

Bowled out for a Duck before picking up a bat - Identifying women's perceived barriers and lived experiences of cricket within the City of Lincoln

Gender inequality in sport has received significant attention from sports development initiatives and sociologists of sport. Gender inequality describes the structuring of aspects of society that favours one gender over another. Feminist academic literature is heavily focused around how the inequality is perpetuated in society (Hargreaves, J. (2000) *Heroines of Sport: 'The politics of difference and identity'*. London: Routledge.). The prevalence of gender inequality is reflected in women's participation levels in typically masculine sports such as cricket. Approximately 0.08% of the female population take part in cricket in the UK, which suggests there are inherent barriers to women's participation (Sport England, 2011, *Active People Survey 2011*). This problem is something that has been highlighted as a substantial aim that the legacy of the 2012 London Olympics can help overcome (London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympics games Ltd (2008) *Diversity and Inclusion strategy*).

The present study builds on previous work to increase opportunities for women to participate in cricket (Hibberd et al 2011; *'Not Just a Boys Game': Programme evaluation of a multi-agency cricket intervention designed to reduce gender inequity in a city in the East of England.* Paper presented at the student BASES 2011 conference). The principal aim of this study is to investigate the perceived barriers that active women feel prevent or inhibit their participation in cricket. A case study approach will be adopted, focusing on six women's community and University sports clubs in Lincoln, in conjunction with Lincolnshire Cricket board (LCB). Women will be recruited from an array of social backgrounds, with different abilities, ages and experiences of sport.

A mixed method approach utilising both questionnaires and semi-structured group interviews will be employed (Bryman, A. (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge). A theory driven approach to understanding women's perceived barriers to participation in cricket will be adopted. The project will enable researchers to gain a better understanding of the reasons why women find access to certain sports easier than others. This information will allow researchers to make recommendations for widening participation in women's cricket, with a view to increasing the viability of women's participation in cricket locally.