and parents, and a decreased network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a). For example, during a fairly structured bowling social event, the juniors were separated into a team of boys and a team of girls. Apart from Lorraine venturing over to the boys' team a couple of times, they stayed in their teams and did not socialise together. The separation of the sexes in this instance was very different to the way in which players were encouraged to mix, and were happy to integrate

together, during training and matches. This could be the result of a different panoptic gaze (Foucault, 1979a) to the one that operates within the korfbal space. The influence of gender discourse on the omnipresent surveillance within wider society may have influenced players to remain in their sex-specific spaces, socialising with their own sex and not daring to venture into space the opposite sex occupied.

Individual players also acted differently outside of structured training and match situations. After watching Ralph perform some Michael Jackson-style moves as he was waiting for his turn to bowl, Sam, one of the more quiet boys in training, began dancing around the space. Sam had generally been very reserved in the training space, but this space was seemingly a more open one for him, where he felt he could express himself physically and freely in a way that he did not within a training space. During training, he demonstrated a high level of calculated constraint, and developments towards a docile korfbal body (Foucault, 1979a). It could be that he had seen the repression that Ralph was subjected to each time he transgressed from accepted korfbal behaviour (by way of punishments, humiliation, and exclusion), and in turn, Sam may have internalised the punishment in his own mind, ensuring that he did not transgress within the korfbal space. Foucault (1988) explains this with the analogy of the madman, who must be aware of the constant judgement from those watching, judging and condemning him. The madman then recognises transgression by repression, as they are punished as frequently as necessary until it is internalised in the madman's mind. External judgment and punishment can then be ceased as the punishment will continue within the madman's mind (Foucault, 1988).

During the same bowling social event, Ralph was also seen to act in a liberated way, although this was not unusual for him even during training sessions. The bowling social was the first time Ralph had been involved in a korfbal situation since he was severely told off by David at training over a month before (see section 5.2.1.3). Since then he had not been to any training sessions or matches, but the less structured bowling space provided his re-entry into a korfbal environment, and he continued to train after this social event. This space may have offered a safer place for him to regain confidence since David had previously shouted at him in front of parents, other coaches and players, punishing him through public humiliation in an attempt to normalise his



behaviour in the korfbal space (Foucault, 1979a). The social space gave him the opportunity to be himself in a less disciplined situation than korfbal training. His perceived liberation was enacted as he joked around whilst bowling; he bowled the ball, missed the bowling lane completely, and knocked over a Christmas tree, laughing in response and looking at other players and parents for their reactions. As both female and male players laughed at him, Zoe commented that he might have ADHD. Thus, Ralph's behaviour was still being judged, even outside of the structured training environment, but the hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1979a) from coach to player, did not provide a punishment in this less disciplined space.

Clearly, korfbal social spaces provided a different environment to more structured training and match spaces. A number of players acted differently and tended to display more liberation with regards to their bodies, for example when Sam began dancing. It was also interesting to see that the girls and boys barely interacted within this social environment; instead, they kept in same sex groups, talking and socialising within these segregated groupings. This contradicted the way in which a number of players explained how the girls and boys were all friends (see section 5.1), and demonstrates how korfbal may dilute gender differences within a structured space, but these values are overridden by normalized gender discourse outside of this environment.

### *5.3.2 Contact outside of korfbal*

Despite previous assertions by a number of players, that the korfbal environment provided a space where girls and boys were all friends, section 5.3.1 demonstrated how sex segregation was maintained by players within korfbal social spaces. This complied with findings that insinuated that often outside of the korfbal environment, players socialised more with people of the same sex than the opposite sex. Lorraine explained that outside of korfbal she tended to be friends with more girls than boys, as she was more comfortable talking to girls, "normally I get on with more girls than boys... I talk a bit more confident with girls than boys" (Lorraine). The assertion that she was more comfortable talking to girls, may have been due to her perceiving this interaction as more normal within society. She may have been aware of surveillance from wider society (Foucault, 1990), persuading her to comply with normalised gender interactions. James also explained how he talked to more boys at school than girls, but

described how korfball provided him with an opportunity to talk with girls too. Foucault (1994) suggests that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates, and James's comment could imply that the korfball gaze normalises mixed gender interaction in korfball spaces, whilst the gaze within wider society dominates during other times.

Interviews also demonstrated that when players did socialise with other members of the korfball team, they were usually players of the same sex. For example, Charlie suggested that he was mainly friends with the same sex, and explained that when he met fellow korfball players outside of korfball, it would only be boys, such as Lee. Lee also agreed that he only met male korfball players outside of korfball, for example, Charlie and Tom, "No not so much, you see them [the girls], like maybe around, but not specifically like going out to see them" (Lee). Gemma and Lucy also explained how they socialised with a number of the girls outside of korfball, but either did not mention the boys at all (Gemma), or explained how they had no interest in meeting the boys, as boys are different to girls (Lucy),

yeah me and Sophie sometimes go to the cinema in Sutton, and erm, me and Lucy normally just talk on Facebook and things like that, and erm, text, BBM, and me and Michelle aren't in contact at all because she don't have a phone (Gemma).

they're [boys] just a bit, they're a bit different (Lucy).

It was unsurprising that sex separation existed outside of the korfball space, considering the increased gender difference that occurred as the korfball space moved from the most disciplined and surveyed areas, such as matches and training sessions, to more liberated areas, such as the bowling social, or 'free time' at tournaments. Once out of the disciplined environment, it was clear that any social situation orchestrated by the players only involved the same sex. This could be attributed to the idea that wider society provides a panoptic environment whereby gender is under an invisible but constant surveillance, and players may, therefore, have become principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) with regards to who they thought they should associate with in social spaces outside of korfball. Additionally, section 6.3 discussed ideas related to gender appropriate activities, so it might be that players only considered the same gender to be interested in the same social activities outside of korfball. Gender appropriate activities

act as discursive practices which reinforce the differences between males and females in dominant gender discourse.

Wider social norms were also prevalent with regards to understandings of relationships within the team. Interestingly, when players were asked about relationships within the team, they all adopted heterosexual assumptions. Homosexuality seemed to be silenced in the same way that Foucault (1990) explained that sexuality was silenced by the Victorians in certain places and times. Sophie suggested that none of the team had been in relationships, and Lucy agreed, giving age as a reason, "Erm, a couple of people have, but not that I know of, not in my age group, because we're a bit young" (Lucy). Conversely, Ralph explained how there were currently no relationships within the team, but previously there have been. He described how he had been the boyfriend of both Sophie and Lorraine "I went out with Sophie for less than a day [laughs]... So yeah it didn't end up really well. I went out with Lorraine... yeah, I went out with Lorraine less than two hours" (Ralph). When relationships were discussed, they referred to heterosexual affiliations, suggesting that there existed a discretion to the norm for the discussion of heterosexuality, whilst homosexuality was silenced. Foucault (1990) discusses how this was similar during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when increased discretion was granted to heterosexuality as this was accepted as the norm, with an increased cause for concern with homosexuality and other 'unnatural' sexualities. Gemma and Lorraine also suggested that players had had boyfriends and girlfriends outside of korfbal, but did not acknowledge intra-korfbal relationships,

Sometimes, Gemma, she'll like have a boyfriend for a bit, and then she might like, sort of stop, and then like, Sophie recently has had a boyfriend, but she dumped him, so, like, I don't know about James and Ralph, but like I think that not everyone's got a boyfriend or girlfriend (Lorraine).

Although relationships were not always considered, a number of players discussed flirting that went on between various male and female players. Gemma acknowledged that flirting went on within the korfbal space, and laughed about the topic being discussed, demonstrating her amusement. Lucy also found the topic amusing and giggled as she named players that flirted or fancied each other, once again providing a normalised heterosexual assumption.

Lucy also suggested that sometimes the boys tried to impress the girls at korfbal, but this was not reciprocated. When asked who flirted with whom, Gemma responded, “Erm Ralph and Sophie, but Sophie doesn’t flirt with Ralph... Ralph flirts with most of the girls” (Gemma). She also explained that James and Lorraine flirted by laughing at each other’s jokes, “They always laugh at each other’s not funny jokes... Yeah, because, like, all of the rest of us don’t like, get it, and then like, say James’s just like, “Hahahaha, that’s so funny Lorraine” and goes like that” (Gemma). When Lucy was asked to explain how Lorraine and Shane flirted with each other, she argued that,

basically they were just doing competitions, like who could score the most goals, they just kept on like, hugging each other when they scored... They just, when we were at national trials a couple of weeks ago, erm, yeah last week, [giggles] you can’t tell anybody (Lucy).

As well as considering the topic amusing, Lucy found it to be a secret one, despite being quite open about disclosing it.

James was the only male player that described players flirting, and he suggested that Ralph and Lorraine flirted, but that it was primarily Ralph as opposed to Lorraine. He explained how Lorraine was very laid back and that was why it was clearer that Ralph did the flirting, “Ralph’s like one of these people who will just go for it no matter what” (James). When James was asked how he knew about players fancying each other, he explained that “they kind of like tell you as a secret... like, they tell you not to tell other people and all that” (James). James willingly disclosed ‘secrets’ in the same way that Lucy did, he argued that “sometimes you try and keep it a secret, but it kind of gets out” (James).

This section reinforces ideas considered at the end of 5.3.1, which suggests that girls and boys do not have the same gender-neutral understandings of socialisation and friendships outside of structured korfbal spaces. Players demonstrated magnetism towards members of the same sex when pursuing friendships outside of korfbal, and seemed to take that for granted with little criticality, despite assertions from a number of players in section 5.1 that implied the boys and girls within the korfbal team were all friends. In interviews, when players were asked to discuss relationships, something that

was not overtly visible within the participant observation part of this study, players gave a number of examples where players had boyfriends or girlfriends within the team, and heterosexual assumptions prevailed. Wider social discourses related to gender could be seen to impact upon korfball players, particularly in less structured korfball spaces. Additionally, some of the key korfball ideas, such as sex integration, failed to transgress korfball boundaries. When considering influences from wider society, it is worth investigating how korfball players perceive sporting situations and influences outside of korfball.

### *5.3.3 Other Sporting Situations*

During this study, junior korfball players were asked to consider how they understood sports and sporting situations outside of korfball. This was to try and decipher how they perceived other sporting environments, and understand whether they recognised any similarities or differences between korfball and other sports. Players willingly discussed other sports and compared korfball to more traditional sports. It is vital to the research questions within this study, to investigate whether the way that the junior players performed and understood korfball, was different to the ways in which they performed or experienced other sports, in a similar way that they understood friendships within korfball to be different to the normalised sex-segregated friendships outside of korfball.

Players compared korfball to other sports in various ways. Ralph likened korfball to basketball, in a similar way that previous literature has (IKF, 2006; Crum, 2003a; Summerfield and White, 1989). He suggested that korfball was taken from basketball, but has been made better than basketball. Charlie and Sophie also compared korfball to traditional, mediated sports, and explained that part of the reason they preferred korfball was because players have to be able to attack and defend (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated; IKF, 2006), and are not tied to specific roles like in so many other sports. Yet, from interviews it was also clear that korfball had a number of similarities to other sports, for example a system of reward existed to demonstrate the best teams and players. Lilly talked about Sophie having lots of awards at her house for scoring the most goals, and for being the best player as voted by the team. Sophie also recognised herself as having been top goal scorer twice in a row (over the last 2 seasons). Sophie's ability may help to contradict dominant discourses centred on gender and performance in physical

activity, which Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) recognise can develop positive experiences and empower girls and boys. When Charlie was asked who he thought the top scorer was, he answered “I know for a fact that Lee scores the most because he is on the top of the leader board on the korfbal website” (Charlie). It became clear from interviews that a hierarchy was displayed on the public website, and players were listed somewhere within that hierarchy. When Gemma explained this hierarchy, she discussed it in a rather competitive way, explaining, “on the website when it says who’s scored the most, Sophie always goes up with the girls... I was winning but then I broke my arm and I couldn’t score anymore, see I should have got the trophy” (Gemma). When discussing normalisation, Foucault (1979a) explains the importance of differentiating individuals and distributing them in order of rank, so there is not only an element of punishment and reward but also a recognition of gaps between individuals, a hierarchy. Foucault (1979a: 183) asserts that ‘the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. On short, it *normalizes*’.

Korfbal has changed recently, arguably to increase visual entertainment and become more similar to many mainstream mediated sports. Recently, at a more elite adult level, korfbal has developed to include a shot clock, which means that a shot from the attackers must go up every 26 seconds, or the ball is given to the defending team. Lorraine explained how this happened at the highest adult level, but not at a junior level in this country. She also went on to explain how Sophie could not wait to use the shot clock, but that she would struggle with the pressure. The shot clock demonstrates how the game is being developed to get faster and more entertaining as shots must go up very frequently. The addition of the shot clock complies with the desire for more goals and excitement, which was also the rationale for moving the penalty spot nearer to the korfbal post in 1974 (Rodenburg, 2003). The desire to incite excitement is also demonstrated through the korfbal competition within a league structure, like so many other sports. In a similar format to other sports, korfbal’s league structure filters into county teams, and finally a national team. Crum (2003a) explained the importance of international competition and suggested that for korfbal to become a ‘topsport’ it needs to be played all over the world with media coverage of exciting national and

international leagues. When considering whether korfball should be played on a larger scale, with more leagues, players and clubs, Sophie and Lee both argued that they would like more players involved in the sport. They both discussed how they would like korfball to be taught in PE so that the number of korfball players would increase. This demonstrated how some players wanted korfball to grow from a relatively niche sport, to become a more popular sport with more teams and increased competition. This corresponds with the IKF's objective to increase the number of participants in order to foster heightened appeal for current players (Fransoo, 2003). Conversely, Ralph asserted that korfball should not be played in PE, explaining that he did not want everyone to know about it. He explained that he preferred the niche aspect of the sport, and the secret community feel.

Despite korfball being invented in an educational context (Van Bottenburg, 2003), and offering the chance for mixed PE lessons "because both girls and boys can play so you haven't got to have like, an all-girls lesson, or only girls lesson, or only boys lesson, so you can play it throughout as in both two sets can join in" (Lorraine), players realised that this was not happening in schools. For example, Gemma explained how her teacher wanted to use korfball in PE, but the PE lessons were sex segregated so it would not be possible. The sex separation in schools is an example of classification, as the sexes are scientifically categorised by sex before dividing practices separate them (Foucault, 1982). Examples of scientific classification and dividing practices can be seen when the madman was separated from the rational man in asylums (Foucault, 1988), when those that were ill were separated from society via hospitals (Foucault, 1994), and when boys and girls were separated in school environments (Foucault, 1990). In the example of sex-segregated PE lessons, by categorising school children by sex, difference is established and they are then separated from each other in this environment. Foucault explains how the human sciences create universal categories of people, objectifying them in the process (Smith Maguire, 2002). Considering the mixed format of korfball it would offer an opportunity to create PE lessons suited to both sexes, without preconceived ideas regarding specific sports being suited to each sex. Yet, players explained that currently, PE lessons were separated by sex, and they did not realise that korfball could remedy this, they only saw single-sex PE as a barrier to

korfball opportunities.

When considering how korfball compared to other sports, Sophie considered korfball in comparison to male-oriented sports in general. She explained how the male versions of sports were usually more visible and accessible to watch than female versions, but appreciated how korfball provided the opportunity to watch both boys and girls play at the same time. She explained how,

when you look at, erm, girls football, there's not much interest in girls football than there is in boys football, like, so everyone says "oh, England are playing tonight", but you can't go and watch girls play. So I just think you can watch both girls and boys play at the same time (Sophie).

This quote demonstrates how Sophie understood that society generally views the female version of traditional sports as second best. Conversely, she suggested that mixed korfball was the only format of the game, meaning that male versions of the game did not take priority. Lucy also thought critically about male-oriented traditional sports, suggesting that girls do not like football because it is mostly for men, implying that korfball offers girls an opportunity to play a sport that was created for both sexes. Additionally, Sophie described how the structure of the korfball game reflects a need to use both sexes in order to be successful. She described how this might improve mixed PE lessons since her experiences of PE at present, involved the boys excluding the girls altogether: "they [boys] have to use the girls and they usually wouldn't. Like, they would usually block us out. They would usually just pass amongst each other" (Sophie).

When considering what non-players thought of the game, Sophie gave an explanation of korfball within the context of mixed sport,

Well they are a bit surprised when I said it's the only mixed sport in the world except for Frisbee that like boys and girls can play at exactly the same time, like they don't have a girls' team and a boys' team, erm, they were quite interested about that. Erm, and like most of the people, like most people I know just get along with boys and they're not that fussed like, they're not like 'urgh, they're boys' or something like that (Sophie).

Sophie implied that people were generally receptive when considering korfball as a mixed sport, and were interested in the mixed structure of the game. She did not



suggest that people were uncomfortable with the idea of a mixed sport. Yet, other players explained that korfbal outsiders generally thought that korfbal was a sport for girls rather than boys, “I think boys are more like ‘well is it a girls sport then? It’s probably more girly than boy-y’” (Gemma). Gemma’s understanding of an external gaze, one outside of the korfbal family, posing judgement upon the sport, can be compared to the medical gaze that Foucault (1994) discussed. He explained how the medical gaze extended beyond doctors in hospitals, to the wider society, penetrating social spaces, until society was aware of the ever-present medical gaze. In this example, Gemma was aware of a gaze from korfbal outsiders as they cast their judgements upon the sport, traversing their gaze from a wider social space to a korfbal setting. Gemma’s assumption about boys’ perceptions of korfbal was in line with Crum’s (1988) suggestion that non-players may perceive korfbal as a ‘sissy’s’ sport, and Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost (undated) who argue that korfbal is interpreted as a sport for girls. It also aligns with research by Grindstaff and West (2006) and Adams (2001) who suggest that people outside of some non-traditional team sports, namely cheerleading and figure skating respectively, label male participants as ‘sissies’.

Junior players demonstrated descriptions of korfbal that made it directly comparable to many other traditional, mainstream sports. With explanations of hierarchical leadership boards related to top scorers, trophies and medals awarded to the best players, amendments to the game to make it quicker and more entertaining (such as the shot clock), and the general desire for an increase in the number of participants, there were clearly comparable elements to other sports. Despite this, some of the female players did recognise that korfbal had something different to offer because it was invented as a mixed sport. The fact that it did not mean that girls were trying to ‘invade’ sports that have traditionally been dominated by boys, such as football, meant that these girls felt more comfortable playing with boys in a mixed sex environment.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated how the junior korfbal players within this study

understood korfbal to be different from other sports despite some very visible similarities becoming evident through interview data and participation observation. Foucault's ideas related to normalization, discipline and docile bodies helped to review korfbal practices and demonstrate similarities to other sporting contexts. However, player interviews and observation revealed how the family feel of the game, the non-contact philosophy, rules against solo play which encourage teamwork, and the importance of being vocal all offered differences to numerous traditional mainstream sports, contributing to the response of research question three.

Observation, interviews and informal conversations aided the understanding of the way in which junior players experience and perform korfbal. Through the rules of the game and the influence from various adult roles, korfbal often provided a space where sporting equality was encouraged, performed and experienced. Utilising a number of Foucault's ideas has enabled an analysis of the way in which korfbal practices and values are normalized within the korfbal environment, even when conflicting with wider social discourses. Therefore, korfbal can be seen to act as an embodied practice which resists dominant discourses of gender difference. This provides an initial response to research question one regarding korfbal's success in attaining sporting equality between the sexes (this will be discussed further in chapter six). Players recognised this in comparison to other sports, and general spaces within the wider society. Foucault (1994) argued that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates. It may be that within the korfbal environment, the korfbal gaze which promotes equality between the sexes, dominates over the gaze which exists in wider society - one which arguably does not support sporting equality in the same way. This goes some way to suggest that korfbal has retained some of its founding values, as per research question four, and it may offer a culture which is different to other traditional, mediated sports, as per research question three. The research questions will be responded to more explicitly in the study's conclusion, chapter seven.

Despite sex equality generally being experienced within the korfbal space, it was more evident within highly structured environments where rules and informal practices were enforced to normalise korfbal behaviour. Away from the korfbal match space, which could be considered the most disciplined setting, gendered behavior compliant with

dominant gender discourse became more visible. Informal conversations, interviews and observation demonstrated that the promotion of sex equality within korfball did not always produce gender-neutral behaviours or understandings, thus beginning to respond to research question two regarding gender neutrality. To further answer this question, the next chapter will go on to explain how junior korfball players arguably normalised gendered behaviour with regards to emotion, aesthetics, activities and actions, both within and outside of the korfball environment. Most notably, despite the aim of equality between boys and girls, junior korfball players explained how the variation in male and female korfball kit acted to reinforce gender difference, enforcing Messner's (2002; 2009; 2011) claim that the sexes can be seen as equal but different.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Gender and Equity**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

The last chapter demonstrated how the wider structure of the korfbal environment provided particular experiences that contributed to the whole package of korfbal. At face value, the format of the korfbal game seemed to encourage a degree of equality between the sexes. Within chapter five the experience of korfbal was explained through a Foucauldian lens, which proved to be a reasonable theorisation for a discussion on korfbal space. However, this chapter will move from the discussion of broader discourses in chapter five, to discuss the central focus of this research, specifically exploring gender and equality within korfbal. A Foucauldian lens will continue to be utilised in this chapter, but poststructural theories that specifically explain gender will also be applied.

The players' experiences of korfbal highlighted an important issue relating to whether sex equality and gender neutrality are mutually exclusive in korfbal spaces. This chapter will explore the presentation of the gendered body in korfbal, how players understand masculinity and femininity, and how emotions are negotiated within korfbal, in order to better understand the apparent gender tensions. These areas emerged as important indicators of gender perceptions of junior korfbal players, and this section will investigate the way in which junior players contemplate gender as an issue or not. The relevance of gender during their participation in korfbal will be assessed alongside other issues that arose during the research which relate to sporting ability and performance, and the influence of broader, external gender expectations. Ultimately, this chapter will continue to present and analyse data related to korfbal values and culture, as per research questions three and four, and also sex equality in korfbal but will focus on thick descriptions and detailed explanations of issues pertaining to gender neutrality, as per research question two.

#### **6.1 Presenting the Gendered Body in Korfbal**

Observation of korfbal sessions and interview data provided the opportunity to consider how the junior players dressed within various korfbal environments, and how

they understood the significance of the way that they looked. Notions of gender norms or understandings frequently occurred in interview data, and the way in which players used their gendered bodies was also apparent during observation. When interviewed, junior korfbal players demonstrated some perceptions of masculinity and femininity and used their bodies in ways which would conform with, or resist gender norms.

From the start of this study, a gendered representation of clothing was observed, with korfbal kits separating players' sex through the use of shorts for boys, and skorts for girls (a one-piece skirt-shorts combination, with shorts sewn in underneath a skirt which is the outward facing component). When players were asked to consider the clothes that they wore during korfbal matches, most of the boys and girls agreed that they were not worried about what they wore during this time, and had little criticality regarding the gendered kit difference. Most of the players explained that they had to wear a specific kit for korfbal matches so they would all look the same,

Not the clothes I wear, because I like these clothes and we have to wear them (Lucy)

I don't really, as soon as I get on the pitch I don't really worry about what I look like, but before a game, I'm sort of, sort of worried but everyone's wearing the same thing. So it's sort of like, if I look stupid, you're going to look stupid too, sort of thing... I'm not saying that your kit does look stupid, I'm just saying if you feel something, your teammates would have to wear the exact same thing as you (Charlie).

Regardless of having more freedom in their clothing choices for training, as opposed to the prescribed kit that they were required to wear during matches, players were still not particularly concerned with the way in which they looked, for example, Lorraine stated that:

I don't really mind at training, cos like, sometimes I wear like a Nike, this Nike top, and then my mum will wash it, and then I won't wear it again cos like it's made for it. But then like sometimes I might just wear erm, a vest top and then a top over, and then just my joggers. I don't really care how I look in training (Lorraine).

Lucy agreed with Lorraine, and explained how she did not spend a lot of time considering her outfit for korfbal training, instead, she simply wore any running top that she owned and her skirt. There did not seem to be a great deal of consideration

regarding clothing and appearance when players were in match or training spaces.

Despite the general disregard for match and training attire, most players did give opinions when prompted to consider why girls were encouraged to wear skorts in korfbal whilst boys wore shorts. Responses either related to gendered understandings of girls being more suited to skorts, or conversely, to practical reasons concerning the rules and regulations of korfbal. Players that considered it more appropriate for girls to wear skorts, tended to do so for a number of reasons that related to social norms and acceptability. For example, Lucy suggested that the reason was, “because it makes girls look more ladylike” (Lucy). Lucy seemed to take for granted that it was more acceptable for girls to wear skorts, “but I prefer it anyway because, erm [long pause] because they just look nicer... on girls, because, I don’t know, it just makes them look quite ladylike” (Lucy). This aligns with research by Grindstaff and West (2006) who suggest that female cheerleaders in their study enjoyed wearing short skirts and makeup, and had no desire to wear gender neutral clothes. When probed further, without being able to suggest a more detailed reasoning regarding the preference for skorts, Lucy simply responded, “because I was born a girl, so I just want to be a girl!” (Lucy). Lucy demonstrates a fear of being masculine, much like the girls in a PE study conducted by Gorely, et al. (2003). The uncritical retort from Lucy could be a result of the normalised gender discourse within wider society shaping Lucy’s views. Foucault (1976) explains how every society has a particular system of truth which is based upon accepted discourses. He suggests that choices ‘are made according to the logic of a certain rationality which certain discourses are made to justify’ (Foucault, 1983: 376). Sophie also willingly asserted that she preferred to wear a skort rather than shorts, again with little real reasoning, but seemingly as an acceptance of social norms,

I don’t know, it’s just because I have, I don’t know [long pause] I think I’d feel a bit stupid in shorts like, I don’t know... Erm, I don’t really have shorts, like I don’t really, because I play in my skort, I don’t really have, I don’t even wear jogging bottoms. I don’t know, I just find it comfortable, like, I don’t know (Sophie).

Sophie may wish to wear a skirt whilst playing sport to prove her femininity, or it may be that korfbal norms enforce a gender discourse from wider society. In this way,

korfball can be considered another discursive practice within gender discourse. Butler (1999: 13) explains how gendered experiences are limited through 'hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality'. Thus, gender discourse normalises embodied gender through accepted aesthetics and actions depending on the sex of an individual. Considering this idea, and aiming to discover whether gendered clothing was important in her life outside of korfbal, she was asked if her preference for skirts was reflected in wider social life. Confusingly, she explained that outside of korfbal "I wear my jeans and trousers" (Sophie). This raised questions regarding her need to assert her femininity whilst participating in korfbal, whilst, at the same time, demonstrating how comfortable she was not wearing a skirt outside of this environment. Rather than ascribing the gendered difference in kit choice to a social norm related to the way that girls look, Gemma described how girls were simply used to wearing skirts as opposed to shorts, "Erm, because girls like, prefer skirts, like they walk around in skirts more" (Gemma). Although Gemma did not explicitly argue that the norm was for girls to wear skirts, she subtly suggested this by explaining that girls wore skirts outside of korfbal, implying that wearing skirts was more normal for girls than wearing shorts.

Boys also seemed to have an understanding of gendered dress, and James explained that girls wore skirts because they were more feminine, and that girls that wear boys' clothes, and boys that wear girls' clothes, were susceptible to being teased. James implies that the act of teasing can be used as a tool to normalise individuals. Foucault (1990) explains how prohibition can be maintained through social taboo, which, in this instance, can be seen in the abnormal action which provokes teasing. Additionally, Foucault (1979a) explains how humiliation is used to create docile bodies; and in this case, the humiliation as a result of teasing can be seen as a tool to create a docile gendered body. James explains:

Erm I think it's because, really it wouldn't be right if the girls were just wearing shorts, because it's not really feminine, kind of thing, for a girl to wear shorts... Erm, well kind of, it wouldn't seem right if a girl walked in, and then like, they were wearing shorts and all boys stuff, and then the girls, and then a boy walks into a room wearing all girls stuff, wearing girls perfume and looking like a girl [laughs], wearing make-up... I don't know, I think just, people would like, start taking the Mickey out of them (James).

James clearly gendered certain clothes and aesthetics, such as shorts for boys, and skorts, make-up and perfume for girls. James explained how gender transgression “wouldn’t be right”, providing evidence of judgement when individuals transgress from social norms (Foucault, 1990), and presenting himself as an actor in the reinforcement of gender norms and dominant discourse. Foucault does not debate gender in his works, although we can apply a number of his ideas in order to explain individual actions. However, Judith Butler (1990) does specifically discuss gender; and the perception of appropriate gendered clothing and presentation of the body can be explained by applying Butler’s (1990) theory of performativity. The way in which boys and girls are expected to wear particular clothing, and explain feelings of comfort when wearing these clothes, demonstrates the appearance of a gender identity: the *performance* of gender, rather than the existence of a ‘real’ gender identity. Similarly, Ralph had rather normalised views regarding girls’ clothing and suggested that girls wore skorts “to show their legs off [laughs]”. He continued by stating,

they look more better. So say you see them in the skirt, you would say, “Wow! She looks really good”, like “she’s really gorgeous”, and etcetera. So like, I just think it’s fashion really. Everyone wants to look good (Ralph).

Ralph had an understanding that girls look better in skorts, and implied a sexualised view about girls looking “gorgeous” in skorts, also explaining that people could see their legs. In addition to this male player’s perspective, Lorraine joked that one of the reasons she wore a skort was to show off her legs, “to show off my legs, my tanned legs” (Lorraine). To which a number of other girls either agreed or disagreed, before the group of girls continued by joking negatively about the whiteness of some girls’ legs. This demonstrated that the desirable norm was to have tanned legs, which are considered as aesthetically more pleasing. The embodied practice of gendered clothing is discursively produced through dominant discourse. The girls and boys described an embodied gender produced through discourses, and also discuss judgements regarding embodied gender, thus actively reproducing gender discourses (Tolvhed, 2013; Woodward, 2012). This demonstrated how the girls were both subjects and objects of power (Foucault, 1994), complying with socially accepted gender norms themselves, and also judging others who did not comply.



Despite many players, both male and female, gendering clothing choices, there were also players that were happy to ignore the gendered clothing norms. Lilly, who openly considered herself a tomboy, and who was wearing shorts at the tournament when she was interviewed (because her skort was in the wash), demonstrated how she was happy wearing shorts or a skort,

Yeah, like a mixture. Even though I'm a tomboy and I don't really wear much girly clothes, but I don't mind wearing a skort because they're, like, a mixture of boys and girls, so like, it goes back to like, being equal (Lilly).

This use of the term 'tomboy', can also be seen in ethnographic work by Emma Renold (2009). Renold (2009) suggests that girls can 'queer' commonly accepted gender and sexuality norms by assuming themselves as tomboys. In her ethnographic study of 10 to 11-year-old primary school pupils in the UK, she found that some girls embodied hegemonic masculinity and detracted from hetero-sexualised femininities, creating a transgressive space that separates the duality of sex and gender. Lilly thought that skorts illustrated the equality that was promoted in korfbal, due to the skirt and shorts being combined. Yet, despite this view, she did not try to explain why boys were not wearing skorts if they were a symbol of equality. Lorraine also had no problem with girls wearing shorts or skorts, but she did find it amusing when girls showed too much flesh or wore very tight clothing such as Lycra cycling shorts,

I think they do, but then, erm, cos sometimes I look at people, like they wear really short like, erm, cycling shorts. I do think it looks a little bit silly, but I think they'd look a little bit better in a skort, but I think it doesn't really matter... cos like, like you look a bit funny in cycling shorts, because they're really tight and really high up [laughs] (Lorraine).

In addition to assumptions regarding gender and clothing, players also considered the practical assertion of girls wearing skorts in korfbal. Since boys can only mark boys, and girls can only mark girls (IKF, 2006), practical suggestions included the way in which skorts identified girls from boys, and therefore the players knew who they were allowed to mark. Lucy illustrated this by stating, "No, it's because, say you looked like a man [laughs], then you'd have to be able to tell the difference by the skort" (Lucy). Lucy found it funny when considering that a girl might look like a boy, and thus would be sexually unidentifiable. She then went on to further explain the practicality of skorts

and shorts to demonstrate difference easily, “Yes, it’s just easier. Like say you’re looking down, and like someone’s trying to run past you, you don’t have to look up to have a look at their face” (Lucy). She emphasised the need for a sex distinction in order to play successfully. Gemma and Ralph also considered the practical necessity of different clothing for boys and girls,

I couldn’t tell the difference between behind like, is that a girl? Is that a boy? (Gemma).

basically it makes it easier. I’ve got an answer to that one. It makes it easier for you to like, understand like when you look at that, and when they turn around and you can see the thing swirling around, so you know that’s the girl, so you can know that you’re, that’s the one you’re marking (Lilly)

so I guess you want to see the separate, so that basically like, so that you know like, that’s a boy, that’s a girl, really (Ralph).

Considering the way that some players complied with traditional gender discourses and normalised discursively produced embodied practices, such as girls wearing skorts, it was interesting to see players give a mixed response with regards to the appropriateness of skorts in male dominated sports. Players were asked to consider whether female boxers and rugby players should also wear skorts, and Lucy was the only player that strongly felt that they should,

because, well there’s no reason they shouldn’t, because if we wear it for korfbal, and for the same reason, it just makes erm, especially for like boxers you know, because sometimes they can look very manly (Lucy).

Lucy supported girls that played more ‘manly’ sports to wear skorts, in order to conform more successfully to social gender norms. She showed an open distaste for female athletes that have muscular physiques and explained that even in skorts these players would not be very “attractive”, “no, well they might want to, but I don’t think that, because they’re very muscly if they’re boxers... Then they won’t look very attractive” (Lucy). Lucy was fearful of women having too much muscle, much like the wrestlers in Sisjord and Kristiansen’s (2009) research, and girls within PE in the study by Gorely et al. (2003). Lucy seemed to suggest that skorts feminise sports, making sportswomen look less “manly”. She is seen to comply with notions of dominant gender discourse and the accepted ways that the body should be displayed. Lucy’s opinions on muscly

women, describing them as “manly” and not very attractive, demonstrated a judgement of transgression from accepted female traits. The judgment of transgression was a tool that Foucault (1990) explained aided normalisation. Despite this argument, James gave the same reasoning for girls to not wear skorts. James described how it is more appropriate to wear shorts in rugby because it is more of a “manly” sport,

Erm, that’s quite a hard one actually. Erm, well that’s kind of like a more manly sport, so like they would have to wear short shorts and stuff like that, with like, if their skirt fell down or something like that, it kind of wouldn’t be a good sight... rugby is supposed to be like a man’s game, and like, it wouldn’t look right with girls wearing skirts and boys wearing man shorts and tight shirts, and stuff like that. It wouldn’t look right (James).

James can be seen to categorise activities into girls’ and boys’ activities, complying with assertions by Chalabaev et al. (2013), and in a similar way to GCSE students in With-Nielson and Pfister’s study (2011). Alternatively, a number of players attempted to reason that female rugby players should not wear skorts due to practicality,

No, I don’t think so, because I think it’s a lot different, Rugby to korfbal. You’re always getting on the floor, so like a skirt isn’t really that good... Like shorts obviously, they aren’t going to flash like [laughs], so erm, no, I don’t think they should (Sophie).

I think they should wear shorts because they have to like get on the floor more, grab the ball and then run, I’m talking about rugby here... Erm, and then they feel more loose with that (Gemma).

because, you’re playing rugby like it’s going to, it’s resistant yeah, so it would be blowing up and it would be more difficult to run. Whereas shorts are just like tighter like that, so you can just go straight down to get the ball (Lilly).

When Lilly was asked why this was not the same in korfbal, she responded with, “I don’t know” (Lilly), demonstrating how her reasoning was somewhat flawed. Junior players willingly attempted to compare korfbal to rugby as an example of a traditional sport. Chapter one discusses how korfbal has a different historical trajectory to traditional sports, and although the historical legacies of rugby are not detailed, it can still be used to understand what mainstream sports look like; for example, a male space, where particular performances of masculinity prevail, such as ‘competitiveness, aggressiveness, and toughness’ (Wellard, 2009). In this instance, rugby has been used as a comparative framework for sport and gender.

Similarly to Lilly, Lorraine and Ralph also suggested that female rugby players and female boxers should not wear skorts, because shorts are better suited to these sports, “Erm no, because, like, I reckon they should wear shorts in them ones, only because it sort of suits that sport” (Lorraine). However, Lorraine was also confused when responding to the question of why skorts would not be appropriate for sports such as rugby and boxing,

like, in boxing, I reckon it would just get in their way, but then in tennis, I think it looks more professional to wear a skort than to wear shorts... It’s just that I reckon it would get in their way if they wore, cos like where they have the ball like, they could probably like, I don’t know (Lorraine).

Lorraine tried to make suggestions as to why female boxers and rugby players should wear shorts, but when prompted to explain, she could not provide a logical rationale. Lorraine then made an alternative suggestion, which was very similar to Ralph’s, and explained how shorts make rugby players and boxers look more aggressive than skorts could,

yeah, cos it will make them seem a bit more aggressive... so they’re, cos like, they might come harder up on the player, like look a bit tougher. So, like if they wore a skort, then they’d make, that might make them think “oh, I look a bit girly” (Lorraine).

something like a violent sport, like I mean like boxing, you want to wear something that shows you’re tough... so I think because girls are pretty, and all like showing off, “oh I’m gorgeous”, you want for sports like football, well not football, like netball and all of that, compared to like, erm, boxing, where you have to wear shorts to show that you’re tough, that you’re ready for anything really (Ralph).

When questioned, Lorraine clarified that “girly” was not tough, aligning with assertions about attributes related to femininity such as fragility and docility (Mansfield, 2006; Messner, 1988; Clark and Paechter, 2007; Hargreaves, 2000). Shorts were seen as aggressive and masculine, and sports such as rugby and boxing needed this look, while skorts were more “girly”, and this look would not be appropriate for females playing masculine sports. Although Lorraine attributed characteristics such as aggression, and a certain aesthetic look to rugby and boxing, she did not suggest that women that play are deviating from the norm, and did not suggest that they should wear skorts in order

to look more feminine<sup>27</sup>. Ralph also suggested that the particular sport defines whether girls should wear skorts or shorts, proposing that sports such as boxing require shorts because they are more violent. There is an association here that certain clothes give a perception of aggression, a characteristic deemed as more important for certain sports than others. This implied that gendered attributes and clothing have been normalised in relation to specific sports. It also showed how embodied sporting practices may have the potential to disrupt dominant gender discourse, providing an appropriate space for women to sacrifice an embodied gender through clothing.

When asked whether male korfbal players should wear skorts so that the korfbal team were in exactly the same kit, no players considered this a good idea,

Erm, because I think boys obviously won't feel comfortable in skirts, they think they're a bit weird (Sophie)

because you can't, I know, boys can't wear skorts because they'd look stupid. Because I think like, Irish people and Scottish people look weird because they wear all those skirts... they just don't like suit, because you just don't, like, go into school and all the boys are wearing skirts and dresses (Gemma),

[laughs] well I think fashion, you have to look good, and I think because you do see some girls wear shorts as well, but I think because girls, it's what, fashion really. You wouldn't see a boy wearing a dress, would you? I know if you do it for a laugh, like I know me and Tom and all that, done it for a laugh so... yeah in Avon Tyrell, you know, the girls act (Ralph).

Ralph expressed how unusual he thought it was for boys to wear girls' clothing, and when he considered a time that he dressed in girls' clothing, it was simply "for a laugh", providing undertones of accepted gendered dress. Ralph inadvertently described performative gender, where actions and performances, including clothing, produce the appearance of a gender identity rather than an innate gender (Butler, 1990). The learned acceptance of what is normal can also be explained by Foucault (1979a) who describes how individuals within society are separated into binary opposites of 'normal' and 'abnormal'. Techniques within society then act to evaluate individuals, observe individuals, and endeavour to 'put right' the abnormal, which in this case would be the transgender individual. By the fact that Ralph found it abnormal for boys

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<sup>27</sup> Grace had suggested this earlier in the section

to wear girls' clothes, perceptions of difference between sexes were clear. Gemma also continued explaining her understanding of boys wearing girls' clothes, by inferring that boys are more masculine and girls are more feminine. She suggested that this was the reason that girls were more suited to skirts and boys were not, "Because it's, it don't look right, because they're all like "grrr", and the girls are all like, "hehehe"" (Gemma). The way that Gemma describes the appropriateness of male and female clothes being linked to male and female traits, demonstrates another example of embodied practice, such as gendered dress, being produced discursively. Gemma seemed to support notions of biological determinism (described by Mansfield (2006) amongst others), giving the impression that boys naturally had traits more akin to aggression or power, whilst girls did not naturally demonstrate these attributes.

Despite a number of players being quite clear regarding the negative feelings they had about boys wearing skirts, Charlie and Lorraine both seemed to accept that boys could wear skorts if they liked,

I don't know really, I think it's, they think erm, they feel more comfortable in whatever they're wearing to play the game, sort of thing, whatever they're more comfortable in. If a boy wanted to wear a skort, I wouldn't have a problem with it, as long as they're comfortable playing. It might look a bit weird but... (Charlie).

Erm, I think it's, I don't know, I don't think, it doesn't matter if the boys wear skirts. I think it would, cos like girls wear skirts for so long it just like, makes it... if the boys wore skirts it would just look silly on them. But I don't really think it matters (Lorraine).

Both Lorraine and Charlie described the way in which it would not matter if the boys wore skorts, but both recognised that it would not be 'normal' as they described them as looking "weird" (Charlie) or "silly" (Lorraine). Considering Lorraine's previous comments, it may be that she was less concerned with gender stereotypes and more worried about korfbal norms regarding boys wearing skorts. For example, she also had a negative response to inappropriate korfbal kit for girls, even when the clothing was female-oriented, "if I come to my games, I might just think, "oh does my top look OK?", like I don't want it to look too long because it will go over my skort... cos then it makes it look like I've got a dress" (Lorraine)<sup>28</sup>. Lorraine's explanation implied that

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<sup>28</sup> Dresses are not part of a korfbal kit

wearing a dress when playing korfbal was not normal, despite dresses being normalised clothing for women in wider society. These ideas comply with Lefebvre's (1991) assertions that different spaces produce different actions, and Friedman and Van Ingen's (2011), and Lefebvre's (1991) suggestion that the body is influenced by the space that it occupies. This would imply that the korfbal gaze dominates over the gaze from wider society in this instance, suggesting that the gaze that sees is the gaze with power (Foucault, 1994), which would imply that in this space, korfbal has the potential to disrupt elements of wider social discourse.

Although the junior players often presented similar views regarding the presentation of the gendered body during korfbal situations, a specific occurrence where Lucy was witnessed to move from an 'outside space' into a 'korfbal space' proved to be a noteworthy point. Just before a match one Sunday, Lucy and her mother were walking from the car to the sports hall, and Lucy ran ahead to change her clothes whilst her mum and I spoke as we walked. Her mum explained that Lucy was embarrassed because she had to come to korfbal in tights and a dress after a Christening. Lucy was wearing a fairly short, but smart navy dress, and white patterned tights, with her hair down. This was very different from the way that the players dressed for korfbal, and Lucy was clearly uncomfortable being in the korfbal space with clothes on that she would only wear out of that space. This embarrassment may have been because the clothes that she was wearing transgressed normal attire in korfbal spaces. The clothes Lucy was wearing were highly gendered, and within the korfbal space, other than wearing skorts, the girls usually wore their hair up, with t-shirts or hooded sweatshirts, and trainers. This aligns with assertions by Azzarito and Solomon (2009) who suggest that people embody cultural values within any specific space at any specific time. The evidence showed how the players' bodies were less overtly gendered within korfbal<sup>29</sup>. Lucy's embarrassment could have been centred upon the idea that she went from a gendered environment in a family space, and then entered the korfbal space which focused less on gender difference and gendered dress. She was visibly more comfortable once again, as soon as she was back in her korfbal kit, within the korfbal

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<sup>29</sup> The female players do wear skorts, but they also wear t-shirts, socks and trainers which reflect the same kit that the boys wear

space. Lucy's feelings could have been a result of a perceived deviation from the norm regarding how the body should be dressed within the korfbal space.

Once again, the paradox is evident between perceived normalising judgements within society and normalising judgements within korfbal spaces. Punishments, in order to develop normalised actions were evident for different, and often contradictory practices and behaviours, within korfbal compared to a wider society. Lucy was clearly worried about being the only person not wearing korfbal appropriate clothes, she was worried about being individualised, and appeared relieved when she was with other players, wearing 'appropriate' attire for this space. Butler (1993: 1) explains how identity is performatively established by the same 'expressions' that are assumed to be its consequences. Lucy's choice of clothing is not a consequence of an innate gender identity. Instead, her performance of gender, her clothes and her actions, reinforce her gender identity, through discursively produced embodied practice.

## **6.2 What a Korfbal Player Should 'Look' Like**

Although the gendered korfbal clothing was noticed from the very start of this study, it was not the only factor that represented how male and female korfbal players should look. In the same way that certain players considered what clothing was appropriate, interview data demonstrated an understanding of the embodied representation of girls and boys. Lucy explained how girls would rather not play sports such as rugby since they do not like contact sports, "No, because they, erm, I don't know, girls just seem more fragile and they care about how they look" (Lucy). Lucy demonstrated ideologies of biological determinism, assuming that girls were more fragile and weaker than boys (explained by Mansfield, 2006 amongst others). She continued by explaining that girls would not like it if they endured a black eye, but boys would embrace it, "with boys it makes them look tough" (Lucy). Lucy demonstrated a normalised understanding of gender. Foucault (1990) explains how, during the Victorian era, 'judgement of transgression' and 'discretion of the norm' were used as techniques of normalisation. Foucault (1990) explains how normalising judgement meant that discretion was given to the norm, whilst transgression from the norm was judged and reprimanded. Lucy's example demonstrates how boys were more accepting of black eyes since it was



considered normal for boys to have black eyes, but not girls. These suggestions rely on assumptions that discretion would be given to the norm, which in this case would be the boys with black eyes, whilst judgements would be made on those transgressing, which would be girls with black eyes. A number of other junior girls also expressed an acceptable way for girls and boys to look. For example, Sophie referred to Michelle as a “monster” due to her size, although she did not seem to say this with malice, it was more matter of fact, “we’ve got quite short girls, i.e. me and Lorraine, and then Beth isn’t that tall, and then you’ve got Michelle Bennett who’s like a monster!” (Sophie). Foucault (1973) explains how individualising through surveillance and social practices, makes it possible to mark the normal or the abnormal. Sophie’s description of Michelle as a “monster” demonstrates how she individualises Michelle and depicts her physique as abnormal compared to the other “quite short girls”. Some of the female players demonstrated concern for how they looked when they played korfbal. Gemma explained how she tries to make sure her hair looks nice, and even ensures that it is put right again after matches,

Yeah, I sort of make it look nice, I get a comb, start brushing it and make it all nice and thick... I always try and make my hair look nice so, it’s just a natural thing... but my hair don’t look nice now because I was just in the middle of a game, I’ll have a chance to sort it out in a minute (Gemma).

Gemma clearly cared how she looked when playing korfbal and found it important to look a certain way within korfbal spaces. She went on to explain how she took time to look at herself in a mirror and assess how she looked,

I like the clothes we wear, and before a game, I’ll go in to a mirror and do my hair and everything. I don’t normally put on makeup for korfbal unless it’s stayed on from like the night before or something. Erm, but I don’t usually put on make-up at all (Gemma).

Gemma also talked about makeup, and although she asserted that she did not put makeup on to play korfbal, she discussed the way in which she did occasionally wear makeup outside of korfbal. This could be demonstrative of the idea that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates (Foucault, 1994), as Gemma presents herself without makeup in the korfbal space, where it was not normal for junior players to wear makeup, but occasionally wears makeup outside of this space. Nevertheless, a number of female players were less concerned with the way they looked as such, and

worried more about physical aspects in relation to the practicality of playing korfball:

no, sometimes my hair, but I'm not really bothered about it because I always have it tied up anyway... and it doesn't really get messy or anything (Lucy).

Well, I have to make sure, err, my fringe is tied. I don't want it getting in my way, so I have to make sure that's up. Erm, and my hair's up obviously, but I'm not really bothered how it goes up (Sophie)

I don't really care about my hair most of the time, erm, like I just don't want it to get in the way (Lorraine).

These female players all explained that first and foremost, they did not want their hair to inconvenience their performance, and the way that they looked was of little worry. Gemma was the only player that explicitly described how she monitored her appearance.

Ralph was the only boy that demonstrated a desire to look good and displayed a concern with his appearance. When asked if it was important to look good, he responded with, "say you're dressing up for like, a special occasion, like Kent [a summer tournament], I bought this [pulls at the t-shirt he is wearing] because I like the t-shirt, I've got a hoody, so yeah it does" (Ralph). He then explained his love for fashion, and his desire to never be the only player not looking good,

just you know, fashion really. You don't want to like have everybody dressed up, you just don't want to be the odd one out. Like, "oh yeah, you don't look good. You haven't got the latest fashion" and all of that. That isn't bad, that's just what they prefer. You just, you don't want to be like "oh, I don't care how I dress", like, really (Ralph).

Despite his concern with clothing, Ralph was not worried about how his hair looked, as he considered his hair to effortlessly look good all of the time, "my hair just naturally looks good, I don't have to comb it or anything, and yeah I do, because it depends, there's some things that I don't really care about" (Ralph). Ralph's fashion consciousness, and desire to look good can be explained by Edwards (1997) who suggests that males are influenced by media images of successful men presented in particular ways. Male narcissism fuels consumer society, and men's fashion becomes an important business as men become concerned with how they present themselves. Ralph's interest in fashion and his personal presentation is arguably something that would usually be associated with females. Daniels (2009) explains how polygendering

is the mixing of characteristics that have been used to distinguish between masculine and feminine, and in this example, Ralph may be presented as polygendered.

In addition to their awareness of clothes, or the way that they looked, players were also conscious of the way that they looked in photos, as photos were often taken from the match sidelines, and posted on the team's public website,

It depends, if there's like people at the side taking pictures, because they always end up on the internet. I don't know actually, my facial expressions... because say you're like frowning all the time, then I'd worry, not worry, then I'd care about that (Lucy).

All the time, yeah. There are some pictures on the website actually where I'm posing and stuff at the camera. Yeah I care a lot about that kind of stuff... yeah I have to be looking my best, just my posing, yeah I love me posing (Lee).

The way they looked was a concern for a number of players, be it the way that they presented themselves physically, or the poses that they were performing when cameras captured photographs. Nevertheless, the concern for physical appearance, or others' perceptions of the way that they look, was not usually attributed specifically to boys or girls. Both sexes made comments that related to concern over looks, it was not something that was overwhelmingly associated with one sex or the other. The only generalisation that was made regarding looks, was in relation to getting muddy. Lucy discussed how girls did not like to get muddy, which was one reason that they did not play rugby, "They just don't, I think it's just, erm, because it's mostly men that play it, and they get really like, dirty" (Lucy). Ralph also described how boys like to get muddy, but not all girls do,

but if they're [boys] like going to get muddy unlike girls they like to get... it depends which girls, because Sophie loves getting mucky, but for instance Lorraine, she would wear something like a skirt, something nice, and if she gets it muddy she'll, you know... I'm not saying, no reason about that, girls can get more muddy than boys and they'll love it (Ralph).

When asked why it seemed that some girls like mud and others do not, he suggested that it was all to do with upbringing,

I think, because, I don't know. It's just because how, maybe they've grown up. If you've got a camping family, you know, you're going to get dirty, but like for instance Lorraine doesn't camp as often, so she's not used to it... the experience (Ralph).

From Ralph and Lucy's comments, it would seem that boys are supposed to enjoy getting muddy, it was implied that this was normal. Whereas, girls were either expected to dislike getting muddy (Lucy), or would dislike getting muddy if their upbringing had not influenced them otherwise (Ralph). Understandings of embodied gender difference can be seen here, which can be further demonstrated by Whitson's (2002) research which showed how childhoods differed between girls and boys, as they are shaped by gendered types of play, leading to gendered body experiences. Discursive fields, such as the family, can be seen to produce embodied practices which either comply or resist dominant discourse. Lucy and Ralph recognised that, generally, girls' play and boys' play differed, with 'muddy' play usually being a boy's activity. Wellard's (2009) explanation of expected sporting masculinity can explain the different gendered actions described here. Wellard (2009: 48) explains how masculinity is not only reflected in obvious assertions of aggression but can also be enacted through subtle expressions of 'masculine 'character' displayed through bodily performance'.

During participant observation in this study, a number of conversations took place which related to the way that girls look, usually with Ralph as the instigator. On one occasion, whilst the coach surveyed a training match, and Ralph and Lucy sat on the bench awaiting their turn to play, Ralph was seen to start a korfbal conversation that went on to become a highly gendered one. He began by talking to Lucy about Sophie's korfbal ability, and then led on to, "she might be bossy but she's got a nice pair of legs", Lucy retorted by saying, "you're so weird". Lucy's reaction to Ralph's comment could demonstrate a micro-penalty of speech (Foucault, 1979a). Foucault (1979a) explained how the micro-penalty of speech was part of a small penal mechanism which must operate at the centre of disciplinary systems in order to normalise. He gave the examples of idle chatter or insolence as micro-penalties of speech and explained how these would be met with punishments, such as deprivations or trivial humiliations, in order to normalise an individual. Lucy's negative reaction to Ralph's topic of discussion could be interpreted as a trivial humiliation, a punishment, since the sexualising of korfbal players was not normal within the junior korfbal space. It was something that was rarely observed, and when it was observed, Ralph was usually the only instigator. In *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault (1988) describes how perpetual judgement from

others resulted in the madman judging himself. He explained how the madman must recognise transgression by repression as he is punished until it is internalised in the madman's mind and he shows remorse. 'Recognition by mirror' means that the madman is made to observe and realise his own madness, culminating in the termination of external judgment and punishment, as the punishment will continue in the madman's mind. Normalisation is then produced as they realise that they, as a madman, have transgressed from what is normal, and through the resulting repression and judgement, the individual knows to normalise their self. Despite the judgement and consequential punishment that Lucy inflicted on Ralph, he did not internalise the punishment in his own mind, and subsequently, he did not show evidence of normalizing himself. This can be evidenced as Ralph makes similar remarks to both Lucy and Gemma later in the study and gets the same negative reaction, yet he continues with his conversation nevertheless. In this example, Ralph can be seen as the subject of observation since he was watching and commenting on Sophie, yet the response from Lucy demonstrated that he was also the object of observation at the same time, demonstrating confirmation of a complex network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a).

Gendered verbal remarks were extremely rare within the training space; often the verbal acknowledgement of gender difference was silenced. Within discourse, silence is not separate from the spoken word, instead, these two aspects are relative to each other (Foucault, 1990). Generally, within match and training spaces, gender difference was only verbally acknowledged tactically. Players were encouraged to verbally explain who was where on the pitch, such as "boy feed" or "girl feed" (see section 5.1) on the importance of being vocal in korfbal), but 'real' differences between the sexes were not spoken about. Nevertheless, this example provided evidence of one player's understanding of gender when in a space that was only under the surveillance of one other player. Ralph's perceived lack of visibility may have encouraged him to decrease the power of the gaze (Foucault, 1979a), giving him the freedom to instigate this gendered conversation. Nevertheless, there were a number of conversations and actions that also reflected some acknowledgement of gender difference within other spaces, such as tournament down time. For example, James and Ralph could be seen

to discuss the chat-up lines they use at school, they gave me several examples and we all laughed together. Ralph gave an example of, “do you want some water? Because you are looking hot!”, and James also gave a couple of examples. I asked them if the lines worked, and James asserted that a couple did and he had been given a girl’s number at school, whilst Ralph explained that he and his friends just dared each other to say them to girls, and they were not actually trying to attract girls<sup>30</sup>. This conversation demonstrated how James and Ralph understood a degree of difference between girls and boys, and this unstructured space, away from parent and coach surveillance, provided an opportunity for discussions of this kind. It also demonstrated a normalised understanding of sexuality, as every reference they made was to heterosexual behavior. Additionally, Ralph made several comments towards girls within the korfbal team, in unstructured space that was populated by parents too. At a tournament, Ralph said to Gemma “that is a great body” in front of his own mum, James and his dad, and Gemma’s mum. Gemma became shy when he said this and immediately headed over to where the girls were all sitting in a group, telling them what Ralph had said in a way that implied she was disgusted. Although Ralph was comfortable having conversations about gendered bodies in a public setting, Gemma reacted in a way that inferred that she thought Ralph’s behaviour was inappropriate. Not long after this event, Ralph asked Ruth how her daughters all had such great bodies, to which Ruth laughed and explained how the girls had polished off a tub of ice cream the previous night. Neither Ruth, nor any of the other parents, verbally discouraged the gendered discussion about bodies, but childhood discourses would imply that conversations of this kind are not normal for children. This could be why none of the other boys in the same space joined in the conversation or agreed with Ralph.

From the examples provided, it would seem that in the unstructured space, away from matches where equality is needed for success, and away from training where there is still a high degree of surveillance, gender difference is more noticeable and accepted. This, once again, emphasises the importance of the way in which the body is influenced

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<sup>30</sup> Here I am directly involved in the conversation, I am the knowing subject gaining knowledge about the junior players, and at the same time I am the known object to them (Foucault, 1994), as they gauge what to tell me and how to act within my gaze.

by the space that it occupies (Lefebvre, 1991; Friedman and Van Ingen, 2011). Thus, different spaces have shown that they promote different actions and experiences (Lefebvre, 1991). The more the space promotes liberation, and the more korfbal discipline and surveillance were decreased, the more gender difference was visible and accepted, demonstrating that players had become docile with regards to normative gender discourses within wider society, and somewhat shaped by discourse. This was apparent on a sliding scale from the highly disciplined, and highly surveyed korfbal match space, to the slightly more social and less disciplined training space, and finally, to the least surveyed and much less structured space in free time at tournaments and socials. Foucault (1979a) explains how the principal aim of the Panopticon is to create an awareness of constant visibility in the mind of the subjected individual, ensuring the success of power. Players were most visible within the match space, somewhat visible within the training space, and there were moments when there was no visibility within free time at tournaments and social events. Notwithstanding the importance of looks and clothing as an indicator of embodied representations of gender, players were also willing to discuss their understandings of gender terminologies, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **6.3 Masculinity and Femininity**

As players discussed aesthetics and the body and embodied characteristics of gender also became apparent, they displayed a number of perceptions relating to gender. During discussions, some players actually used the terms 'masculine' or 'feminine' to explain certain bodily attributes or actions, and others inferred, or subtly made reference to accepted gender norms. Despite some players giving very clear views regarding gendered stereotypes and assumptions, Lilly made it clear that her thoughts were more open to critical understanding. Regarding bodily gender appropriateness, Lilly explains,

No I don't, I think it depends, like you can't say, that would be stereotypical, you can't say like, all the boys are really really muscley, because that's not true, and all the girls have got flimsy arms, because that's not true (Lilly).

Yet, conversely, most players did deliver stereotypical gender understandings, for example:

Yeah, like girls are more delicate, and then they try and like, fancy themselves up,

and then boys are walking around going, like, [makes a fist] (Gemma).

yeah, I guess, because its fashion really... whereas the girls have to wear something to show their legs off, boys should have something to show that they're male, muscular for instance... girls always want to look beautiful and I don't blame them (Ralph).

Gemma and Ralph attributed muscles and aggression to boys, whilst girls were generally stereotyped with wanting to present themselves beautifully. This idea of embodied gender aligns with assertions from Whitson (2002) who suggests that the day-to-day life of children is influenced by feminising practices that limit the opportunities of the female body, and masculinising practices that teach men to use their bodies in powerful and assertive ways. They clearly both had understandings of gender difference related to bodies and the presentation of gendered bodies. Both Gemma and Ralph demonstrated normalised views regarding the appropriate presentation of the gendered body, she seemed to have internalised normalised societal values (Foucault, 1979a).

In addition to gendered bodies, understandings of femininity also related to perceived gendered actions. A generalised feminine action was discussed by a group of girls during a break at a tournament. The junior girls argued that girls simply cannot go to the toilet by themselves, "because that's just not right, you can't go to the toilets on your own" (Lorraine). The stereotypical idea that girls only go to the toilet in pairs was clearly evident here, and when players were questioned about boys going to the toilets in pairs, the reaction demonstrated that it was not readily accepted as Sophie described "the feminine loos" (Sophie), and Lorraine explained that, "yeah, some boys, if they're feminine boys then yes" (Lorraine). The discursive practice of going to the toilet in pairs was associated with girls, and boys that performed the same action were considered feminine. As a concept, the idea of feminine boys provoked laughing from female players, demonstrating that this was not an accepted norm. If boys adhered to Butler's (1990) gender trouble, disrupting gender categories using performance, they could be seen to be mocked. This response from the girls showed an active individual participation in the development of accepted gender identities (Messner, 1990), which constituted a reproduction of gender discourse. It also demonstrates a perception of boys' and girls' activities (With-Nielson and Pfister, 2011).



In addition to the verbal description of acceptable feminine behaviour, the girls were often seen to display traditionally feminine stereotypes. For example, Lorraine frequently cartwheeled from place to place during practices; such as, between collecting a ball at the back of the post and moving to the back of the shooting line to take her turn. She also regularly discussed her gymnastic achievements with other girls. On another occasion, during a water break between practices, Sophie showed Frank a picture of a cake on her phone and continued to tell him how she had baked it herself. These examples may illustrate how players have made themselves principles of their own subjection regarding gender norms, through omnipresent, invisible surveillance within society (Foucault, 1979a). They may have participated in these activities due to the normalisation within society: their discussion of normality reaffirms this, and demonstrates how discourse has shaped the subjects. They could be seen to project normalised actions through their behaviour, speech, the activities they performed, and the ways in which they used their bodies. These were all examples of controlled elements within a small penal mechanism that operates at the centre of disciplinary systems, in order to normalise individuals (Foucault, 1979a).

The terms of femininity and masculinity were not only mentioned subtly when talking about girls and boys, they were also mentioned more explicitly in relation to korfbal. During a research interview with Ralph, a number of girls came over and joined the conversation. During this group conversation, a series of ideas surfaced about understandings of femininity and masculinity, and appropriate ways for boys and girls to behave. For example, Ralph began by explaining that non-korfbal boys assumed that korfbal was “girly” and not “muscular”, and continued by explaining that you could not prove your masculinity within korfbal, “No, because I don’t know, I think you can’t prove that you’re masculine if you’re a korfbal player” (Ralph). Despite this, Ralph did explain that korfbal players needed some masculine attributes in order to succeed, “yeah, but you need the masculine to like, have the, do the long passes” (Ralph), showing Ralph’s normalised understanding of strength as a sign of masculinity. After the idea of masculinity was generated within the group conversation, the girls were asked whether they had a problem with being masculine, to which both Lorraine and Sophie shouted “yes!” very assertively. Gorely, et al. (2003) explained that girls in

their study of PE students were fearful of being masculine. There was evidently a normalising judgement (Foucault, 1979a) that female players embraced in this instance, with regards to women being labelled as masculine. Butler (1999: 173) explains how, when the regulatory ideal body is disrupted, it is then 'exposed as a norm and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law' that regulates what it claims to describe. The reaction from Lorraine and Sophie demonstrated a judgement of transgression towards masculine women, contributing towards a technique that normalises (Foucault, 1979a) and ensuring that people act in acceptable ways. Ralph then continued by explaining that Lorraine and Sophie were not masculine, just "stronger than most girls" (Ralph). Whilst this discussion of masculinity was continuing, Sophie put her finger down by her crotch and imitated a penis. This demonstrated her understanding of masculinity as an attribute associated with men, and also illustrated the way in which masculinity was associated with physical difference, signified by her penis imitation.

The group conversation began by strongly associating the term 'masculinity' with men, but eventually, the idea of masculine girls was discussed. Lorraine explained that some people called her masculine, and Ralph jumped in, seemingly to defend her, and stated, "Lorraine you're not masculine, you're not masculine" (Ralph), like it was a bad thing, and he wanted to reassure her. Lorraine then explained that people had accused her of being masculine because of her reputation of being physically assertive, "because loads of people at my primary school were scared of me, because I could probably take them down in like, a few seconds" (Lorraine). Ralph agreed in this respect, and invited Lorraine to pinch him to prove his point, "No, look at her pinch! Her pinch is like, so deadly, look... I'm used to it now" (Ralph). Ralph let Lorraine pinch her until his skin was quite badly marked, but he did not react. This could be a demonstration of his masculinity, since he proved that he was able to withstand pain, and also proved that pain was not inflicted upon him by a girl. A competition then broke out between the girls, whereby they described how physically capable they are of hurting others, a relatively masculine trait for the girls that were so defensive over the term initially. Sophie asserted, "but I know where all the pressure points on someone's body" (Sophie), and Lorraine retorted, "give me a second, because my uncles in the army"

(Lorraine). Again, Ralph 'defended' the girls and asserted that "they're not masculine, but they've got masculine things" (Ralph). At the point that Ralph suggested the girls had some masculine attributes, Sophie responded with "like a willy!" which, once again, demonstrated her understanding regarding masculinity, men, and the physical attribute that symbolised male masculinity.

During a group conversation which centred upon perceptions of gender, the female players started to demonstrate an increased acceptance of masculine attributes. Sophie explained how "being strong isn't masculine, it's feminine" (Sophie), demonstrating that traditional understandings of masculinity were not always taken for granted when players considered what it means to be masculine or feminine. Lorraine then disclosed how she could be both girly and masculine, revealing a polygendered (Daniels, 2009) identity, "so I have girly sides but I have a masc... a sort of tomboy side" (Lorraine). A number of the other girls then agreed with this statement, but Lucy was not accepting of the term 'tomboy' (which will be discussed further later in this section) and clarified that they were not tomboys, but they were sporty. Lucy asserted an awkwardness at being labelled a tomboy, "Yeah, well, we're not like tomboys, we have a girly side and a sporty side" (Lucy). Lorraine agreed that Lucy's terminology of "sporty" was better than being termed "masculine", "Sporty side is nicer" (Lorraine). A judgement of transgression is evidenced by social taboo (Foucault, 1990) as the girls corrected themselves, after using the label of masculine. Despite Lucy and Lorraine's dislike for the term 'masculine', Ralph reiterated that girls being masculine was not negative, "it isn't bad to be masculine" (Ralph). Nevertheless, Lucy disagreed and considered it negatively, "yeah, it is for a girl, yeah" (Lucy), demonstrating her fear of being seen as masculine (Gorely, et al., 2003). The notion that girls could be masculine, but would not want to be, is an indication of the performative nature of gender, rather than innate characteristics. Butler (1999) describes how,

If gender attributes and acts, the various ways in which a body shows or produces its cultural signification, are performative, then there is no pre-existing identity by which an act or attribute might be measured; there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction (Butler, 1999: 180)

Players' opinions and assertions changed quite frequently when considering whether it

was appropriate for girls to be called masculine, or boys to be considered as feminine. Lorraine was one of the most critical thinkers when considering appropriate gender norms. Towards the end of a group conversation, she reconsidered the idea that masculinity or femininity were suited to one sex or the other and suggested that, "it's not all about a boy being masculine and a girl being feminine" (Lorraine). Although, both she and Ralph did infer that being a masculine female was "different" (Ralph), indicating that it was considered abnormal (Foucault, 1973), and would lead people to "call you a lesbian" (Lorraine). The indication that being labelled a lesbian was negative, contributes to the notion that lesbians could be considered as "the other" (Foucault, 1988), the alternative, and the undesirable. Sophie reacted to Lorraine's comment by saying that this was not the case at all, and labelled Lorraine as "weird". Lorraine then defended herself by stating that girls who do not participate in boys' sports would assume that girls that did participate in boys' sports were gay,

No, because like, if they think we're masculine, yeah, then we're with the boys and then they'll sort of like, cos like, we'll probably do all the boys sports, and then when we're with the girls they'll probably think "we want to have a go with them" (Lorraine).

Again, Lorraine demonstrated the negative association with being homosexual, expressing a concern about being deemed a lesbian, and inadvertently acknowledging lesbian identities as "the other" (Foucault, 1988). As Cahn (1994) suggests, the link between masculinity and sport, and thus the association between female athletes and 'butchness', has a firm link to deviant sexual preferences and lesbianism.

Despite confused understandings of masculine females, Ralph did consider it necessary for women to have some masculine traits, such as strength during childbirth, "it depends because you need to have some masculine I think, because when you have your baby, I think you need the strength to actually carry on and push yourself" (Ralph). When asked if he thought being a masculine female is a bad thing, he responded, "no, I don't think it's a bad thing" (Ralph). Therefore, players demonstrated contradictory perceptions regarding 'masculinity' and 'femininity', sometimes defending 'abnormal' gender demonstrations, and sometimes reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Despite the affirmation of traditional gender expectations at times, occasionally gender stereotypes were not upheld. James provided a number of examples where

gender stereotypes were not performed. During the Christmas bowling social, James was seen to help Becky (Sophie's younger sister, who was 7 years old), to aim and push the bowling ball down the lane with the help of the bowling aid. Traditionally, looking after a younger female would be assumed as a more feminine role, yet there were a number of social situations where James could be seen to play with Becky. He demonstrated a softer masculinity, as described by Klein (2000), who considers attributes such as family values being demonstrated within sport, as an illustration of softer masculinity. James can be seen to display this masculinity as he cared for a younger child within the 'korfbal family'. During a break between games, James was blissfully unaware of gender difference as he sat straddling a large inflatable yellow banana and made faces as Becky laughed and jumped and sat on the other end time and time again. A number of the adult players were seen giggling to themselves as they obviously saw the phallic symbolisation in the action, yet James was undeterred and seemingly ignorant as he could be seen to assume they were laughing along with him, and so he continued. The lack of assumed difference could be attributed to the korfbal community being likened to a family. Thus, James may have seen Becky in a similar way to a younger sister, and looking after her may have become less of a gendered action and instead a family norm (see section 5.2.3 for more information on the korfbal family).

James was not the only player seen to deviate from traditional gender norms, a number of girls could be seen to deviate from assumed femininity and acceptable gender behaviour. Most notably, at the end of a training session, Lorraine was bent over near Sophie who was sat down, and Sophie told her "you nearly sat on my head!". Lorraine retorted to this comment by suggesting "I could've farted in your mouth!", in response Sophie walked off to get her water and bag. Lorraine continued this discussion with me and explained, "that happened to me once, at a sleepover, someone farted in my mouth- it was horrible!". This discussion and the actions being discussed are not understood to be very feminine, yet Lorraine quite willingly continued talking and even referred to herself as having been able to "fart" in Sophie's mouth. Generally, deviation from traditional gendered expectations was rare within the training space. If they did occur, it was usually Beth asserting her physicality, or occasionally Lorraine hosting less

feminine conversations.

It is key to note that the gendered actions within the training space were not actions that related specifically to the game of korfbal. They occurred in a space that was visibly more social than a formal korfbal match, and they were often seen during breaks in training, at the end of training, or in dead-ball situations where the players were not directly involved in the game at that time<sup>31</sup>. These moments were an important part of the whole package of korfbal (see chapter five), which highlights the broader experiences of korfbal. This may suggest that different panoptic environments provide different surveillance and therefore players act differently. Within the korfbal space, specifically match space, players were under the surveillance of people promoting korfbal norms such as coaches, parents and other players and so players became principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) with regards to korfbal norms: their actions reflected equality within matches, and restricted gendered actions. The actions within korfbal spaces could represent ideas presented by McKay, et al. (2000), who suggest that nonmainstream sports could fulfil different gendered understandings, and thus appeal to those not interested in mediated, mainstream sports. Outside of these spaces, when the panoptic environment was reflective of a wider society, gender discourses became more important within surveillance, and the players became the principles of their own subjection (Foucault, 1979a) with regards to gender norms and discourses. Matches themselves did not provide the freedom for junior players to lack korfbal discipline. Instead, matches had stricter surveillance from a larger network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a), and therefore, it seemed that match time was not used as a social space in the same way that training was. This also limited the gendering of the korfbal match space compared to training space, as players had less freedom to act in gendered ways, and instead were focused on acting in ways appropriate to the formal korfbal space. It would seem that when in the strictest of korfbal spaces (the match space), panopticism centred upon korfbal norms rather than traditional gender norms within the gaze of wider society. Docile bodies were much clearer in the match space

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<sup>31</sup> With the exception of Beth, who was the only player to actively misbehave when her section had the ball during training matches. Beth did not ever play in weekend matches though, it was clear that korfbal, was a social space to see her friends in a similar way to a youth club or equivalent, rather than being a sport with rules and values that she fully embraced

than they were within the training space. In the match space players demonstrated bodies that had been manipulated and trained and in turn they obeyed (Foucault, 1979a) korfbal rules, norms and values. This demonstrate how embodied practices, such as korfbal, may begin to alter dominant discourses. Korfbal can be seen to offer a discursively produced outlet for gender equality in sport, and the opportunity for gender subversion.

A specific term that also came into conversations when interviewing the junior players, was the term 'tomboy'. Although it was not as significant in this research as other issues, such as physicality, it is worth considering their understanding of the term. A number of the female players discussed tomboys, either referring to themselves as tomboys or talking about tomboys in a negative or undesirable sense. Lilly described herself quite positively as a tomboy, "Yeah like, I'm a tomboy so, and I didn't want to play, and I like football, but I didn't want to play for the boys' team, and I didn't want to play for the girls team" (Lilly). When asked for some further explanation regarding why she considered herself to be a tomboy, she argued, "I don't like to do girl things, yeah sports, and I don't like going to like, beauty pageants [laughs]" (Lilly). Lilly embraced the notion of tomboy in a similar way as primary school children in Renold's (2009) study, where they embodied hegemonic masculinity and assumed themselves as tomboys. Players also labelled others as tomboys, for example, Lorraine described Michelle as a tomboy in a flippant way, describing some of her dislikes but seemingly not judging her, and thus not demonstrating evidence of repression due to transgression (Foucault, 1990),

I don't think it matters, it just like, they, cos for some reason like Michelle, because she's a tomboy she doesn't like wearing a skirt, a skort, and she wants to wear shorts. And I don't think it matters, but then when David said, "oh you have to", she like, I think she got a bit upset, only because like, she had to (Lorraine)

Because I know she's a tomboy and like, erm, she just doesn't like all them girly things cos, like, it's quite hard for us, cos like, when we go in Sutton and we all go Primark and look at all the girls stuff, erm like, we always invite her, but say, she goes "oh what are we doing in Sutton?", "we're probably going to Primark, New Look", and cos like, we'll get like a lot of girly stuff. She likes all cars and she watches *Top Gear*, and she's quite tomboyish. So she does like some stuff like we do, but it's quite hard for us because we've got to include her in

everything we do, if not she'll seem left out, but then she'll just be bored, she doesn't like it. It's quite hard for us (Lorraine).

Lorraine acknowledged that Michelle could be considered a tomboy, and despite not seeming to cast a judgement, she did infer a difference between Michelle and the other female korfball players. She discussed "girly" things that Michelle did not like, implying that Michelle did not enjoy the 'normal' things that girls enjoy because she is a tomboy. Lorraine individualised Michelle as the non-normal, explaining how she liked things that other girls did not, she liked things that were not necessarily gender appropriate. Michelle, as a girl that did not like the same things as other girls, could be seen as "the other" (Foucault, 1988), different to the rest of the 'correctly' gendered girls.

Ralph also directly referred to the term "tomboy" but not with reference to a specific player,

I just think it doesn't make a difference really, but I reckon, I would prefer if girls wore like skirts to shorts, to show that, to show off that they're nice, good looking [laughs]... you want to show that you're, you're good at it, but you're not one of those tomboys for instance. I'm not saying that's bad or anything (Ralph).

Despite his insistence that being a tomboy was not negative, he did state a preference for girls wearing skirts in order to prove that they were not tomboys, which by its very discussion could be interpreted negatively. In a similar way to Lorraine, Ralph could be seen to describe tomboys as 'the other', separating them and explaining them as different.

From participant observation and interviews, it was evident that the junior korfball players had relatively rigid ideas regarding what it meant to be masculine and feminine, and how they understood acceptable gender binaries. Although some players, such as Lilly, had a more flexible approach to what it meant to be a tomboy or a female that was not defined as feminine, a high number of female players did have trouble negotiating the use of 'tomboy', and offered alternative terms that they were more comfortable with. Participants frequently argued that male players would want to demonstrate masculine traits and that female players would not want to be labelled as masculine. This aligns with findings from Gorely, et al.'s (2003) study with PE pupils, who demonstrated that girls were fearful of being masculine, and boys were fearful of



being labelled as feminine. Although, there were conversations around this idea that meant that players, such as Ralph and Sophie, sometimes thought critically about the terms and what they meant. It often appeared that players would enact certain characteristics such as masculine physical assertions by girls (Lorraine for example), or more feminine caring attributes such as looking after a child (such as James), but when they were asked to consider what it was to be masculine or feminine, they more often than not aligned with accepted gender norms, demonstrating how their considered views were shaped by dominant discourse. This acceptance of 'normal' gendered behaviour also seemed to extend to the way players acted within korfbal spaces, and also how they dealt with emotion and pain.

#### **6.4 The Emotional Aspects of Korfbal**

Drawing on ideas from chapter five regarding physicality and embodiedness in the performance of korfbal, korfbal players seem rather progressive with regards to equality between the sexes (despite the division of the sexes marked by skorts and shorts). This being said, ideas concerning clothing (6.1), aesthetics and looks (6.2), and perceptions of terms such as masculinity and femininity (6.3) suggest that gender norms are still very much adhered to in many respects, and the way that players express emotion and act in given situations are no different.

During the observation in this study, a number of the players were seen to become emotional due to pain or embarrassment. On a number of occasions James was seen to endure pain when being hit by the ball, but each time, coaches made this into a trivial occurrence that he should not react to. Both Sophie and Michelle were seen to get upset when they were embarrassed for either being told off or because of frustration due to not doing as well as they hoped. Lorraine was also seen to get upset when she was injured during a game situation. Gemma talked a bit about her opinions of the players that tended to get openly emotional and explained that,

some boys, like James, if you like, touch his face he'll start crying, and Michelle, Michelle is like really tall and everything and she acts all strong, but if someone says something to her, like meanly, she will start crying (Gemma).

Gemma seemed to be the only player who clearly remembered and acknowledged the way in which players had shown emotion. It might be because she found it

difficult to understand, for example, she argued,

because like, Michelle started crying because Ruth told her off for doing mean faces at Frank when he gave her some advice about passing into people. I think she passed it over their head and a girl caught it, and then, erm, so Frank said “don’t just rely on your height”, and then she was like “grrr” [pulls an aggressive face] and did a face at him, like a mean one, and then Ruth came over and said, “I think that’s damn rude that you did that in front of Frank’s face, he was just giving you some advice”, erm, and then she started crying. If that was me, yeah I’d feel a bit sad, and then I’d say sorry to Frank, sorry to Ruth as well, and then I wouldn’t start going off crying and getting a strop (Gemma).

Gemma openly argued that the fact that Michelle got so upset was “strange”, and she could clearly not relate to the emotional reaction. A network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a) was evident here, as Gemma observed and made a judgement regarding Michelle, Ruth’s reaction demonstrated a judgement towards Michelle’s behaviour, and both Frank’s corrective punishment towards Michelle, and Michelle’s action in response to Frank, all demonstrate an active network of gazes. Despite the fact that Gemma described how James got upset when he was touched, James argued that coaches were harder on the boys because they were less likely to be emotional, “Erm, sometimes I feel like the men kind of like are a little bit hard on the boys because of like, they know they won’t run off crying and all that” (James). James expressed normalised gender views regarding the emotion of boys and girls. This was an interesting point considering that James was seen on a number of occasions to look like he was going to cry, and yet he clearly attributed this feature with female players. In the same way that heterosexuality was considered as the norm in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and homosexuality was seen as abnormal (Foucault, 1990), normalising judgement meant that discretion was given to emotional girls, whilst transgression from the norm, such as male emotion, was judged and reprimanded.

When players were asked about potential differences between boys and girls during korfbal, very few acknowledged differences or discussed the way in which players reacted to pain, or became emotional. Lucy did suggest that girls could be “a bit wussy” and therefore korfbal is a good game to mix girls and boys and alleviate some of the ‘wussiness’ that is often experienced in single-sex girls sport. Which goes some way to agree with Azzarito and Solomon (2009) who suggest that research demonstrates how girls and boys embody gender appropriate behaviour, such as, in this case, the girls

being more “wussy”, and Chalabaev et al. (2013) recognise how differences between the sexes are adopted from an early age. Lucy also explained how girls “aren’t afraid to show their emotions”, whilst boys are more likely to deal with pain if they get hurt,

like say the ball hit them, then boys would just say “ouch”, and girls like, lie on the floor [girly screaming and laughs]. No, girls would probably cry, and then the boys they don’t want to cry because it’s embarrassing for them, they want to try and act masculine (Lucy).

Lucy clearly held preconceptions of how the boys should act in order to be masculine, and this involved not disclosing when they were in pain, despite it being acceptable, and even expected with regards to girls. Where Lucy explained that it would be embarrassing for boys to cry, she implied that boys crying would be a social taboo, which Foucault (1990) considers as a tool of normalisation. When probed further about the idea of boys and their expected and desired masculinity, Lucy explained how boys did not want to be seen to cry because they might look feminine. When asked if it is bad for a boy to be seen as feminine she asserted “well they don’t want to be” (Lucy). She demonstrated an understanding that boys are fearful of being seen as feminine, in line with research by Gorely, et al. (2003). When Lucy considered that it would be embarrassing for boys to cry, and that boys want to act masculine, they do not want to be seen as feminine, there is a certain implication that a panoptic gaze may be in effect (Foucault, 1979a). She gave the impression that that boys would be worried about how they looked to others, assuming a normalising gaze, which they may or may not be able to see, which made them want to act in a certain way.

Players could generally be seen to act in gender appropriate ways when it came to pain and emotion, and this was often encouraged by external forces such as coaches or parents. It could be argued that players have been shaped by gender discourse, and choose gender appropriate reactions to pain and emotions. In turn, the same gendered reactions are discursively produced embodied practices. Furthermore, players did not only act in gender-divided ways with regards to emotion and pain, there were also clear divisions between the sexes when it came to other actions, such as getting easily distracted, and also how much effort they put in.

#### *6.4.1 Distractions*

The space at training involved less disciplined bodies than those at play during matches. Whereas matches were treated more seriously, training was a combination of serious practice and fun times with friends, despite the maintenance of enclosure which is highly important for visibility when creating docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a). This could be attributed to the fact that cup and league matches were deemed as important and therefore required more discipline, or maybe because match space also included the gaze of the referee, opposing players, opposing coaches, and opposing supporters. The unfamiliar surveillance may have led the players to be more disciplined in match space.

During korfbal matches within training, the space was divided into two sections (to imitate a match situation). During this split, it seemed that two quite separate spaces developed. For example, when Sophie and Lorraine were not at the end of the pitch where the ball was being played, they were seen to sing and dance together. This could be considered as a gendered action since dancing is often believed to be a feminine activity (Chalabaev, et al. 2013). On other occasions, Ralph was heard to be singing 'Viva Las Vegas' at the top of his voice as the ball was in the opposite section, and Lorraine and Gemma were seen to be spinning in circles together with their arms outstretched<sup>32</sup>. These examples demonstrated a lack of calculated constraint, and therefore a lack of docility (Foucault, 1979a) as they turned their focus away from korfbal behaviour. It was as if this space, outside of the space containing the ball, became a less disciplined space, where they could pay less attention and revert to a more social space which demonstrated increased gendered tendencies than match space. Additionally, they were still children who wanted to play, revealing a tension between adult-centric sport with firm rules and codes, and unstructured childhood play. Progressive educators recognise the importance of play to childhood development (Froebel, 1887, cited in Kushner, 2001), and despite korfbal's roots being formed by a progressive educator, it does not rely on creative play. Surveillance and gazes regularly followed the ball, and since visibility provides power and features as a technique of discipline (Foucault, 1979a), players away from the ball were no longer subjected to this disciplinary power. It also meant that the docility of korfbal bodies decreased within

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<sup>32</sup> Girls were often observed to entertain each other in pairs or groups, whilst the boys in training spaces were often seen to be solo when entertaining themselves, demonstrating the girls' affinity to the social side of sport (Sirard, Pfeiffer and Pate, 2006; Hills, 2007; Cooky, 2009)

the space where the ball was absent, as there was less correction of behaviour, less use by the coaches of the players' bodies as objects of power, and less control over their activities (Foucault, 1979a). Once again, it demonstrated how space where players were not under omnipresent surveillance, provided a contestation between korfbal identities and gender discourses and generated questions regarding their gendered actions.

There often seemed to be a relation between those that were directly involved in the training practice at a specific time, and those that were not. For example, one practice involved players taking a shot at the post, and then going into collect as the next person in the queue took a shot. After collection, the players were supposed to run to the back of the queue ready to take their next turn as it approached, yet rather than running back, Lorraine did several cartwheels from the collection position to the back of the queue. George was also seen to be imitating Michael Jackson-style dance moves whilst waiting for his turn, and on occasion, Ralph was seen singing loudly whilst waiting for his turn. Although the specific space that surrounded the post (shooting space and collecting space) deterred any players from deviating from korfbal moves and the structured practice, the space beyond this seemed to present a more liberated and less disciplined space, although it was not often seen to display clearly gendered actions. This space was similar to the space where the ball was not present during training matches. It removed surveillance and visibility since the gaze seemed to focus on the players with the ball, or in active positions by the post. This was sometimes true when demonstrations were taking place too. This emphasises the importance of particular spaces on individual actions and bodies (Lefebvre, 1991; Friedman and Van Ingen, 2011). On one occasion, Lucy was verbally disciplined for spinning a ball with her hand and playing with it rather than watching the demonstration for the next practice. This action showed a lack of calculated constraint, and therefore docility. However, the fact that she was verbally disciplined showed corrective action by the coach, involving punishment centred on humiliation since she was told off in front of the other players, and through this corrective punishment, a normalising judgement could be seen at work (Foucault, 1979a). Occasionally surveillance was also focused on players who were not involved in the practice, or did not have the ball at that particular time, but this was

rare. One example was during a training match when Lorraine was off the court. She sat quite far down the hall, away from Frank, the coach, and other players not currently on the pitch. Frank asked her why she was sitting all the way over there, and she wandered back to him, apologised and sat next to him where Beth was also sitting. This could imply that the coach wanted her within the space he could survey since visibility assures power (Foucault, 1979a).

Certain gendered actions were visible within the training space. The boys could frequently be seen to enact traditionally masculine activities, such as when Paul imitated a machine gun shooting at Ralph (making a machine gun noise and putting his arms in a position that looked like he was holding a machine gun), Ralph then did the same imitation back towards Paul. Also, at the end of a training session, during a match where James and Paul were marking each other, they imitated boxing moves towards each other, punching the air but not actually touching each other.

It seems that bodies were disciplined in certain spaces, such as match space, to adhere to korfbal actions and behaviour. Within this highly disciplined space, as a result, the space was not influenced by gender inequality. Arguably, the korfbal structure does not allow for sex inequality, and therefore, the network of korfbal gazes and omnipresent korfbal surveillance from coaches, parents, the referee and other players does not promote this, ensuring that players subjected themselves to this korfbal normality. As suggested by McKay, Messner and Sabo (2000), mixed sports, and in this case korfbal, may provide the potential for alternative gender understandings within sporting spaces. The training space was a lot less disciplined, and in turn had more traits similar to a social space. It had less discipline to adhere to korfbal behaviours and values, and more influence from the surveillance of wider society and gender discourses. It is within this less disciplined space that gendering is much more visible.

Interview data suggested that the boys tended to get more distracted during training than the girls, for example, Lucy explained how, “boys, they always mess around, and the girls, they take it more seriously at training” (Lucy). Additionally, Lorraine discussed that, “the girls are a bit more aggressive cos, like, most of the time the boys are just mucking around”, and,

that will affect their game, because they haven't sort of listened. So they don't know like, cos they will say feed, and they won't do it right which is quite annoying. So we'll get frustrated with them for not doing it right when they should have been listening when they're not (Lorraine).

Lorraine described how the girls got frustrated with the boys during training since the boys got distracted, whilst the girls were more serious and put more effort in. Lilly also described the boys as "always mucking around" (Lilly), and gave an example of a scenario where Ralph and Toby (from the under 17s team) were running after each other trying to twist each other's nipples, "[laughs] the other day at training, Ralph and Toby, they were playing, and Ralph's got a massive bruise around his nipple because of Toby... Toby twisted his nipple [giggles]" (Lilly). Although Lilly explained how the boys messed around during training, she laughed about the way that the boys physically hurt each other whilst playing. She may not have actively engaged in the type of interaction that happened between the boys, but she did not look at it with disdain since it clearly amused her. It was not deemed as problematic and this may have been because Lilly gave a discretion to the norm (Foucault, 1990). Lilly continued to explain that Ralph was often a "bit of a div", and as a result, David, the coach, frequently had to treat Ralph differently to the other players, "not shout like, "do this, do that like", he shouts at him like, "come on Ralph, stop messing around" and stuff like that" (Lilly). Which agrees with the boys' perceptions in research by Nicaise, et al. (2007), who asserted that they believed that they received more negative feedback in PE settings. Players explained how David gave corrective humiliation, and individualised the non-normal (Foucault, 1979a), as Ralph behaved in unacceptable ways within the korfbal training environment. When asked whether David would treat a girl in the same way if she was messing around, Lilly responded with "yeah, but I don't think a girl would do that" (Lilly). This demonstrated how Lilly had preconceived understandings of gendered actions. She accepted the thought of boys messing around, and even found it amusing, but was clear that she did not think that girls would mess around in the same way, recognising discursive embodied actions which contribute towards dominant gender discourse.

In addition to the girls' assuming that boys get more distracted than girls, James viewed the boys as being more distracted and likely to mess around during training. He explained how the boys had a tendency to mess about, but attributed that to the

presence of girls. He implied that without the girls there, the boys would be less likely to get distracted or mess about, “sometimes when the girls kind of intervene, like, some of the boys get a little bit restless” (James). Lorraine also agreed with the idea that boys were likely to get distracted, and named James and Ralph as two of the boys that sometimes failed to listen in training,

some people, they can get a bit annoying, but like sometimes in the group, when we’re playing, some people don’t listen, like Ralph and James. Sometimes they just don’t listen and it’s really annoying and like, so the girls like, erm, David might say, “right, the girls are always working, it’s always the boys that seem to be, erm, messing around, so get with it!” sort of thing (Lorraine).

Lorraine explained how the coach signals that the boys mess around more than the girls. Coach power and surveillance were very clear from the discipline that they delivered (Foucault, 1990).

Lilly and Lorraine were not the only players to give Ralph as an example of a boy who was regularly distracted, Sophie also named Ralph and described him as “quite a hyper boy” and “a bit over the top” (Sophie). Nevertheless, Sophie continued by defending Ralph and suggested that he was not hyper on purpose, it was just in his character, and that other clubs may have girls that act in the same way, implying that it was not about innate sex or gender traits. Sophie did not view Ralph’s distraction as a characteristic that was generalised to boys. She specifically stated that Ralph was distracted at her korfbal club, but there could be girls that would act in the same way at other clubs. Sophie did not demonstrate an understanding of gender difference here, unlike coaches in research by Messner (2011) who assumed that sports benefit boys due to their excess energy or disorderly nature, suggesting an innate behaviour difference between the sexes. In a similar way to some of the female players, when Ralph was asked about players that messed around, he recognised himself. However, he explained how he messed around at the beginning of the season, but argued that later in the season he no longer behaved like this since he found that he was not progressing as a korfbal player. As Ralph considered his actions and explained his new thought process, it would appear that he had internalised the correct way of behaving in korfbal, and had gone some way to becoming a principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1979a), internalising the punishments that the coaches had delivered when



he deviated from acceptable korfbal behaviour. Ralph explained that Gemma and Lucy were the two players that messed around most often once he had started to behave,

others aren't bad, but I think Gemma and Lucy, I think they muck about a bit, cos I used to muck around and I've realised it doesn't help anyone, and they, if you see them now, they're dropping the ball from a simple pass and things like that (Ralph).

It was interesting that Ralph was willing to acknowledge that he was a player that had messed around, although his awareness may have been ingrained in him through constant coach interaction, and coach correction. It was also interesting that Ralph named two girls as the players that messed around most often towards the end of the season, since the only other player that labelled specific girls as being most likely to be distracted was Lee. Lee explained how, "you can just see her [Lucy] sort of gazing into space [laughs]" (Lee). Although, observation suggested that towards the end of the season Lucy and Beth were the two players that caused the most disruption to training sessions, Lee may have suggested that Lucy was likely to mess around because she was his sister. Through the brother-sister relationship that they had, he may have felt more comfortable talking about his sister in such a way, yet he did not mention Beth who often played around with Lucy and was the one who usually started the distraction games. Considering Ralph and Lee's assertion that a number of the girls were distracted and messed around most often, Sophie also suggested that the girls messed around as well as the boys. Sophie discussed the emergence of Beth within training sessions, and when describing how Beth had become friends with everyone in the team, she also explained that they all played around together, "we all [all of the girls] just like, not muck around, but have a laugh and joke, cos it's like, the only, Lucy and Beth, it's like the only time we get to see them for a week" (Sophie). This once again emphasised the social importance of sporting participation for girls (Sirard, Pfeiffer and Pate, 2006; Hills, 2007; Cooky, 2009). It was interesting since observation of the training sessions showed a severe change in the dynamics and behaviour of the girls after Beth joined the team. Prior to the appearance of Beth, the girls were observed to take training very seriously and they did not particularly interact in a way that could be deemed as a distraction from training. Once Beth arrived, the girls changed quite drastically in their actions during training. Over time they became much more 'boisterous', sometimes batting the

ball out of each other's hands, tugging on shirts, or laughing and joking as a result of making fun of each other. They began to demonstrate a more polygendered behaviour; as females that demonstrated a mix of characteristics that could be attributed as masculine (Daniels, 2009). Strangely, none of the players mentioned Beth as someone who caused distraction or played around, yet she was the catalyst to the girls behaving in a much less disciplined way.

Nevertheless, from observation, it was evident that the training space was influenced after the arrival of Beth. She was one of Lucy's friends from school and completely changed the dynamic of the space for the girls. She did not attend socials, tournaments or matches, so did not influence any other spaces. Rather than seeming a little distracted and occupying themselves in spaces where the ball was not active, the girls became undisciplined even when they were directly involved in a game or practice space. During a practice, Beth was seen to stick her foot out to trip Michelle up as she ran passed, but Michelle realised and jumped over it. Additionally, during a training game, Lucy told Frank that Lorraine pinched her on the cheek, and Frank told her to "mark Michelle!". She was clearly needed in an active space, yet Lucy reiterated in a more agitated voice, "she pinched me!". Frank attempted to correct her by giving her directions to mark her player, but Lucy showed no calculated constraint. While Foucault (1979a) would describe Lucy's actions in terms of noncompliance or not displaying a docile body, it is still difficult to gauge whether this act of defiance could be explained as a form of agency or teenage rebellion. For example, Jackson (2006: 46) explains how 'girl power' girls and 'ladettes' may 'be eschewing the old-fashioned, hardworking, good girl image, and instead embracing a party animal, rebel, effortless achievement image more akin to their male counterparts'. Nevertheless, not every deviating action directly involved Beth, the whole dynamic of the girls and their actions were seen to change after the arrival of Beth and her less disciplined ways. It was as if they had seen her acting in a different way and decided to amend their actions accordingly to comply with her less favourable behaviour during korfbal training sessions.

The network of power was less obvious between the junior players themselves, as they mostly ignored advice from other junior players regarding technique. For example, during a throwing and catching exercise when Lorraine tried to explain to Lucy that she

needed to plant her foot rather than crossing one foot over the other, Lucy resisted and told Beth to feed the ball too high for Lorraine. This happened a number of times and Lucy and Beth giggled together. This act of teasing was only visible on occasion from the girls, the boys did not react to criticism or help from others in such a way. The reaction from Lucy and Beth did not show signs that they were becoming docile bodies, they did not demonstrate a desire to master the body (Foucault, 1979a) or get the technique right through the practice. Instead, they resisted the advice from a more experienced player and joked around, failing to complete the practice successfully or master the body by correcting the technique.

Until Beth entered the training space, a lack of discipline in the active korfbal space was not apparent, and yet the introduction of one new character changed the way the girls acted. Generally, it seemed that Beth's attention was focused on Lorraine, and Beth's lack of korfbal discipline was clear from her physicality towards her, which transgressed both korfbal values and gender discourse. On one occasion Frank had to tell Beth that she could not push Lorraine whilst she was marking her. Another time, whilst the ball was down the other end of a training match, Beth could be seen to quickly touch Lorraine's shoulder again and again in order to annoy her. Eventually, Lorraine retaliated quite aggressively by punching Beth's arm away, but Beth still continued. This also happened when Sophie, Lucy, Lorraine and Beth were all on a post with Tom (an under 17s player). Lorraine was seen to hit and slap Beth in retaliation to Beth continuously hitting her, again showing transgression of korfbal values and gender discourse. It also demonstrated how fighting, a traditionally masculine activity (Chalabaev et al., 2013), was enacted by girls in this instance. This situation was rare since the under 13 players usually acted more disciplined in the company of under 17 players, even more so than when their main coach (Frank) was surveying them. Yet, one player changed the actions and discipline of numerous other girls and changed the korfbal space into a more gender differentiated one. Encouraged by Beth, the dynamics of the girls changed to be less disciplined, and in turn, the space became more gendered.

Girls became more 'giggly' after the arrival of Beth, displaying a trait usually associated with girls. Beth was new to korfbal so had not experienced discipline in order to adhere

to korfbal norms; she seemed to overtly comply with gender norms instead. Beth may have felt that she had to act in an extremely girly way in this sporting environment, as girls in research by Cockburn and Clarke (2002) suggested that they felt it difficult to be physically active and heterosexually desirable. Thus, she may have felt the need to assert her femininity rather than trying to succeed in being physically active. The space also became more attuned to gender difference after Beth arrived. Beth took time during one session to whisper to Michelle whilst Lucy told her “stop it! I don’t fancy Ralph!”. Later in the session Beth went up to Tom (an under 17 player tasked with refereeing a training match) and said “Lucy fancies Ralph... you and Ralph”, to which he responded with “Lucy fancies Ralph?” as he ran on to the pitch to referee. Lucy retaliated to these actions by telling Beth that she did not like her and then giggled, demonstrating the playful jest of the assertion. Later in the same session, Lucy followed Beth’s example and whilst she sat next to Frank and Gemma she commented, “and what’s that Gemma? I love you Tone Tone?” and she giggled to herself. These examples display normalised heterosexual assertions with regards to sexuality. It is important to note that, firstly, the reference to sexuality was always heterosexual, and secondly, discussions of love seemed to be an accepted behaviour when said in jest, which usually provoked mutual laughter between the players involved. This was unlike the situation when Ralph discussed sexuality and Lucy met it with a negative response.

The actions, behaviours and attitudes of female players changed right from the arrival of Beth, prior to this Lucy seemed quiet and reserved, demonstrating calculated constraint and a relatively docile korfbal body (Foucault, 1979a). Lucy was not somebody who teased others, or frequently demonstrated particularly girly characteristics, nor did she display a portrayal of gender difference within the training space. The arrival of Beth brought surveillance from outside of the korfbal community, and in turn, surveillance which related to gender which influenced the girls to act in ways that transgressed korfbal values and norms. Beth came into the korfbal training space without korfbal values and managed to change some of the girls from relatively docile korfbal bodies to less docile korfbal bodies. Butler (1999) describes how actions, behaviours, and words are performative, and signify the false assertion of an internal identity, such as gender. The illusion of a gender core is maintained through social

discourse, which regulates gender 'through the surface politics of the body' (Butler, 1999: 173). With less influence from regulating korfball practices and a decreased awareness of normalised actions within this specific space, Beth's actions were influenced by wider social discourses. Beth's frequent gendered performance influenced more docile korfball players to comply with her actions rather than korfball norms, demonstrating the impact of social discourses.

It is worth considering the importance of childhood when investigating the junior players within an adult-centric and adult invented sport, even though korfball was invented for children. The way that Beth acted may have been a result of enacting informal childhood play, rather than any intention to disrupt normalised korfball environments. A number of players did not agree that it was mainly the boys that got easily distracted or used training time to play around together. Lorraine suggested that outdoor training (which happened out of season and in the summer), was a key space for all players to play around. She stated that, "most weeks it's quite fun because we just mess around like. If it's outside, we like, for the hour and a half, we might just play a silly game of korfball, like everybody. It's quite fun" (Lorraine). Lorraine generalised this "we" to the whole team, but it is worth noting that outdoor training was treated in a very different way to training during the korfball season. It was less about tactics and more about playing korfball for fun and bonding as a team. This was often the same for adult korfball players and mimicked the more relaxed element of tournament games rather than league positions and cup triumphs. Lorraine also described how the girls did mess around during indoor training season, but to a lesser extent than the boys, "but then girls, we do have a bit of a mess around, but they like, we'll get our heads down quicker than the boys do [...] they mess around a whole lot more" (Lorraine). However, Lucy also agreed that all players had their moments, whereby they did not pay as much attention to training, and instead used training as a social activity for messing around with friends, "sometimes, everybody has those days where they get really hyper, and you know they just think that we have other times to train, so this time no-one really matters. So sometimes we just want to have fun" (Lucy). Sophie also agreed that, at times, everyone messed about to a certain degree, male or female,

I think it depends like. There's sometimes when we're all mucking around, but

if, if we're concentrating and we're all mucking around I don't think David and Frank really mind, as long as we are doing what they've asked us to do, and like we're having fun then I don't think they mind, but it just depends like (Sophie).

Sophie continued by referring back to Ralph as someone who messes around, but then suggested that other players were happy to joke around with Ralph, including herself,

Well, I don't know because Ralph messes around with other people. Like I would quite happily go and like, not mess around, but have a joke and laugh with Ralph, like, but, erm, yeah I think everyone, like Lorraine, Michelle, James, Paul, everyone would like, Lucy, have a laugh (Sophie).

Ralph was not the only culprit messing around, it was suggested from Sophie's comment that Ralph often messed around with a number of other players, demonstrating how he was not solely responsible as the catalyst of distraction amongst players.

Interview conversations showed how some players made generalisations about boys or girls getting more distracted, but there was also evidence from interviews and participation observation that demonstrated how it was often certain individuals who got distracted regularly, irrespective of gender. Both Ralph and Beth were seen to cause a distraction during training sessions, yet, although a number of players identified Ralph as an easily distracted individual, no-one referred specifically to Beth. In general, players were happy to suggest individuals as those likely to get more distracted, rather than suggesting it was a trait related to gender. Even though this was the case with regards to distraction, players were more forthcoming with generalised assertions relating to sex and exertion of effort during korfbal performances.

#### *6.4.2 Laziness and Effort*

References to distracted players were usually applied to specific individuals, while laziness and effort were usually generalised to one sex or the other, in a similar way that emotion and pain were gender divided. Generally, the girls were considered to put in the most effort, as stated by James, Lilly, and Charlie, whilst the boys in the team were seen to mess around, as suggested by Lilly, or deemed slightly lazier as a whole,

Boys, they always mess around, and the girls, they take it more seriously at training (Lucy)

we [boys] get a little bit slackish when like, we kind of get tired. Because like,

whereas the girls, they keep on trooping on, whereas us we kind of slow down a bit (James)

Like some people, they can get a bit annoying, but like sometimes in the group when we're playing some people don't listen, like Ralph and James, sometimes they just don't listen and it's really annoying, and like, so the girls like, erm, David might say "right, the girls are always working, it's always the boys that seem to be erm, messing around, so get with it!" sort of thing (Lorraine)

girls, they do like, they do work a bit harder than the boys, but like, because, erm, you can sort of tell, because a lot of people from like, a couple of the boys, they trialled for the academy but like, they didn't get in because, I only think it's because the girls, they work harder (Lorraine)

Gemma explained that boys were complacent when throwing the ball, whilst girls threw with more effort (she then made a sound that resembled an aggressive grunt when explaining how girls throw). This idea is converse to assertions by Clark and Paechter (2007) who found that 8 to 9-year-old girls in their study generally withheld full exertion, and also arguments by Young (2005) who suggests that girls do not motivate their whole bodies when they throw balls, embodying a learned anxiety of pain or injury. Gemma further explained that, "boys can naturally throw it [the ball] like that" (Gemma), suggesting that boys have a natural strength and therefore girls have to try harder in order to match their throwing ability, demonstrating a belief in biological determinism of natural attributes associated with men and women (see further discussion in Mansfield, 2006). When discussing this idea, Gemma displayed normalised gender values, she also separated traits for boys and girls, demonstrating how boys were perceived as naturally strong, and girls could be conceived of as weaker, potentially 'the other' (Foucault, 1988). This demonstrates the discursive construction of embodied practices, whereby boys are assumed to be stronger and throw balls better, whilst girls are deemed to be weaker and less able to throw in comparison. These ideas then become embodied by subjects, and they reproduce dominant gender discourses. This supports assertions by Summerfield and White (1989) that men have a natural and unforgiving strength that women cannot compete with. Yet, the IKF (2006) argue that the natural advantages of men, such as physical strength, are strongly reduced due to korfbal rules. The argument by the IKF aligns with Messner's (2002; 2009; 2011) discussions of soft essentialism, where girls are granted equality, but there is a silenced understanding that they are naturally different. It does not seem that this

is always perceived to be the case. Players suggested that Lucy demonstrated energy and effort through shouting and running, “Well she’s always active, like running around. She always shouts for the ball a lot and shouts stuff (Gemma). Yet, conversely, Ralph suggested that,

others aren’t bad but I think Gemma and Lucy, I think they muck about a bit. Cos I used to muck around, and I’ve realised it doesn’t help anyone, and they, if you see them now, they’re dropping the ball from a simple pass and things like that (Ralph).

It was interesting to see how Ralph understood that he used to be one of the players that played around, and for him to reflect upon this and discuss how he had changed. He spoke as if he was in a privileged position, noticing others that were underperforming at korfbal because they were messing around. Over time, Ralph had become more docile, he had been trained to understand that he should not mess around during korfbal training (Foucault, 1979a), and had internalised these accepted values (Foucault, 1988). He further explained that it was unfair for the players that do put the effort in, and again acknowledged himself as someone who had learnt and improved because of this, “I don’t think it’s fair on the people that put the effort in, and I used to not put the effort in, and you even knew that so, and so yeah” (Ralph). Ralph then continued by adding that,

But like, I used to not be one of the confident, I used to be like, erm, I used to kind of like not care about, I used to just love playing matches, but now I’ve really understood that I’ve got quite bad, because you’ve just seen me go down and they’ve all gone up (Ralph).

This showed Ralph’s understanding of effort and ability, illustrating the negative connotations associated with lack of effort. Again, this demonstrated a level of korfbal docility acquired through training and discipline (Foucault, 1979a), it also showed how Ralph had internalised the need to exert effort in order to succeed. Sophie agreed that Ralph put less effort in when he messed around, but suggested that, “I don’t think he does it on purpose, but he’s the kind of boy who does that like, but then like, I think in other clubs you do get girls who do that as well” (Sophie). Sophie did not associate Ralph’s lack of effort with a sex-specific attribute, and instead, she explained that Ralph may put less effort in at this club, but it could easily be a girl at a different club. Lorraine also recognised that effort and hard work directly led to success and recognition,



I think, I'm not too sure, I think Ralph did, but I'm not too sure. But like, erm, Gemma did, Lucy did, I think quite a few people [went to national trials], but only me, Sophie, Charlie and Lee from Trinity Academy, we're the only four that got in [to the national academy]. And like, it does like sort of prove that, cos we work the hardest (Lorraine).

It appeared that some kind of order of genesis existed within the korfbal environment, the best players were marked by their success in getting into the national academy. National trials acted in a similar way to an exam and gave some kind of rank or classification which aid the normalisation process (Foucault, 1979a). Despite the player assertions so far, James argued that Michelle put the most effort in at training, even though this would go against the observation that took place during training sessions. He explained that he, "just always see[s] her [Michelle] at the end of training, and she's always hot and sweating, and then like, she's always wanting more drink and stuff like that" (James). Thus, physical reactions to exercise demonstrated a level of effort to James. Lorraine was also seen to exert a lot of effort (Gemma), whilst Gemma viewed herself as also trying very hard, and Ralph thought that George was Captain because the coaches saw how much effort he put in. Lorraine agreed regarding George, "he's not messing around at training, which is good, because he wants to get his head down and just do it" (Lorraine), yet she suggested that Sophie and Charlie were the best players due to the effort that they exerted.

Despite this, Ralph, and a number of other players suggested that both the girls and boys have moments where they put in more effort than the other sex:

I think, I don't think, I know this sounds weird, but I don't think the boys put in the effort sometimes, or sometimes the girls don't put in the effort (Ralph)

I think it depends, like there's sometimes when we're all mucking around but if, if we're concentrating and we're all mucking around, I don't think David and Frank really mind, as long as we are doing what they've asked us to do, and like, we're having fun, then I don't think they mind (Sophie)

everybody has those days where they get really hyper and, you know, they just think that we have other times to train, so this time no one really matters, so sometimes we just want to have fun (Lucy).

Although the training space provided more freedom than the highly disciplined match space, players were still under the influence of certain disciplinary measures. For example, they were mildly punished for not being the most successful during training

practices. On one occasion, when a practice was taking place on two posts, the players were described as two teams, and the team that did not score ten goals first were made to do 'quick steps' for 30 seconds. In this instance, 'quick steps' could be an illustration of physical discipline. Important elements of Foucault's (1979a) explanation of normalising judgement include the idea that punishments, such as physical discipline, deprivations and trivial humiliations, are important within any disciplinary system aiming to normalise individuals. This type of physical punishment was also seen within a training session when the juniors were made to do five sit-ups each time they performed a pass incorrectly. This demonstrated how the body acted as an object of power and was being manipulated in order to create a docile body (Foucault, 1979a). The types of punishments were not specific to one sex or the other, and during these practices, the teams were mixed-sex, which demonstrated that the coaches did not deliver gendered punishments. During one instance of punishment, when James was told to do 5 sit-ups, he asked, "why?" before walking away from the practice. It was unclear at this stage whether he was going to do the sit-ups as asked, but then he went to the corner and completed all five. James completed the sit-ups despite the fact that no-one was watching, and no-one would have noticed if he had not done them. This may have demonstrated a good example of a panoptic environment, since James did not know whether anyone was watching him, or whether anyone would monitor him, and yet he completed the task, implying that he was the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1979a).

There was evidence from interview data that suggested that some players thought that individual players, either male or female, exerted the most effort, whilst other individuals could be branded as lazy. There were relatively high numbers of players who asserted that the girls generally put in more effort than the boys. The reasoning behind this was varied and extended from ideas that boys simply got tired quicker than girls (James), to ideas of boys being naturally stronger and girls needing to exert more effort to compensate (Gemma). In spite of the number of players that were happy to make generalisations regarding sex and exerted effort, a high number of players did also try to explain that this trait was not one related specifically to sex. Some players described how girls and boys displayed traits of laziness or effort at differing times; they

were not traits overwhelmingly displayed by one sex or the other. Yet, more often than not, when a specific sex was named as exerting more effort, it was the female players that were nominated. Therefore, there was not a clear acknowledgement that girls do not fully exert themselves, as suggested by Young (2005) who argued that girls do not physically exert themselves to their full potential due to fear of pain or injury. The perception of an evenly gendered distribution of effort in a korfbal context, could begin to refute dominant discourses related to 'natural' differences between boys and girls. When considering how some characteristics were assigned to specific sexes, such as the overwhelming evidence that accepted girls getting emotional and not boys, and the frequent generalisation that boys tended to be lazier whereas girls were nominated as the sex that exerted more effort (for a variety of reasons), specific sporting differences between girls and boys were also acknowledged by the junior players.

### **6.5 Perceived Difference of Sporting Ability between Girls and Boys**

Throughout conversations with the junior players, the topic of 'difference' frequently arose, and comparisons were often made between the perceived physicality of boys and girls, as well as the sporting experiences of boys and girls outside of korfbal. Observation during participation also gave me the opportunity to watch and understand how the boys and girls acted differently, and whether they complied with traditional gender norms in many ways, or whether there were examples of resistance and contestation within korfbal spaces.

Within the training space, there was clearly a tactile nature between all of the girls, which was not seen with the boys at all. The gendering of physicality in this way was possibly normalised. Physicality between the coaches and female players, and the female players with each other, was seen as completely normal; seemingly, no disciplinary mechanisms were at play in order to change this use of the bodies. This was the same within the training space and also outside the training space, but was not visible within matches. Lorraine and Sophie are both quite small in stature and were often seen to sit on Michelle's lap (she was quite a bit taller than them). Shortly after, Sophie was seen to give Lucy a really embracing hug. The physical contact between the boys often revolved around play fighting, and they did not have any physical contact with the coaches. After one training session, James and Sam were play fighting lightly

together, and then Ralph and James began to play fight before Ralph and Tom (from the U17s) started scuffling around together. The different gendered behaviour with regards to the body and physicality may imply that equality was only mastered within the actual *game* of korfbal, and not necessarily within the spaces that surround it, which has implications regarding the actual impact of practices such as korfbal on wider social discourses. Generally, within the training space, the girls were not seen to play fight together, but after the entrance of Beth, there was a different physicality which usually involved Beth barging other girls during an end of session match, or grabbing tops during a practice to help her stay with her opponent. There was sometimes intentional retaliation to Beth's physicality, which included Lorraine hitting her back after being hit during a practice, but generally the girls did not assert this physicality. It did not happen before Beth arrived, these actions only ever involved Beth. Beth's physicality and the physical retaliation of Lorraine, demonstrated a lack of calculated constraint and a lack of docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a) in relation to korfbal behaviour.

Often, sporting space outside of korfbal was also seen in a gendered way. When discussing PE space, Sophie asserted that girls do not really like football, and boys do not really like netball, demonstrating a knowledge of sports more suited to boys and girls (With-Nielson and Pfister, 2011). Within mixed PE she explained how the boys, "usually wouldn't like, they would usually block us out, like they'd like usually just pass amongst each other", demonstrating the gender separation within PE space at the school. This is similar to research by Evans (2006) who asserted that girls being studied felt disadvantaged. Lucy gave an example where they played rugby in PE and the girls simply, "were, like, running around screaming", reflecting normal gendered assumptions of girls within a sporting space. The girls were conforming to traditional gender stereotypes within this space, under the panoptic surveillance of wider society, whereby girls should perform in a different way to boys. She explained how people that play korfbal are different, suggesting that girls act differently within the korfbal space. She also went on to explain that mixed sport, such as korfbal, is better than single-sex female sport or PE since girls can be "wussy", implying that single-sex female sport is gendered and weak. Lilly also made generalisations about girls playing sport in PE and

argued that “the girls like all, are all like, ‘I don’t want to get my shoes dirty’, and things like that”, she then went on to explain that “the boys play too rough”. The way in which Lilly discussed girls in PE indicated that the girls did not present docile bodies (Foucault, 1979a) within the PE environment, they did not want to master their bodies with regards to the exercise and were too concerned with getting dirty to be interested in getting techniques right. Ralph agreed with generalisations about boys who play sport and explained how boys’ basketball has a lot of “rough and tumble” because it is just boys, implying a difference between how they would act if girls were involved, or how girls would act playing the same sport. Gemma also drew differences between boys and girls in PE saying that girls get “bitchy” if you do not get it right, and boys get aggressive, but within korfbal, the people that play it are not like that. She also asserted that, within PE, the boys show-off in front of girls, or do not “pass to the girls, they’ll think they’re rubbish or something”. This aligns with research by Hills and Croston (2011), who suggested that boys in their study deemed themselves as superior to girls in PE classes. James asserted that girls do not punch and kick if they play football, and within sporting space they are usually gentler than boys, demonstrating a clear gendered opinion about both boys and girls within sporting spaces. Conversely, Lorraine stated how she preferred mixed PE because the boys are sportier than the girls, and explains how, by playing with the boys too, she can push herself harder. Lorraine showed traits of alpha femininity (Azzarito, 2010), where she desired success and physical accomplishments (Scraton et al., 1999; Theberge, 2003; Heywood and Dworkin, 2003; Adams et al., 2005). This demonstrated a gendered thinking about boys being better at sport than girls, but also demonstrated that she did not have a problem with entering the boys’ zone, and she welcomed the challenge of sport rather than acting reserved and feminine. This contradicts dominant discourses, which Azzarito and Solomon (2006a) explain can lead to a positive experience where boys and girls can view their bodies as sites of empowerment. The actions which Lorraine discusses, have the potential to disrupt accepted embodied gender norms, supported by dominant discourse.

Traditional sports like football and rugby are seen to dominate PE classes (Charlie), despite the fact that sports such as korfbal provide a great opportunity for girls and

boys within PE lessons to play together, “so you haven’t got to have, like, an all girls’ lesson, or only girls lesson or only boys lesson, so you can play it throughout so both, two sexes can join in” (Sophie). Sophie explained how PE teachers do not try to get girls equally involved in football, and they do not try to get boys equally involved in netball, even though they all have to play both within PE. She suggested that this is probably because girls do not really like football and boys cannot play netball, “because it is only a girls’ sport” (Sophie). Lucy suggested that when girls play single-sex sport they tend to be “wussy”, and therefore it is better to play mixed sport so that not all the players are wussy. Korfball could provide an opportunity for mixed PE lessons, whereby both sexes have the potential to mutually enjoy a sport that has not been created for the opposite sex alone, especially considering its educational roots (Crum, 2003a; van Bottenburg, 2003). It was created within a school environment, as a mixed game that girls and boys could play in unison (Broekhuysen, 1949, cited in Crum, 2003a), promoting equality and teamwork (Crum, 2003a). Additionally, Thorne (1993) suggests that PE lessons that promote inclusive practice, equality, and reflect teamwork, can demonstrate the viability of gender inclusivity and potentially lead to a change in wider understanding, which suggests that games such as korfball, could provide a space which alters dominant discourse often reproduced in a PE and sporting environment. Summerfield and White (1989) explain how korfball was invented as a competitive mixed sport that relied on cooperation, where rules were designed to encourage boys and girls to participate on a level playing field, reject violence, and form an egalitarian game.

Korfball is often deemed to be different to traditional sports for various reasons, for example, in 1973, Jan Cottaar (then President of the Dutch Sports Press) stated that korfball is ‘a game to which the modern luxury of sports has not yet penetrated’ (cited in Van Bottenburg, 2003: 98). This arguably referred to the professionalism, commercialisation and general Western consumer culture that influenced many other sports. James explained that korfball is different from traditional sports, and explained how the sport itself either attracts, or generates, a sort of person that is different from other sports and sporting environments, “I like the atmosphere, whereas, like, other sports kind of like, they kind of pick on each other kind of thing, whereas we don’t, we

kind of all stay together, and there's always like loads and loads of support" (James). Sophie also suggested that korfbal could be deemed as different from traditional sports. She explicitly stated that one of the best things about korfbal is the fact that it is mixed, she likes the fact that each section is made up of two boys and two girls, and she likes to play with boys "because it is different" (Sophie). Lilly did not overtly state that she likes korfbal due to the mixed format but did say: "I'm a tomboy, so, and I didn't want to play, and I like football, but I didn't want to play for the boys' team, and I didn't want to play for the girls team" (Lilly). She continued to explain that, "the girls are all, are all like, 'I don't want to get my shoes dirty' and things like that, and the boys play too rough. Whereas, in korfbal, it's like, it's non-contact, so it's just fun" (Lilly). Lilly recognises that korfbal is unlike football, possibly due to the differing sporting and gender discourses that influence 'boys' sports' such as football.

Traditional sports were also seen to be physically different to korfbal. Lilly considered football to be "rough", but did not attribute this characteristic to korfbal, and Lee considered korfbal to be "less aggressive" than rugby. When Charlie was asked what non-players thought about korfbal, he described how his [male] friends, "call it a wussy sport because it's non-contact, because they do, like, football or rugby. But yeah, I think they just think it's a wussy sport, but it's something I enjoy so I don't really care" (Charlie). The non-contact format of korfbal, meant that it was often presented as being physically less aggressive than many other sports. The less aggressive, and non-contact format of korfbal, could be why Gemma suggested that "boys think korfbal is more girly than boy-y" (Gemma). Gemma's perception agrees with previous research which asserts that korfbal is perceived as a 'sissy's sport' (Crum, 1988: 239), and a 'girls' sport' (Emmerik, Keizer, and Troost, undated). It also resonates with findings from research by Grindstaff and West (2006), whose cheerleader participants explained how male cheerleaders were deemed as 'sissys', and Adams (2011) who suggested that figure skating had a reputation as a 'sissies' sport. There are obviously preconceptions from 'korfbal outsiders' that assume a non-contact, non-traditional, non-male oriented sport must be "wussy", suggesting that since it is not perceived as a masculine sport, it is perceived as a lesser sport than the likes of football or rugby. The preconceptions of korfbal may also be because it is seen as a relatively secluded (Fransoo, 2003) and

unknown sport (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990), and therefore, identifying as a korfbal player outside of the community is difficult (Fransoo, 2003).

Interviews demonstrated that differences between boys and girls were asserted by some players, whilst others saw no gender difference. Ralph explained that girls and boys were very similar, and described how male and female players within the korfbal team all socialised well; he had little acknowledgement of difference, “No, I really don’t see it because we have a laugh, so yeah” (Ralph). Despite this, when asked who the best player was, Charlie asked whether I wanted to know the best male or female player. He separated the sexes and classified them. Foucault (1982) explained how people can be divided through scientific classification, and objectified through this process. These categories are usually dichotomous and mutually dependent (Cole, 1993). Charlie’s automatic separation of players demonstrated his understanding of sex-classified difference. Yet, at the same time, it also acknowledged his conscious need to consider both sexes, demonstrating some desire for equality at the same time as acknowledging difference (Wach, 2002). Occasionally, within the training space, boys and girls were separated in practices, for example, boys on one post and girls on the other. This was only seen once or twice, girls and boys were usually separated evenly on the posts, or divided due to ability. Nevertheless, when players were within the ‘no ball’ times of training, they did usually seem to congregate with the same sex. Reasons for this could relate to the structural aspects of the game, whereby, during training matches, girls marked each other and boys marked each other, which led to easy communication with the same-sex player that they were partnered with. Although, after training and in water breaks, it remained that the girls tended to socialise with girls, and boys with boys. This could demonstrate that panopticism was present, implying that a wider gender discourse, and the invisible and omnipresent societal surveillance, had influenced the players to become principles of their own subjection through their permanent visibility (Foucault, 1979a), and therefore act in normalised gendered ways. Despite the division of the sexes, which was not apparent all of the time, there were plenty of times when the team were together as a whole group, or a boy and girl could be seen talking together on the bench.

Physical difference was something that players acknowledged, and Gemma, Lilly,



Sophie and Lorraine described physical differences between girls and boys:

Erm, cos like, girls have got more privatey areas [laughs] (Gemma)

No, because normally the boys are like, taller than the girls. So if the girls, if the boys marking the girls, they wouldn't be able to get to shoot or stuff like that (Lilly)

Like size and physical things, because, erm, like either because most boys are quite like, not faster, but like, they are a bit stronger, so like, if girls were going to jump with a ball, it's like, quite a few times I'll get it, but if it was against a boy, they'll probably get it every time... and I wouldn't feel as good, because normally I'll get it, and it wouldn't make me feel as good (Lorraine)

Erm, I think that's quite a good thing, because I know some boys, they are a little bit, like some boys are stronger than some girls, so they might be a bit tougher on them. So I reckon it's quite a good that girls can mark girls, because they're sort of like, the same ability (Lorraine)

because boys have more ability of like, like being strong and things like that, but like, being in the rebound and being strong, where the girls have more like skills at shooting and stuff like that (Sophie)

Physical differences between boys and girls, which were seen to give boys an advantage, included strength, height, speed, and less delicate body parts, aligning with assertions from Savulescu (2011: 1184) who suggests that 'men are larger, stronger and faster'. It also supports notions from Grindstaff and West (2006) who acknowledge ideas that women are innately weaker and slower than men. These attributes were deemed to make boys less delicate during contact, good at defending shots, and better at collecting balls after shots. Sophie was the only player here who suggested that girls were better than boys at skilled roles such as shooting. With these different physical attributes, boys and girls were deemed to act in different ways. Girls were seen to be much less physical than boys, "I mean like girls, as they're like girls, they don't really like to punch and kick each other in football and all that, so they're much more gentle" (James). This corresponds with work by Clarke and Paechter (2007) who discuss how girls in their study found that being nice was an important factor when making female friendships. Gemma agreed,

sometimes the girls get a bit bitchy if like you don't do it right, or get all stroppy, whereas boys ... when they get aggressive, so they will like hurt you, and girls don't really like pull you on the floor or anything (Gemma).

Boys were not only seen to have physical advantages such as strength, but they were

assumed to be more physically aggressive than the girls. There seemed to be a discretion to the norm (Foucault, 1994) regarding boys and violence; it was normal and acceptable for boys to be perceived as violent or aggressive. Gemma continued by explaining that it was hard playing korfbal sometimes, as the boys held shirts and girls did not, the boys shoved into players and girls did not, and the boys were more likely to pull players to the floor or hit them. She also explained how the boys could naturally throw the ball harder than the girls, apart from Michelle who was tall and therefore also threw with a lot of power. Gemma talked about the boys in a general way, and then specifically named Michelle as the only girl with a lot of power, individualising the non-normal, which Foucault (1979a) explains is a technique of normalisation. Gemma explained how the boys' size and aggressiveness meant that they threw harder than girls, whilst Lucy used words to describe the boys such as masculine, competitive and aggressive, yet described girls as wussy and fragile. The idea of girls being fragile can also be seen in accepted characteristics of femininity (Mansfield, 2006; Messner, 1988, Clark and Paechter, 2007; Hargreaves, 2000). Lucy, and a number of other players expressed views related to gender norms and socially accepted actions. The attribute that was not associated with boys was speed. Lucy was considered to be the fastest on the team, "Lucy is the fastest, so I'd normally say girls then, because of Lucy. Erm, she's so full of energy, I don't know what her mum gives her. I think she's on steroids or something!" (Gemma). Ralph also discussed how the girls had quicker reflexes and the boys had to put in more effort to match this, implying a natural difference between boys and girls.

When Lorraine was asked who the best player was, she explained that Sophie was the best girl and Charlie was the best boy. Lorraine gave the best female and male player, separating the sexes and providing an assumed difference in the same way that Charlie had previously. When asked who the best player was overall, she then explained that it was hard to compare male and female players,

I don't know because like, Sophie's a girl and Charlie's a boy. Cos I know most, cos I would say it has to be Charlie, but because he trains with the under 17s quite a lot of the time, so he's a lot higher up. If Charlie wasn't it, I would say George (Lorraine).

It was clear from observation and interviews that a number of players had beliefs and understandings that complied with more traditional gender norms. Although not all players, a number of them did believe that boys had physical advantages in sport and were likely to be more physically assertive or aggressive than girls in the same situation. Some players also problematised sports outside of korfbal, or physical education classes, deeming them to be predominantly directed at boys and discouraging girls from sport in the process; korfbal was seen as a potential answer to this problem.

It may be that this mixed environment led boys to be respectful of the athletic performances of girls, since they are working so closely with them, in a similar way that male cheerleaders respected female athletes in Anderson's (2008) study, because they had to work directly with them in order to succeed. This would suggest that embodied practices which demonstrate the abilities of girls as well as boys, could lead to alterations in the dominant discourses which reinforce gender difference and the physical inferiority of females.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has responded to research question two regarding the potential to gain gender neutrality in korfbal and has shown how the junior korfbal players in this study still held understandings of gender that were often based on societal norms. Observation, interviews and informal conversations demonstrated both compliance to, and deviation from 'normal' gender actions at various times, with some confusion about key gender terms including masculinity, femininity and the term 'tomboy'. Players were often reluctant to think critically about accepted gender norms, and on occasion, players would seem uncomfortable when probed to explain why their views existed, or when encouraged to consider normalised gender discourse. Yet, responding to research question one, the findings from this study were more positive regarding equality within korfbal, than previous korfbal studies reported (Crum, 1988; Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989). It may be that this mixed environment led boys to be respectful of the athletic performances of girls, in a similar way that male cheerleaders working closely with female cheerleaders, respected female athletes in Anderson's (2008) study. It offers an optimistic viewpoint

regarding the possibility for integrated sport environments for subverting gender.

Players could also be seen to be both the subject and object of observation (Foucault, 1994) within the complex network of gazes (Foucault, 1979a; 1994) which existed in both the korfbal spaces and wider society. Players demonstrated the use of social taboo as a judgement of transgression (Foucault, 1994), and individualisation of the non- normal (Foucault 1979a) in order to normalise gender, and could sometimes be seen to be party to that normalisation processes themselves.

Generally, players tended to comply with accepted gender norms in relation to aesthetics and the body, emotions and pain, physicality, and so on. It would seem that korfbal, as a sport, could not eliminate these understandings within its own space, let alone within wider society. Yet, there were exceptions to an uncritical gender understanding, and certain players displayed this during observation and interviews.

Findings and conclusion drawn from this discussion chapter and discussion chapter five, as well as information from previous literature review chapters, will now be drawn together in order to directly and explicitly respond to the study's research questions regarding sex equality, gender neutrality, the uniqueness of korfbal culture, and the maintenance of historical aims. Additionally, the next chapter will also consider limitations of this study's methodological framework and research techniques, as well as the limitations of the theoretical applications used in order to explain phenomena. It will also draw on potential ideas for future and further research in the area. Ultimately, the final chapter will make conclusive remarks regarding the findings of this study, with regards to the ability for korfbal to provide an alternative space that achieves gender equity.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Conclusions**

The main aim of this study was to investigate whether junior korfball can create an alternative sporting space that is conducive for gender equity. The study incorporated a historical overview of the emergence of korfball within a socio-cultural period considered different in many ways to traditional sports. It also included ethnographic fieldwork in a korfball club, with junior korfball players, over a period of one year.

This section will summarise the main findings, comment upon the usefulness of adopting a Foucauldian lens to explore the research questions as well as identify limitations of the study and suggest ways forward, including suggestions for further research. For clarity, the research questions are used as a focus for the concluding remarks.

1) Does the historical development of korfball maintain influence over the game today?

As outlined in chapter one, korfball was invented as a game that would provide sporting equality for girls and boys. The IKF maintains that this is still the case for korfball, with rules in place that enforce equality, and remove the sporting advantage that men have over women due to their 'natural' physical attributes (IKF, 2006). However, if compared with other sports, either in operation or being developed at the time (such as football and rugby), the slower diffusion of korfball and general lack of popularity is noticeable. The IKF explains that korfball does have a worldwide following (IKF, 2006), but not to the extent that many other sports have. Interview data also showed how players understand that many people outside of korfball do not really know about the sport, or have even heard of it. In many respects, korfball's separate historical origin, specific claims for gender equity and subsequent development could be seen to have a marked impact on its popularity today. Finally, korfball came out of a game created from an ethos of progressive education, and a number of traditional progressive educators endorsed the emphasis on the importance of play, such as Froebel (Kuschner, 2001:277) and Dewey (Gerber, 1968). Despite this, korfball has developed into a sport,

like many others, based on codes and rules, with recent changes such as the introduction of the shot clock in order to create more excitement, in a similar way that moving the penalty spot nearer the goal aimed to do (Rodenburg, 2003). Korfball is not unlike traditional sports in this respect, since many have not escaped the need to adapt in order to fulfil the needs of a consumer culture and the mass media. Blain and Boyle (2002) describe how television influenced the creation of the one-day test in cricket and the tiebreak in tennis. They explain how sponsorship is determined by the amount of television coverage a sport has, and therefore, sports are willing to change their rules to comply with television demands. As a result of its longing to grow in popularity, korfball has adjusted and changed the traditional rules of the game, in a comparable way to other sports.

2) Can korfball offer an alternative culture and different values to traditional, mainstream, mediated sports?

Interview data demonstrated how children saw korfball as an alternative to boys' or girls' activities, and they particularly liked the mixed format of the game. Specific *ways* of playing korfball, recognised as unwritten codes, were discussed by junior korfball players. My previous experience, observation, and the players' interviews, led me to believe that these elements made korfball different to other sports. They included the vocal aspect of the game, the necessity of teamwork in order to be successful (required by the rules), and the non-contact format of the game. Children discussed the way that their relationships with adults (namely parents and coaches) were different in korfball than other sports. My observations in the field also endorsed this. The closeness between players and coaches (particularly female players), and also the nature of support that parents gave during training, matches and tournaments, was one of the important elements to junior players. They described the difference of the family feeling in korfball that they did not attribute to other sports. These differences, as well as the performance and values described, were mainly evident within the more visible korfball spaces, such as match situations, and were not evident in less structured spaces such as time spent at tournaments when matches were not being played. Foucault (1994) argued that the gaze that sees is the gaze that dominates, and this was particularly evident within korfball space.

The junior korfball players in this study understood korfball to be different from other sports, despite some very visible similarities evidenced through interviews and observation, such as competition, rules, and the league structure.

3) How successful is junior korfball at attaining sporting equality between the sexes?

The findings from this study were more positive regarding equality within korfball than previous studies reported (Crum, 1988; Thompson and Finnigan, 1990; Summerfield and White, 1989). Interview data showed that both male and female players were described as being the best player by participants, and the majority of players suggested that they thought that korfball was a sport maintaining equality for male and female players. Despite these assertions, there were occasions (for example, Charlie) where distinctions were made between the sexes through forms of categorising and accentuating difference through scientific classification (Foucault, 1982) of male and female. The need to acknowledge both sexes when describing equality made the situation complicated and emphasised Messner's (2002; 2009; 2011) claim that the sexes can be seen as equal but different.

4) Does junior korfball promote gender neutrality?

Generally, players tended to comply with accepted gender norms in relation to aesthetics and the body, emotions and pain, and physicality. The findings suggest that korfball, as a sport, could not eliminate these understandings within its own space, let alone within wider society. Players were often reluctant to think critically about accepted gender norms, and on occasion, players would seem uncomfortable when probed to explain why their views existed, or when encouraged to consider normalised gender discourse. Despite this, there were exceptions to an uncritical gender understanding, and certain players, at certain times, displayed this during observation and interviews, for example when Lilly suggested that not all boys are muscly and all girls weak.

### **7.1 The Use of Foucault's Ideas for Analysis**

Foucauldian theory has proved useful in many respects in this thesis, helping to explain the various events, actions and behaviours of junior korfball players. Foucault's

explanations of power, discourse and surveillance have provided a sophisticated interpretation of the various relationships of power within a junior korfbal context. These relationships are governed by a range of factors, not only gender but broader social discourses related to, for instance, culture, sport, bodies and childhood. A Foucauldian lens allowed the research to uncover how embodied practices, which operate within the context of a mixed gendered sport, such as korfbal, can disrupt discursive regimes to a certain extent. However, it is important to recognize that this was limited to the structured korfbal space and not beyond. Nevertheless, this study has demonstrated how some players embodied particular gender attributes and actions within the korfbal space, despite assertions for equality between the sexes, illustrating how broader social discourses were still visible within korfbal. Korfbal can be seen to offer an alternative to practices which reinforce dominant gender discourse, and it offers a space where gender equality and female ability may contest taken for granted assumptions regarding male superiority and the need for gender segregation in sport. Foucault's theories provided a useful starting point from which to explore the complexity in non-binary forms or simplistic one-way processes that are seen in traditional structural accounts derived from orthodox Marxism. In doing so, Foucault's ideas provide the backbone to investigations that can explore specific locations such as sport (Markula and Pringle, 2006), and also gender and children within sport (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006a).

Despite the usefulness of Foucault when explaining phenomena as they emerged in my observations and interviews, the general focus of Foucault is open to criticism when applied to a particular construct, such as gender. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of the complex relationships of power operating within the context of korfbal allow for the initial recognition of, at times, conflicting intersections of social aspects not necessarily determined solely through gendered relations. Within the specific context of gender, however, it is here that Butler's (1990; 1993) concepts prove useful in this regard, as she is able to incorporate the post-structuralism of Foucault with a feminist application in order to describe the performativity of gender. This is why Foucault's ideas are applied more noticeably in chapter five on the experience of korfbal, where the 'whole package' is discussed (Wellard, 2013), while Butler's (1990; 1993) ideas of



performativity are considered more relevant in chapter six where gender is more specifically analysed.

Other critiques include the claim that Foucault does not conduct empirical research 'in the field', instead, often relying on the analysis of written, historical accounts of various times and settings, without speaking to the people experiencing the phenomena he is describing. This study has attempted to acknowledge the historical context of the invention of korfbal but has also strongly relied upon the views and opinions of junior korfbal players, as well as an immersion in the culture in order to try and explain phenomena, behaviour and thoughts, from an inside perspective. Nevertheless, Foucault did generate a substantial body of work through archived documents and the theories he developed have proved useful when trying to describe the relationships of power operating between junior players and why junior players have acted in certain ways. His work has also proved important when considering ways that we can think critically about power relationships, about compliance and about resistance, and particularly when considering how and why junior korfbal players enact practices which are normalised both within a korfbal setting and also in a wider society. That being said, Foucault did not talk specifically about either sport or gender (although he did discuss sexuality), so theorists such as Judith Butler and her theory of performative gender can develop Foucault's ideas further and be applied to research on gender, hence the frequent application within chapter six. Foucault's focus on discourse does not necessarily uncover all of the nuances of experience. In some cases, the discourse itself may predict the way the 'evidence' is interpreted. Thus, Butler can be seen to take the notion of the performative body a step further. However, her methodological focus is not based 'within' and this highlights further complexities.

Critically considering my use of Foucault, it would be worth acknowledging my position within the network of gazes in the korfbal field. I too was both a subject and object of observation (Foucault, 1994), undoubtedly making normalising judgements based on korfbal norms, and norms from the wider society. It is hoped that my frequent reflections about my reactions and feelings to behaviour and events, went some way to explaining the way in which I have interpreted and described events. Additionally, I was a subject of power, I was part of a gaze which looked over the junior players as

both a coach and a researcher, the impacts of this gaze will never be clearly known, but I tried to limit the impact by carrying out a long-term study focusing on building rapport with junior players, and bonding with them wherever possible.

## **7.2 Methodological Issues and Reflection on Methods**

While it did take a lot of researching, the socio-historical investigation into korfbal (a mini- genealogy) was integral to understanding korfbal's 'position' in sport. It was necessary to understand how korfbal differs to traditional sports, with different historical influences, and developments based on contrasting aims to sports emerging in the UK, which reflected, for instance, muscular Christianity. The usefulness of including a historical overview of korfbal was evident, as it provided an essential element during later analysis and interpretation.

Methodological considerations for the ethnographic element of my study include the way in which many creative data gathering/representation strategies have been documented when researching with children. Knowledge and meaning can be created mutually between child and researcher through co-investigation using a variety of child-centred approaches. This has been demonstrated in contemporary social research with children using participatory techniques in individual and group settings. These include 'play, activities, songs, drawings and stories' (O'Kane, 2008: 131). Nevertheless, considering the objectives of my PhD, and the space in which I was conducting the research, I decided that these methods may not produce as rich data as speaking with children during interviews, informally within groups, and observing in the setting that I was investigating. This meant that the data collection did not deviate from the authentic actions and behaviours of children. For the purpose of this study, these participatory techniques would have been difficult to administer. They are possibly favoured more in educational settings where these activities are considered 'normal' within the learning context, such as in research by Christensen and James (2008). Within a korfbal environment, asking children to spend time drawing may have led to a swift loss of concentration, considering the constant distractions around them, the lack of appropriate space to draw, and their desire to play sport and be active within the space that I was investigating. It may have been a useful tool to gain information about the players' understanding of gender, by asking them to draw boys

or girls, and let them explain the clothing and activities being performed, and so on, but within the korfbal context that was being studied, I decided to concentrate on data gathering through more organic forms within the setting.

Interviews were a useful method to gain rich data about the junior korfbal players' understandings of gender and korfbal. They generally made the players think about their opinions and demonstrate some critical understanding, but on occasion players showed discomfort with the attempt to think critically or explain their views (for example Lucy when I asked why she wanted to dress like a girl). Despite the richness of the data obtained from interviews, my immersion within the culture was crucial, as observation in the field often demonstrated something different to the responses generated by the interview data. For example, I observed the way in which Beth distracted others and played around at korfbal training, she was by far the least disciplined and caused other girls to join in her games. Despite this, interview data did not demonstrate that the players noticed her lack of seriousness when it came to korfbal training, they named the boys as players most likely to mess around during training.

### **7.3 Concluding Remarks and Future Considerations**

Wachs (2002) and Messner (2011) both suggest that mixed sport could provide a space to display equality of gender ability and performance. The aim of this study was to see whether korfbal could create this opportunity through an alternative, mixed, sporting space. Findings from this study would suggest that junior korfbal does go some way to promote equality between the sexes when playing the game, and this research has demonstrated how traditional understandings of male sporting superiority and sporting ability can be challenged. Nevertheless, players in this study demonstrated that understandings of gender were still highly influenced by traditional gender discourses, with the implication that korfbal did not create gender neutrality for these players. Despite this, as Messner (2011) states, if boys have the opportunity to think of girls and women as equals, rather than subordinate others, then society as a whole could begin to improve, and this korfbal research has gone some way to recognise players' understandings of equal opportunity and ability within the game of korfbal.

In the first instance, the research within this study will be presented to personal contacts within the British Korfball Association (BKA). The BKA will be invited to use the results of this study in marketing documentation and in order to support arguments that the values of korfbal can promote gender equity. In 2016, part of this study was published in a mixed sport special edition of *Sport in Society*, and the embodied practices in korfbal were discussed in the edited book: *Researching Embodied Sport*. There are a number of publication opportunities that may come from this research, including a monograph, which will be discussed with Routledge. Alternatively, several journal submissions, such as elements of chapter one to the *Journal of Sport History* or *The International Journal of the History of Sport*; and findings discussed in chapter five and six to the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*; the *Sociology of Sport Journal*; the *International Journal of Sport and Society*; or *Sport, Education and Society*.

In the future, it would be interesting to investigate whether korfbal can create this same respect between male and female players within a primary school setting. This research has been conducted with players who have *chosen* to participate, with many of them having family members that already have strong associations with the korfbal community. Arguably, the boys that have chosen to play this sport may have a different understanding of gender ability in sport, it may be somewhat different with children within a mixed PE lesson, where children have not *chosen* to participate in this mixed sport.

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## Appendix One: Semi-structured Interview Guide

- 1) Why/how did you start playing korfbal?
  - a. What do you like about it? What made you continue?
  - b. Tell me why you play this rather than rugby/football/netball, etc?
- 2) Do you think you should be able to play korfbal at school?
  - a. Why?
    - i. Mixed/single-sex PE in your school?
- 3) What is it like to play in a game where there are girls and boys?
  - a. Do you have the same rules?
  - b. Are the boys/girls your friends? Do you see them outside of korfbal?
  - c. Has anyone got a boyfriend/girlfriend in the team?
  - d. What do the girls/boys talk about when they get together?
- 4) Who is the best player? What makes them good?
  - a. Is it a game more for girls/boys, or is it equal? Explain
  - b. Who takes the most shots/who is the best scorer? What makes them good?
- 5) Why do you think that the girls wear skirts and the boys wear shorts?
  - a. Is it right/fair?
  - b. Do you think that female boxers/rugby players should wear skirts?
    - i. Why/why not? Why in korfbal?
  - c. Is this important? Should it matter?
  - d. Do you worry about how you look during korfbal?
- 6) Who puts the most effort in at training and during games? (boys/girls?)
  - a. Are they stronger, faster, more skillful?
  - b. Who shouts most?
  - c. Who is the captain?
- 7) Who is the best coach? Why?
  - a. Do you think any of the coaches coach the girls or boys differently? How?
- 8) What do your friends at school think about korfbal?

## Appendix Two: Example Interview Transcript

**File:** 'Sophie'

**Duration:** 0:27:47

### START AUDIO

Interviewer: OK, so first of all, I just want to know how you got into korfbal?

Respondent: Erm my sister, David and Frank came down to my primary school and my sister was there so she went along with Tom and Page and started to play and they really enjoyed it so when i was like seven they let me join in down the school.

Interviewer: Ok so they actually trained at the school

Respondent: Yeah and then they made a club called scorpions

Interviewer: So did you do it in P.E. lessons or

Respondent: In the mornings yeah, got to go there about half seven and then we train until about quarter past

Interviewer: Really, how many times a week

Respondent: Just once

Interviewer: Once a week you did that, and then did you join a club

Respondent: Yeah then we started doing on Thursday so

Interviewer: Ok and was that an after school club or do you mean the actual club

Respondent: The actual club

Interviewer: and that was with scorpions?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Why have you carried on playing korfbal what is it you like

about it?

Respondent: Err, because everybody can play like my whole family plays so like, kind of we can all, like there's always games that we can go and watch, there's never like well sometimes there is but I can always go and watch mum and dad play and then they take me down to watch me play.

Interviewer: Ok so you sort of think there's like a big involvement in it sort of thing

Respondent: and like loads of my friends play so, it's just social

Interviewer: Ok so do you do any other sorts of sports as well outside of school

Respondent: Erm i did play netball but i don't do it anymore

Interviewer: Why did you stop netball?

Respondent: erm, i didn't really like having a set position like you can either only be centre or only be a defender or only be a shooter throughout the whole game.

Interviewer: Is that because you've played korfball?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: yeah because you do both in that ok fine, so erm what's the kind of one thing, the one best thing about korfball then?

Respondent: Err that it's a mixed sport so you get boys and girls playing and erm you get to do both. You get to attack and defend.

Interviewer: Ok and you say you like the fact that obviously it's a mixed sport erm why do you like girls and boys playing together

Respondent: err, i don't know it's just like, when i look at like erm girls football there's not much interest in girls football than there is boys football like so everyone says oh England are playing tonight but you don't go and watch girls play. So i just think that you can watch both girls and boys play at the same time.

Interviewer: Ok rather than, ok that's fine. So you've stopped playing obviously netball because it was quite fixed in positions, have you ever had any interest in playing like girls' rugby or girls football or anything like that

Respondent: Err, i used to play girls football at primary school but erm the teacher left, they were only a trainee teacher so i didn't really want to join anymore. I'm not very good at football so

Interviewer: What do you mean you're not very good because it's a kicking sport

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: Right ok but apart from that that's the only sort of reason

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: ok, so do you think you should be able to play korfbal at school as like a P.E. sort of sport

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: yeah you do, why do you think that would be good

Respondent: because both girls and boys can play so you haven't got to have like a all girls lesson or only girls lesson or only boys lesson so you can play it throughout as in both two sets can join in.

Interviewer: and is that how your P.E is done at the moment then is it separate?

Respondent: yeah we're both but, in year 9 your put like boys and girls go separate but yeah both together

Interviewer: ok so what sort of things do you do then in P.E.?

Respondent: err at the moment athletics and rounders and cricket and stuff like that and we have like tag rugby and netball and gym and



erm, something else i can't remember

Interviewer: and how do you feel then obviously you play korfbal which is supposed to be a mixed sport, how do you think the kind of other sports that aren't designed to be mixed, how do you think is there a difference in how they're played or how the boys and the girls play them or anything like that?

Respondent: erm, i think there's a difference between girls and boys football, like there's not much interest in girls football but like i think they get, boys get more time like people, like the club will take more time than the boys because they're boys and that's what boys are supposed to play football

Interviewer: ok so when you say club do you mean like the after school club and stuff or in P.E. or what?

Respondent: Yeah in after school club. But my school do do a girls football club but erm they don't get a lot of girls going to football like a lot of the girls don't really like football

Interviewer: ok so then in actual P.E. lessons do you think the P.E. lessons are more for boys or more for girls or try do they try and get you equally involved.

Respondent: Erm i don't know i think they try to get you equally involved because you get football at the same like time in the same half of term so they do try and get like both girls and boys involved but then boys are not very interested in netball because they couldn't play it anyway because it's only a girls sport. But like some of the girls didn't really like football because it's football like, they don't like football.

Interviewer: what do you mean because it's football?

Respondent: because they just don't like football it's, you have to use your feet

Interviewer: [laughs] so it's not that it's a boys sport it's just that it's a, one

that girls don't usually do and they're not really not very good at ok.

So do you think that, that boys play differently when you play your mixed sports like in P.E. and stuff do you think like they play differently when they play with the girls than they do if they're playing by themselves?

Respondent: Yeah because they have to use the girls and they usually wouldn't like they would usually block us out like they'd like usually just pass amongst each other.

Interviewer: Ok

Respondent: they have to use us because if not the teachers moan

Interviewer: Right ok so do you think that's why they let you join in because they kind of have to

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok so just coming back to korfbal then so what's it like playing a proper game, you know a game that's invented for girls and boys like is it good, is it sort of enjoyable and stuff

Respondent: yeah i think it's really fun because erm, i think it's good that you have two girls and two boys in the same like section like you can't have a section of girls and a section of boys because i just like to play with boys because it's different.

Interviewer: It's different, what sort of like, what sort of, you know you say it's different, what's good about it then

Respondent: because boys have more ability of like, like being strong and thing like that but like, being in the rebound and being strong where the girls have more like skills at shooting and stuff like that

Interviewer: ok so you think that you therefore get a good mixture of like sporting abilities in different ways

Respondent: nothing said [assumed positive response]

Interviewer: Ok that's really interesting. Ok so girls and boys do you play by the same rules?

Respondent: Yes

Interviewer: and obviously there's the rule about the girls can only mark the girls and the boys can only mark the boys. So do you think that's a good idea or do you think boys and girls should be able to mark each other?

Respondent: I think it's a good idea because erm, because like it's a bit difficult for me because i'm a really small girl and you usually get boys, you don't really get small boys like you might get one out of five but like they would be like this around me [presume gesture implying boys greater height] so it's going to be difficult to try to move.

Interviewer: Right ok, so the rules help in sort of shape and size and height and things. Erm ok, so you say about the boys may be taller. So does that make them, would that help them play better, would that make them better players does that help being bigger or being taller.

Respondent: Yeah, well it doesn't really matter but i think you need some sort of tallish player because of rebounds and stuff like that if you've got someone taller than you in the rebound they're obviously going to get the ball the majority of the time.

Interviewer: Right ok, but you think as it stands with girls marking girls and boys marking boys that works quite well

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok, so erm i'm just going to come on to, are, you know like obviously in Trinity, do you think that are like the boys your friends? Are like girls and boys all friends?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Everybody is friends together. Do you see them outside Korfbal

Respondent: Yeah i see Ralph, Sam and George at school and then err James obviously i see when i go to erm, i go and watch mum and dad play a lot and Steves obviously there so sometimes he brings James along so i do see him. And i don't really see Frank but erm, yeah.

Interviewer: Ok, and do you think all the girls and boys think like that, like that you're all friends then.

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: oh that's good so erm, this is a bit of a random question but do you know if in the team that you play in, like have any of the boys or girls got like girlfriends and boyfriends and stuff?

Respondent: Err, no

Interviewer: No not within the team

Respondent: No

Interviewer: not within the team, just all friends

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: What sort of erm, who would you think then if you had to choose one person on your team who do you think the best player is? As i said no one will know, no one will hear any of this.

Respondent: Erm, i think we're all good at different things like a lot of people would say that Charlie is good which i agree with but then a lot of people say that i'm good but i think Charlie is better. Not because Charlie is older but because he's got more experience he's played in the under sixteens and he understands like erm, and erm, but sometimes he can get like

erm, this is probably sounding really mean but sometimes he's like "I feel like I'm the best" and so he just takes over and like always shoots and never like, so sometimes he just like shoots and then, but we've got Shane playing with us today so hopefully that might change him because i think Shane is a little bit better than Charlie.

Interviewer: Oh interesting so what makes Shane better than Charlie

Respondent: Oh well, Korin comes from Holland obviously and erm, Dave is like head under 20, sorry England and so is Korin and erm Shane does a lot of stuff at home with Dave and Korin and the boys so.

Interviewer: So you just think he is well practised and his technique is

good Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: So it's not like about him being a boy or anything like

that Respondent: No

Interviewer: Ok do you think that the game itself is kind of, more for boys or more for girls or like quite equal or?

Respondent: I think it's quite equal because like you get you can only have four girls and four boys on a team you can't like have six girls and err

Interviewer: Two boys [laughs]

Respondent: Two boys yeah on a team so I think it's equal unless sometimes like you get one more girl because or one more boy because a boy has to play as a girl but you can't usually have that

Interviewer: If it was a proper game yeah, and erm talking about that sort of difference between boys and girls then is there, do you think that like either the boys or girls are more like aggressive or more competitive, thinking about your team specifically or do you think again its more even?

Respondent: I think it's the same because erm, I think Charlie and myself are a lot competitive but then I also think Lorraine and Ralph are quite competitive. I think we're all quite competitive really

Interviewer: There's no difference between boys and girls and no one thinks different of like you being competitive because you're a girl, like everyone's fine with that?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah, ok so finally then I just want to ask, not finally but finally for this question sorry, sorry to keep you

Respondent: That's alright

Interviewer: Erm who do you think takes the most shots and who do you think the best scorer is?

Respondent: Erm it's a bit difficult because I was top goal scorer for like, I've been top goal scorer twice in a row now

Interviewer: Ok

Respondent: But I don't know if that's because I've been to like every game like except for one both times so, but a lot of people like Lorraine and Charlie both missed fathers day last year so they didn't play then. So a lot of people like, I've been to every game because mums more like, mums happy to take me there instead of doing something else like

Interviewer: Yeah, it's like the priority

Respondent: Yeah because she thinks I enjoy it and I do enjoy it which they think, it's a thing we can all do together anyway so, so I enjoy it so it's probably making me a bit big headed but it's either me or Charlie.

Interviewer: Ok so other the fact that you've been to quite a lot of few games and that makes you kind of, the point scoring system. Do

you think there's anything else that makes you better, obviously it's not going to be your height because you're not one of the tallest [laughs]. Erm is it, getting away from your player are you better at that than anybody else or?

Respondent: Erm no I just think

Interviewer: Do you shoot more you know all the sorts of different reasons why

Respondent: No I don't even shoot that much but erm I do a lot of practice with like Rachel and Dad at home like shooting in the garden, well obviously not now because we'd be in the rain but I used to it, and Toby came round once to help Rachel and I was doing loads of shooting then and they'd come round for like four hours.

Interviewer: So you're quite serious about you know practicing and things

Respondent: Yeah and like England and London, I do all, I do both of that as well as this, and we do loads of shooting at the beginning of training like, always do about half hour to an hour shooting at the beginning

Interviewer: Ok so you just think it's just practice basically that makes you so good. Ok so erm, do you think that generally boys or girls take the feed or collect more, you know is like girls are always in boys are always out or vice versa or again is it equal?

Respondent: It depends who you're marking like, if Charlie was marking someone like Shane I'd think he'd be like better not running in because I think Shane's faster than Charlie.

Interviewer: Right

Respondent: But erm, I don't think it really, it just depends I think because if you've got someone like, if I was playing someone like Elise I think I'd be like better as a feed or something like that because

like she's more stronger than me like, bigger than me so I think it would be like

Interviewer: So again it kind of doesn't come down to whether the boys or girls are kind of better it depends who you're playing and then you work around that.

Respondent: Like if you've got a weak player erm then you can run on them because it's easier to run and they don't really know what they're doing, It's probably being mean but it's how you like

Interviewer: Yeah it's how you win the game, absolutely. So why do you think girls wear skirts and boys wear shorts?

Respondent: Erm, because I think boys obviously won't feel comfortable in skirts, they think they're a bit weird. Erm, and erm, I don't really know why girls wear skirts?

Interviewer: Why do you wear a skirt?

Respondent: I don't know it's just because I have, I don't know [long pause] I think I'd feel a bit stupid in shorts like, I don't know

Interviewer: You don't know

Respondent: No

Interviewer: Ok so if your mum said to you right go and get your Korfbal, like go, you've got shorts and a skirt upstairs go and pick one, you picked your skirt, like why, you always, do you wear a skirt to training sometimes as well don't you?

Respondent: Sometimes

Interviewer: So like what, kind of on that day what makes you think I'm going to take my skirt rather than like wearing shorts or something?

Respondent: Erm, I don't really have shorts, like I don't really, because I play in my skort I don't really have, I don't even wear jogging



bottoms. I don't know I just find it comfortable, like, I don't know

Interviewer: Is it because you, do you wear skirts a lot outside of like

Respondent: No

Interviewer: No so it's not that

Respondent: I wear my jeans and trousers

Interviewer: So a skirts quite girly, jeans and trousers aren't so much yet when you play sport you play with a skirt?

Respondent: Yeah, I don't know

Interviewer: Not sure, ok that's fine. So on that sort of note then there's an argument about like female boxers and rugby players they wear shorts, do you think they should have to wear skirts when they play sport?

Respondent: Erm, what females?

Interviewer: Yeah female rugby players and boxers

Respondent: No I don't think so because I think it's a lot different Rugby to Korfbal, you're always getting on the floor so like a skirt isn't really that good.

Interviewer: Ok

Respondent: Like shorts obviously they aren't going to flash like [laughs] so erm no I don't think they should. But again I think that people should be able to choose, like a lot of girls do choose to wear shorts because they don't like skirts, sometimes they have to wear skirts but I don't think a lot of people mind if they wear a skirt like.

Interviewer: So it's really what you prefer wearing really then and you don't know why you prefer a skirt to shorts?

Respondent: No [long pause] no I don't know

Interviewer: Ok erm, ok let's have a quick look where we are. Do you like worry about how you look when you play Korfbal?

Respondent: No not really

Interviewer: Not really you don't worry about your appearance, so you don't think about your hair or what you wear when you go training or things like that?

Respondent: Well I have to make sure err my fringe is tied, I don't what it getting in my way so I have to make sure that's up. Erm, and my hair's up obviously but I'm not really bothered how it goes up. Erm, I have to make sure that I'm either in something that goes like I can't go and wear orange trousers and a blue top like and I tend to wear black jogging bottoms only because I don't like like orange or I don't think err I don't know.

Interviewer: No what makes you sort of decide you don't want to wear orange jogging bottoms?

Respondent: It would just make you look a bit weird.

Interviewer: [laughs] ok that's fine, so we're just coming to the end now I've just got like two more questions for you really, well a couple more questions. Erm who do you think puts the most effort in in training?

Respondent: I think it depends like there's sometimes when we're all mucking around but if, if we're concentrating and we're all mucking around I don't think David and Frank really mind as long as we are doing what they've asked us to do and like we're having fun then I don't think they mind but it just depends like, some people like I should say Ralph, like Ralph loads of the time he's like quite a hyper boy and like sometimes he's a bit like over the top and then there's other times when we're all really

trying to put effort in and stuff yeah so it just depends really I think

Interviewer: But you think Ralph messes around quite a bit though

Respondent: I don't think, I don't think he does it on purpose but he's the kind of boy who does that like, but then like I think in other clubs you do get girls who do that as well so again I don't really think

Interviewer: What about in your club are there any girls that are the same or is it really mainly Ralph do you think that messes around?

Respondent: Well I don't know because Ralph messes around with other people like I would quite happily go and like not mess around but have a joke and laugh with Ralph like but erm, yeah I think everyone, like Lorraine, Michelle, James, Frank everyone would like, Lucy, have a laugh, like Beth, when Beth first started like erm she was very just with Lucy like and then we all erm like asked her to come and then she started to get along we all just like not muck around but have a laugh and joke cos it's like the only, Lucy and Beth it's like the only time we get to see them for a week.

Interviewer: Right

Respondent: So it's like really fun to go and see them and like, and Michelle too like.

Interviewer: and do you think the girls like tend to mess around together and the boys mess around together or is it kind of all

Respondent: Erm I think we all mess around together like sometimes, not really mess around but you know what I mean

Interviewer: Like have a laugh

Respondent: Yeah, it just depends like at the beginning we usually like all go together and like just talk about, and just talk and then when

Frank asks us together most of the time he gets like boys and girls on that side and boys and girls on the other side erm so I think yeah we all just talk to each other and get along.

Interviewer: Excellent ok so do you think that the erm, you obviously said you think that boys are a bit stronger

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: generally you know like that, I understand what you mean

Respondent: we've got quite short girls i.e. me and Lorraine and then Beth isn't that tall and then you've got Michelle Bennett who's like a monster but yeah.

Interviewer: and do you think it helps being like, obviously the boys are stronger and you've only got like one tall girl do you think that in Korfbal being tall, being strong helps you be a good player or?

Respondent: I don't know because I would quite happily say that Lorraine's quite a good player like, she's played for England and London so I don't think she's like, and I think like a lot of people say if you're small you're more likely to be quick like so I think you do need the small players like the smallish like, but like so they can run but you need the tall players like to get the rebound and the feed and stuff like that.

Interviewer: So it's different positions sort of thing are suited to different heights and stuff?

Respondent: But then err it, sometimes like Michelle might get a really tall player and I might get quite a small player, sometimes we have to change so we all have to learn how to play, like the defence and the erm rebounds because Lorraine might get an even smaller person than her and Michelle might get a taller person so you just need to know because obviously Michelle can't go

in the rebound then, well she can but she's more likely not to because she's got a taller player.

Interviewer: Yeah, so again like you've said before it kind of comes back to who, whoever you're playing and you work around that quite a lot

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Who's your captain?

Respondent: Erm, well George

Interviewer: George and do you know why he's captain or?

Respondent: Erm I think it's because like erm he's encouraging like he's, he's like happy and wants to encourage people.

Interviewer: During the games and things, and what sorts of ways does he encourage people?

Respondent: Well he like, he always makes sure we keep our head up, he's like "come on" like "don't worry about it come on" erm, it's hard when you're not on a pitch cos you hear what they say. Erm, "don't worry" err "next goal" or something like that and just keeps you like motivated.

Interviewer: So he'll just shout things during the match to his team.

Respondent: Yeah and also at training he's like "come on guys lets start now" and stuff and he's just yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah motivating and things like that, oh that's really good. And obviously he talks, do you think that you know, are there other girls or boys that talk a lot or boys and girls that don't talk very much or shout much?

Respondent: Me, Lorraine erm, I don't really think Michelle talks a lot erm I don't think that's just the kind of person Michelle is like she's

not one of these people who's going to shout out but obviously I think me and Lorraine are like, we're quite happy to shout out and we'll get angry at people or tell people like "make sure you depend that person next time" or do this next time, we're not that like hid behind, like not worried but yeah and obviously with me being captain like since George, before George came erm I was very much like George, like well I tried to be, I'm not sure if I was but I tried to be yeah.

Interviewer: Right, and do you think, what about the boys, about the other boys obviously you said George talks a lot and stuff what about the others?

Respondent: I think Charlie will talk a lot, I think Ralph will talk a lot if he's got the right mind on, he's quite happily like, like Ralph's down the other end he's like "come on let's go" like not as good, not like as much as George.

Interviewer: Not as like consistent

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok so erm, a bit of a random question then who do you think the best coach is. Obviously you kind of have three don't you?

Respondent: Erm, this is probably being really horrible to Frank but I don't think It's Frank because he doesn't like get involved and show us what we've got to do. Like David like is very like erm, like he gives an example of what we need to do, he shows us he don't just say it but Frank doesn't like, he just says you've got to do this. But most of the time we do understand him it's just you've already done it and erm, David erm what I like about David he goes through step by step like he'll do something easy and then like ten minutes later he'll go do the next step and then he'll go to the next step and he'll go through it like what we did at

England like but David made us start of just stepping back and shooting and then we developed it into like on the move and then going back and shooting and then I would probably say David but erm I do think they're all good at different things like. Erm I think Frank's good at making the teams for us because he understands like what we can do and what we're best at because he's our main coach. But then I do like Zoe because erm, we haven't had a, we've only just started having her like from Trinity so erm, it's nice to have Zoe sometimes so I...

Interviewer: Why's that, why is it

Respondent: Erm I just think because we've had two men and it's nice to just have a girl like

Interviewer: Do you think that the way she coaches is different to the way the men coach at all or not?

Respondent: Erm I don't really know because we haven't had Zoe a lot because she hasn't been to outdoor training which she used to go to the under 16s a lot so we don't really know but she seems, she's a really nice person and she's a teacher, she's really like erm, and she teaches like young children, she's really like erm try this, always make us cheer up and stuff like that so yeah she's a good coach to have.

Interviewer: She's quite positive and

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: Ok do you think the way any of the coaches teach erm, is like more applicable to girls or more applicable to boys or do you think that they just teach you as one group and the way that they teach includes everybody or?

Respondent: I think the way that they teach includes everybody because erm, because it is a mixed sport I think both people need to

know how, I think all people need to, both like need to know how to do different things, like all be able to do the same things. So erm I think it benefits both people like how David teaches, how Frank teaches and how Zoe teaches because erm, yeah just cos yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that erm there's like a difference in the way that the girls and the boys would like to be coached, like do you think, there might not be this is probably a completely random question but do you think that you know, that girls, that girls and boys should be coached in different ways to get the best out of them?

Respondent: Erm, I think that I prefer, preferably to have demonstrations to show how to do it and stuff like that but I don't think, I think the boys just want to get on with it and like

Interviewer: Oh really

Respondent: I don't know it just depends like erm, like err with me and Lorraine being in England this year like when we do the shooting we asked Frank to bring it on a step and like go off one foot and stuff and he was like "yeah" but erm I don't think the boys have really asked that like, but I don't think Ralph would have really asked that because he hasn't learned how to do it.

Interviewer: Yeah so it's not necessarily about the girls asking for it it's more about the best players wanting

Respondent: Yeah, well not the best players but the players who have already done it and learned how to do it

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah wanting to do a bit more

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok so I've just got one more question then, what do your other friends who don't play Korfbal like your school friends or



friends out of school, what do they think about Korfbal like  
what do they say when you say you play Korfbal?

Respondent: Erm well most of my friends that I'm still friends with people in primary school so they obviously know that they play it quite a bit and they know that I enjoy it erm I've erm, when we were down the school err when David would tell you he used to come down the school but obviously they're not now because we left and like Frank doesn't really do it anymore because not many people go anymore but erm, like we managed to get quite a few friends coming along and they seemed to really enjoy it but I just didn't think it was really a sport [coughing]

Interviewer: Swallowed a fly [laughs]

Respondent: I don't think it was like a sport for them like, they seemed to enjoy it but I don't think like they were as motivated as like some of we are like Lorraine, Charlie

Interviewer: Yeah

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Some of the ones that came from your school

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok so there aren't any kind of, what about people who have never played Korfbal, do you know anyone? [laughs]

Respondent: I know lots of people who have never played

Interviewer: I was going to say because you're so involved in Korfbal [laughs]

Respondent: They're like erm, "what's that" but they don't say it like rude they say it like "what's that" and I say it's like a sport between netball and basketball and they do seem really interested about like when I say it's a sport between basketball and netball like erm, because there's two boys and girls sports like obviously err

netballs for girls and more likely basketballs for boys so they

Interviewer: Right, what do they say when you say about it's between girls and boys at the same time.

Respondent: Well they are a bit surprised when I said it's the only mixed sport in the world except for Frisbee that like boys and girls can play at exactly the same time, like they don't have a girls team and a boys team erm they were quite interested about that. Erm and like most of the people, like most people I know just get along with boys and they're not that fussed like, they're not like urgh they're boys or something like that I just

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's all quite normal really

Respondent: Yeah it's like yeah well done

Interviewer: Ok well that's absolutely everything, thank you so much

**END OF AUDIO**

## Appendix Three: Participants and Parent Information Form



Canterbury Christ Church University  
Sport Science, Tourism and Leisure  
North Holmes Road  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT11QU

13<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Dear Parent,

I am writing to invite your child as a junior member of Trinity Korfball Club, to take part in some research for my PhD studies. Being a Korfball player myself and having a love for the game it was the obvious choice for me when considering what topic I should study. **The research will be taking place during the weekly junior training sessions and matches** and therefore will involve nothing more than turning up for sessions as normal. I will be helping out at training and matches, and cheering when my help is not needed. In addition to that **I will simply be watching how the juniors interact with each other when playing Korfball**, there will be no assessment of ability at all and all findings will be for my eyes only until the completion of my PhD when each junior member and the team itself will be made anonymous for my thesis.

I cannot emphasise enough how grateful I would be to have the support of parents and junior players in my research. It is a privilege to be able to complete my research with the wonderful team that is Trinity Korfball Club, and to have such support from the Committee and Junior Head Coach, Ruth.

Attached here is a participant information sheet and consent form. If this is something your child will be interested in being involved in it would greatly help my research into korfbal. If you have any questions at all then please do not hesitate to contact me, the details can be found on the information sheet.

Many thanks in advance,

Laura Gubby



## **Gender Perceptions of Children that Play Korfball**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) as part of a PhD by Laura Gubby.

#### **Background**

I have previously completed research looking at adults that play Korfball, and I am now interested in how girls and boys experience Korfball.

#### **What will you be required to do?**

Junior players who have volunteered to take part in this study will be watched during normal training sessions, matches and social events, along with all other participants. They will also be invited to take part in interviews that will last about 40minutes, since I am really interested in finding out more about the experiences of junior Korfballers. At no point will judgment be made on ability.

#### **To participate in this research you must:**

Be between the age of 10-13, and have played Korfball for at least one season.

#### **Procedures**

This is not an intervention study. You will be asked to agree to be watched during matches, training sessions and social events, where I will be taking notes about the way Korfball is being experienced by girls and boys. You will also be invited to give approximately 40minutes of your time for interviews about your experiences of playing Korfball, this will be recorded. Trinity Korfball Club has given its full support to this study.

#### **Feedback**

Feedback will be given back to coaches and the committee if requested, and will be in an anonymous form, so separate players will not be identified.

### **Confidentiality**

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Laura Gubby. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

### **Dissemination of results**

Results of this study will be discussed within the final PhD thesis, with possibilities of publications and conference papers.

### **Deciding Whether to Participate**

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate in this research, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason, *but the observation data collected up until the date of withdrawal will still be utilised unless you request for it to be removed.*

### **Any Questions?**

Please contact Laura Gubby on 07860483522; or email [Laura.gubby@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:Laura.gubby@canterbury.ac.uk);

