

The male world of football media and beer drinking: a case study of sports bars in Cape Town, South Africa

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Abstract

The present study explores the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It is based on the constructivism research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), a conceptualisation of media as a tool for social behaviour (Couldry, 2003) and James Wertsch's (1998) Mediated Action Theory. The study analyses two dimensions of football media viewing in sports bars: it focuses on the psychological motivations and the socio-cultural structure. The study's main objective is to understand both the role of media for the practice of football media viewing in sports bars and the constitution of gender during the practice. It is a subject worthy of in-depth examination as there is a lack of holistic, contextualised and critical research in media studies, particularly in the field of football media consumption. The study applied ethnographic observations of two sports bars in a middle-class suburb in Cape Town as well as on-site and off-site interviews. During this time the researcher balanced subjective experiences with social meanings and scientific theories in a reflexive and flexible manner. The results reveal a complex network of individual purposes and socio-cultural tools. On the individual level they explain which media aspects are important to serve patrons' needs and why male patrons discriminate against women. On the socio-cultural level the results show how media, gender and other tools interact to influence patrons' behaviour. The study concludes by suggesting how media can be used to create enjoyable social environments and how social structures can be altered to create a more equal society beyond the sports bar environment.

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1 Introduction

It's a relaxing escape from the real world ... where you can just kind of zone out and get into this place where you can say what you like and shout what you like. ... I can go to any random football pub not knowing anyone and I can make friends with anyone there, just because I'm there and just because we have that unspoken understanding that we are sort of here for the same reason. (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014)

Bars are for men. And women can venture to other things. ... People would go to such places to socialise, to share emotions, if they are also watching football. So to bring a woman to such a gathering – what story, what commonality ... would you be talking about? (Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014)

The above interview participants illustrate the two main characteristics of football media viewing in sports bars as explored in the present research. On the one hand sports bars are refuges for diverse patrons who can relax from everyday work and family life and belong to a community. On the other hand sports bars exclude women and deny their participation. The present paper explores these two characteristics and explains them with three socio-cultural *tools*, which are *football media*, *sociality* and *alcohol*. For the moment, however, the introductory chapter is going to provide a general overview of the thesis, point out its significance, define the research objectives and their scope, and explain the structure of the research. The present section will outline the main thesis and give insights into theory and methodology.

The present thesis explores the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It sheds light on (1) the purposes behind the practice; (2) the tools which are applied during the practice; and (3) the way participants learn to identify with the tools and use them. The particular research focus lies on media and gender tools. *Constructivism* (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) is the overarching research paradigm for the thesis which aims at producing *authentic* knowledge induced from individual encounters, which is relevant for particular contexts and related to broader theory. This knowledge serves to support marginalised groups in order to engender more equality in society.

The main theoretical understanding of the thesis is deduced from the field of *media audience research*; Wertsch's (1998) Mediated Action Theory (MAT); leisure theory (Rojek, 1997; Stebbins, 1997); the theory of sociability (Simmel, 1949); the field of media use in public

places; gender theory (Butler, 1990); as well as the field of alcohol and gender. The thesis mainly argues, here, that it is important to investigate the role of media for social behaviour, in order to understand media's influence on audiences (Couldry, 2003). Media is conceptualised within a social action theory (Wertsch, 1998), which investigates psychological motivations behind behaviour¹ and the socio-cultural macro- and micro-structure.

The theoretical assumptions concerned with the actual practice of football media viewing in sports bars define the practice as casual leisure aimed at relaxation and emotional well-being. These emotions are achieved through pleasurable and half-serious social interactions that are enhanced by football media consumption and identification with football teams. This is, however, limited to men due to gender norms. Gender norms are behaviour rules linked to a particular anatomical sex. Part of public football media viewing is alcohol consumption, which is similarly gendered and aims at pleasurable sociability.

Based on these assumptions, the present thesis conducted ethnographic observations and personal, half-structured interviews in two sports bars in a middle-class district in Cape Town, South Africa. Off-site interviews were additionally conducted with football viewers. The results were recorded in field notes, the field diary and on a voice recorder and were transcribed. They were analysed with a qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004). The next section illustrates the significance of the present research.

1.1 Significance

The thesis is relevant for four reasons: it first responds to the recent development in the field of media audience research. Secondly, it explores gender inequality, and herewith attempts to contribute to a more equal society. Thirdly, it researches the context of football media consumption which appears to be underdeveloped in regard to gender. Fourthly, football is an important topic in the South African society, but lacks critical and contextual research. The present section will introduce each of these arguments below.

¹ *Action* is used synonymously with *behaviour*.

The present study's main interest lies in exploring media's role in society. This is related to media audience research and originates from media effects research with a long tradition (McQuail, 2005). Recent development directed media audience research from media reception studies (Morley, 1980) over media audience ethnographies (Liebes & Katz, 1990) to media consumption analysis (Ang & Hermes, 1996), where media is conceptualised as a tool for behaviour. The latest stage of media audience research focuses on contextual media use (for example, Gillespie, 1995; Hermes, 1995; Morley, 1992; and Silverstone, 1994). This research offers arguably more authentic results because it avoids *media-centrism*, which automatically puts a main focus on media and neglects to research other possibly more relevant factors for behaviour (Alasuutari, 1999; Ang & Hermes, 1996; Bausinger, 1984; Couldry, 2003; Spitulnik, 2010). The present thesis, consequently, researches contextual media use in order to find out media's role for behaviour. The present study's second important interest is gender.² It aims at critically analysing behaviour in order to find out whether it is build on discriminatory norms. This analysis can help uncover inequality in society and can provide suggestions as to how to improve it.

To sum up so far, the thesis' initial point is to find out media's role for behaviour and to analyse underlying gender norms. From here the researcher decided to focus on specific behaviour within a particular context in order to provide an authentic analysis. He chose particularly the practice of football media viewing in sports bars for three main reasons, articulated below.

First, football participation and consumption appears to discriminate against women globally (for example Chiweshe, n.d; Groenmeyer, 2010; Hoeber & Kerwin, 2013; Jones, 2008; Meân, 2001; Naidoo & Muholi, 2010). For example, Rubin, Pillay, Tomlinson, and Bass (2009) argue that

football players and fans ... consistently valorise the idea of being a 'real' man and as such women and all things feminine are derided and degraded within this environment. The association with the feminine and all things female becomes normalised as unacceptable. (p. 269)

Studies of football consumption and gender, however, mostly neglect to provide explanations for gender discrimination and fail to provide a contextual analysis (but see Gastaldo, 2005;

² *Gender* will be defined in the theoretical chapter.

and Whiteside & Hardin, 2011) as the literature review will show. The present study contributes, therefore, to the field of football consumption and gender with explanations and authentic results.

The second reason why the thesis chose to focus on the practice of football media viewing in sports bars is the great importance of football in South Africa, where the present study was conducted. Although there is a lack of empirical work regarding the popularity of football media viewing in South Africa, some indicators exist. According to the All Media Product Survey (AMPS) (2013) 48 per cent of South Africans³ are interested in football as a sports activity, which makes it the most popular sport in South Africa.⁴ Although AMPS (2013) does not reveal the most popular television programmes, it states that *Soccer Laduma* is the second most popular newspaper in South Africa,⁵ which is remarkable, as *Soccer Laduma* serves a special interest compared with other newspapers.

Beside the few empirical indicators for football's popularity, various academic authors claim football's importance for South Africa, which is supposed to be a *sports-mad* country (Alegi, 2010; Farred, 2000; Jacobs, 2010; Kaminju & Ndlovu, 2011; Nauright, 1997).⁶ Other authors tend to emphasise and report autobiographically about football's high importance in their lives as well as those of their communities (Jacobs, 2010; Fared, 2010). Despite football's apparent popularity there is, nonetheless, a lack of contextual studies examining the process of common football media consumption in South Africa (but see Bob & Swart, 2010). There is, similarly, a lack of critical gender analysis, although Mager (2010) claims that historically football games in South Africa "centered on ... masculine sociability" (p. 6) among others. She further notes that "masculine camaraderie re-created primary bonds of friendship between men and reinforced men's exclusive access to power and authority over women" (Mager, 2010, p. 8).

The present thesis addresses this research gap and indicates gender-related problems beyond the football context. Finally, the present thesis chose to analysis the practice of football media

³ Critics claim that the survey does not represent the lower-income parts of South Africa well enough.

⁴ This is followed by 20 per cent interested in rugby.

⁵ It comes after the *Sunday Times* and is followed by the *Sunday Sun*.

⁶ For example, Alegi (2010) refers to late Nelson Mandela, the national icon, giving parts of his 1994 inauguration speech during half-time of a football match between South Africa and Zambia on the sports field. He also points to the very emotional reactions of South African leaders when South Africa was awarded with the right to host the 2010 World cup, which equalled the common enthusiasm of many South Africans and the high popularity of the 2010 World Cup.

viewing in sports bars, because it was an inclusive public event, to which the author could easily get access and could merge with other patrons without intruding and causing difficulties, which would have been the case if he had analysed more private media consumption.

All in all, the thesis is significant, because it (1) provides an authentic account of media's role in respect of behaviour; (2) critically investigates gender discrimination; (3) contributes to the field of football consumption and gender; and (4) addresses a relevant but yet under-researched topic in South Africa. The next section outlines the objectives and the scope of the research.

1.2 Research objectives and scope

This section explains the main research objectives and sheds light on the limitations of the thesis. The three research objectives are related to Wertsch's MAT (1998), which will be introduced in the theoretical chapter.

The first research objective is to explore the purposes behind the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It focuses on the psychological dimensions of the behaviour and attempts to understand participants' main motivations. The second research objective is to study the socio-cultural tools that participants apply for the practice. These tools are the socio-cultural structure of the practice and belong to objective reality. Socio-cultural tools can be physical or mental, so that media and gender belong, consequently, to the category of tools. Agents do not usually have the freedom to decide on tools, but are forced to apply certain ones due to routine or social pressure, as the subsequent chapters will explain. The third research objective, finally, is to investigate, how participants come to use the above tools. *Mastery* implies, here, a cognitive or motoric learning to use the tools, whereas *appropriation* means identification with tools.⁷ Participants are usually made to identify with tools.

Within the study of the three objectives the thesis has a particular approach. It is *holistic*, which is evidenced in its exploration of the relationship between (a) media and gender as a socio-cultural structure with (b) the purposes of the practice as the psychological dimension.

⁷ Mastery and appropriation are defined in the theoretical chapter.

It is also *contextual*, for it researches other tools beside media and gender and by establishing a relationship between them. Finally, the study is *situational*, for it considers the application of the tools in the specific micro-context of sports bars.

The above advantages besides, the thesis has, nevertheless, limitations. Due to its holistic and contextual nature, it does not provide an in-depth analysis of purposes, tools and the application of tools. It is explorative and rather establishes different dimensions and their relationship and leaves it for further studies to go into more depth. Another limitation is the present study's non-representative nature. Its results neither represent sports bars in general, nor represent the analysed sports bars in particular. This is partly due to its constructivist approach, which forbids generalisations per se to its broad nature. The next section outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.3 Structure

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter introduced the thesis, explained its significance, illustrated the research objectives and limitations and is now looking at the structure. The second chapter will, thereafter, share the theoretical understanding of the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It will also give insights into the general approach of the thesis, which was introduced in this section. The third chapter will subsequently introduce research in the field of football consumption, alcohol and gender. This will integrate the present study into broader research and make its significance apparent.

The fourth chapter will illustrate how the study retrieved knowledge from the field. The qualitative approach will shed light on this, together with difficult questions about researcher's and participants' subjectivities as well as ethical relations in the informal and risky settings of the sports bars. The fifth chapter will subsequently provide the results of the research and help understand the complex network of various tools and purposes. The sixth chapter will thereafter discuss the findings and relate them to other studies, while the seventh chapter will conclude the thesis and offer questions for further research.⁸

⁸ The appendix provides with the research consent forms from the interviews; the coding system of the interview content; and the interview transcripts.

2 Theory

The present chapter explains the theoretical understanding of football media viewing in sports bars. It is divided into five parts: the first sheds light on the axiology and ontology of constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 2005), which provides the principles of knowledge for the present thesis. The second part of the theoretical chapter provides insights into the broader media audience theory, which is concerned with media's impact on its audiences. It argues that the best way to understand media's impact on audiences is to research daily media use (Alasuutari, 1999; Ang & Hermes, 1996; Bausinger, 1984). Daily media use is further defined as social action⁹ (Couldry, 2003).

The third part of the present chapter introduces a social action theory, the Mediated Action Theory (MAT) (Wertsch, 1998). MAT serves as the main framework for the present thesis and media use is conceptualised within this theory. The fourth theoretical part goes more into detail and focuses particularly on the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It sheds light on the concepts of *leisure* (Rojek, 1997; Stebbins, 1997) and *sociability* (Simmel, 1949) and explains football media viewing (Adetunji, 2013; Bale, 1998; Eastman, 1997; Gastaldo, 2007; Krotz & Eastman, 1999; Lemish, 1982; Mehus, 2010; Osborne & Coombs, 2013; Weed, 2007) and social drinking (Szmigin, Griffin, Mistral, Bengry-Howell, Weale, & Hackley, 2008; Gutmann, 1996). Finally, the fifth part of the chapter explains the concept of *gender* (Butler, 1990) and relates it to football media viewing in sports bars.

2.1 Principles of knowledge

This section sheds light on the present thesis' understanding of knowledge, which underlies the entire research and impacts each part of the thesis. It is based on the constructivism research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), which is developed from the theory of constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The understanding of knowledge informs both the choice of theories and methodology. The present sub-chapter relates the principles of knowledge to theories, whereas its connection to methodology will be introduced at a later stage. At this point light is shed on constructivism's axiology and ontology.

⁹ As already stated *action* is used synonymously with *behaviour*.

Constructivism's research paradigm is one of the main research paradigms alongside positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and the participatory paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Its axiology defines the values, beliefs and ethics behind the present research. In the light of the constructivism paradigm, the present thesis follows the principles of logical and transactional knowledge aimed at enhancing social emancipation of marginalized groups. Contrary to positivism, it is assumed that logical knowledge is not universal, but depends on social contexts. This knowledge has to be induced from certain settings and related to existing theory. The function of the extracted, structured and further abstracted knowledge is to improve the living conditions of the members of the social environment.

Furthermore, following constructivism's paradigm, the researcher is engaged, authentic and personal in contrast with positivism's beliefs that the researcher has to be detached and objective. The researcher gets, as a consequence, in touch with the research participants and, to some extent, shares his views and opinions. Researcher's bias, culture and other personal and social characteristics are not regarded as mere threats, but are in contrast essential, for the theorisation, data gathering and interpretation.

Ontology can be described as the nature of knowledge. It defines the form of knowledge and the way it can be accessed (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In line with constructivism's paradigm, the present thesis regards knowledge as being social. Knowledge is produced, maintained and altered by social groups. Consequently, it can be retrieved through the observation and understanding of social institutions. These institutions have a different size and structure. Some of the institutions are large and well-established and other are smaller and rudimental. Knowledge, therefore, is neither generally applicable nor purely random. It is located in-between the social and individual.

As various intersecting social institutions exist they can at times be contradictory. Hence, individuals, who belong to different social groups and take part in different forms of action, can possess contradictory and conflicting knowledge. To some extent knowledge is, thus, inconsistent and conflicting. Furthermore, knowledge has a certain function and is practical. It is applied by individuals to engage in practices within a certain social context. The same knowledge can, however, have a different function for different groups of individuals. The function can never be predicted without knowing its specific context of application.

The following theories are built on the above principles of knowledge, which mainly emphasize its contextual and practical nature. The next section applies these principles to the field of media studies and concludes with an approach, how to research media's impact on audiences.

2.2 Media audience theory as social action theory

This sub-chapter illustrates the present understanding of media and its role for audiences, based on the above principles of knowledge. It frames media audience theory as a social action theory. The section describes different theoretical streams and focuses on the development of a particular stream which eventually results in the concept of media as a tool for social action.

To begin with, the present thesis belongs to the broader field of media audience research, which analyses the impact of media consumption on audiences (McQuail, 2005). This research tradition can be divided into (1) Effects research; (2) Uses and Gratifications research; (3) Literary criticism; (4) Cultural Studies; and (5) Reception analysis (Jensen & Rosengren, 1990). The first three traditions are less relevant for the present thesis for the following reasons: The Effects research originates from behaviourism and links media consumption directly to behaviour without accounting for cultural, psychological and social mediation. The Uses and Gratifications research acknowledges psychological dispositions as factors for media effects, but still ignores culture and the micro-social context which influence media effects. Finally, literary criticism mainly derives media effects from media content alone, thereby disregarding the active role of the audience for meaning-making.

As to the fourth and fifth audience research streams, which are important for the present thesis, the Cultural Studies and the Reception analysis analyse media content and compare it with audience readings (Jensen & Rosengren, 1990).¹⁰ Pertti Alasuutari (1999) includes both streams into the general category of reception research and calls them the first generation of reception studies. They are based on Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding model (1980) that assumes that media content represents the hegemonic ideology and analyses, whether its

¹⁰ Media content is termed *encodings* and audience readings are named *decodings*.

audience decodes the content in a dominant, negotiated or oppositional way. Audience's decodings are usually explained through social characteristics such as race, class or gender.

Various studies belong to the reception research, with David Morley's *The Nationwide Audience study* (1980) being the most prominent. The advantages of the reception research lie in the active role it assigns to the audience and in the precise analysis of how media texts are interpreted (Schrøder, 2000). Its shortcomings, however, are that media texts are assumed to be political per se, thereby representing the hegemonic ideology and audiences are perceived as either conforming to the hegemonic culture or rebelling against it. It must be noted, however, that various media texts which are part of popular culture, for example, are not intended to be political. In addition, it is difficult to define hegemonic ideology objectively. Moreover, an audience might engage in various readings according to different situations and might not deal with certain meaning-making sides of media texts altogether. For these reasons, reception research at this stage is widely criticised and can be applied only in specific political contexts.

The second generation of reception studies, the media ethnography (Alasuutari, 1999; Livingstone, 2005), advances the reception research. It builds on concepts of *media ecology* (see for example McLuhan, 1964 and Postman, 1985), which draw a connection between a medium and its reception context. The process of media reception is contextualised within the micro- and macro-social and cultural settings. Therefore, four factors are taken into account when media's influence is explored: (1) a specific media text; (2) the specific situation of media reception like the venue, the group of people present and the actions taking place during the reception; (3) the culture of the audience which can be expressed through political ideologies or beliefs and sentiments; and (4) macro-sociological and political categories like sex, race, ethnicity, class and educational background. These four factors are applied to contextualise media reception in order to understand, why a certain audience interprets media texts in certain ways and how these interpretations might affect behaviour or action.¹¹

¹¹ Liebes and Katz' research (1990) can be taken as a prominent example of a media audience ethnography. Although their study did not utilize all four aforementioned factors, it nevertheless focused on the media text of a popular television series, analysed a specific setting when family and friends came together to view the series and applied nationality and ethnicity as a macro-sociological category to explain, why certain groups were reading the media in a *referential* and other in an *inferential* way. Similarly, many other studies analysed different media texts read in various contexts, and eventually Michelle (2007) synthesised the various possible readings and their effects into her *modes of reception* model.

Although media ethnography advances the audience research by being more flexible to various influences and allowing more forms of readings, it still shows one crucial theoretical flaw: media ethnography places media at the centre of its analysis (Alasuutari, 1999; Ang & Hermes, 1991; Bausinger, 1984; Couldry, 2003). Herman Bausinger (1984) explains the problem behind media-centric approaches and argues that media should instead be conceptualised as a technology or a tool which individuals use for certain practices. Media as a technology is part of daily lives and practices and, in order to understand its function, it is important to study daily practices first. Consequently, media ethnography, which focuses its study primarily on media, falsely assumes that it is an end in itself.

This false assumption results in two main flaws: first, as media is part of daily routines, consumers might not observe the full length of the content or might not fully concentrate on it during the reception. Hence, studies which interview the audience mainly about the content force the participants to give media more importance, than it initially might have had. Second, media use depends on the social context and the interpersonal relations: why, how and if media is noticed depends on the behaviour of other individuals, who the audience is directing its behaviour at. Thus, media interpretations and the probability of resulting actions are only secondarily linked to the media text and general social or cultural factors, but primarily depend on the broader social action or behaviour media consumption is part of.

Bausinger's (1984) conceptualisation of media as tools and his arguments are echoed by various media scholars: Nick Couldry (2003) proposes to "decentre media research from the study of media texts ... and to redirect it onto the study of the open-ended range of practices focussed directly or indirectly on media" (p. 4). Similarly, Alasuutari (1999) argues that "people's daily lives must be the point of departure and object of research" (p. 6). He calls the conceptualization of media as a tool for daily life the third and most recent generation of audience research.¹² Ang and Hermes (1996) equally state that

we need to go beyond the boundaries of reception analysis and develop new forms of 'consumption analysis' ... [where] the text is radically decentred and the everyday contexts in which reception, consumption and use take place are more emphatically foregrounded. (p.126)

¹² One exemplary study of the research of media as tools for social practice is provided by Hermes (1995), who analysed women reading women's magazines. She discovered that the magazines served the function of filling spare time in their daily social life, without having a particularly important meaning for the readers. She explored further the cultural constructs which the women applied to understand the meaning of *spare time*, how to fill it, and how magazines can serve that function.

Within the last stream of media audience research, where media is framed as a tool, there are two different approaches. Whereas Hermes (1995) and Bausinger (1984) integrate the study of media into a phenomenological analysis of the daily life, Couldry (2003) proposes to “place media studies firmly within a broader sociology of action and knowledge” (p. 4). This shifts the research focus from individual interpretations and processes to social behaviour. The advantages of social behaviour research are that it is more empirically grounded than inner processes of individuals and that it puts a greater emphasis on social and practical processes. Beside these advantages, Couldry is specifically interested in public rituals and routine practices, which he assumes to be the most important practices.

Couldry’s arguments are reflected by the present thesis in two ways: first, the thesis conceptualises media as a tool for daily social practices and secondly, it focuses its analysis on a popular ritual practice. Based on these arguments the following sub-chapter introduces Wertsch’s (1998) social behaviour theory. This theory explains and structures daily social practices and conceptualises media as cultural tools among other tools. It can be, therefore, analysed, which role media plays for social behaviour and how it interacts with other structural parts.

2.3 Wertsch’s Mediated Action Theory

This sub-chapter explains Wertsch’s social action theory (1998), which provides the main framework for the thesis. The sub-chapter starts by introducing the broader sociological field and points out a few main characteristics and key problems. Against this background, the sub-chapter proceeds by shedding light on Wertsch’s Mediated Action Theory (MAT) and places it within the broader sociological discipline.

Since the beginning of sociology with Max Weber and Emile Durkheim as its founding fathers, the discipline has been researching how individuals and social structure are related to behaviour. Structuralism, functionalism and constructionism, among many other streams, conceptualise the problem in different ways, and related disciplines like psychology and anthropology further expand the theoretical understanding. The relationship between social structure, individuals and behaviour is examined from a macro-, meso-, or micro-perspective.

Macro-level theories such as Niklas Luhman's (1997) systems theory usually emphasise structure as the force behind behaviour, and assign individuals a weaker role. In contrast, micro-level theories like George Herbert Mead's Social-Interactionism (1934), which is a social-psychological theory, focus more on individuals and allow them a bigger impact (but see Goffman, 1959). Another set of theories including Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's Social Constructivism (1967), Anthony Giddens's Structuration Theory (1984) or Pierre Bourdieu's class distinction theory (1984), among others, attempt to grasp macro- and micro-levels of society and try to balance the influences of structure and individuals on behaviour.

Against this backdrop, the present sub-chapter is now going to illuminate Wertsch's MAT (1998), which belongs to the last theoretical stream and thus attempts to balance the role of structure and individuals for explaining behaviour. Its main aim is

to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which this action occurs, on the other. The specific notion of action ... examined is mediated action This involves focussing on agents and their cultural tools – the mediators of action. (Wertsch, 1998, p. 24)

The main purpose of MAT is, therefore, to explain social action on a micro-level. The theory is neither exclusively concerned with psychological individual processes nor with sociological macro-structures. It rather combines these two disciplines to understand social action of individuals. The benefit of a focus on social action lies in the stronger connection to empirical evidence. Whereas individual processes and large-scale social structures can hardly be observed, the social action of individuals is more approachable empirically.¹³

Wertsch's MAT has three main elements (see Figure 2 and 3): The first element is the *agent* and describes individual purposes behind action (Wertsch, 1998, p. 32). The second element is the *socio-cultural tool*, which stands for a physical or mental object applied for the action (Wertsch, 1998, p. 30). Cultural tools are derived from broader social structures and cultures. Finally, the third element is *mastery/appropriation*, which describes how the agents learn to use the cultural tools and how they identify with them.

¹³ Action has, however, to be interpreted, which creates some distance to empirical *reality*. Nevertheless, the necessity to link interpretations to observations forces the researcher to engage more with the perspectives of research participants instead of solely applying personal understandings.

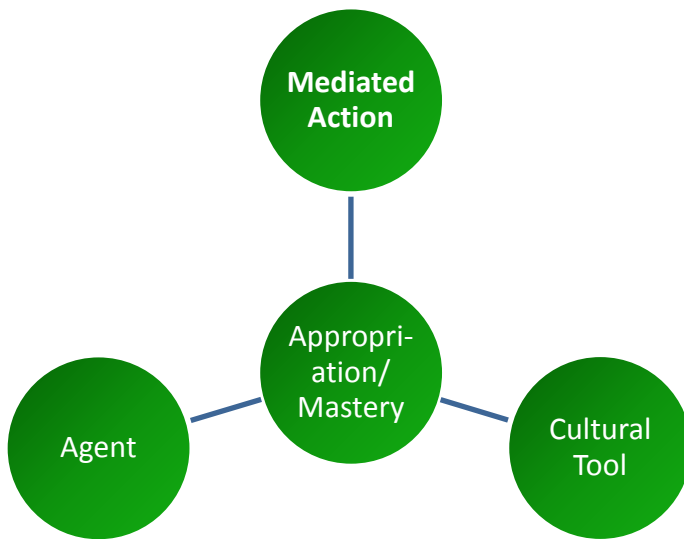


Figure 1 – The three elements of mediated action.

The relationship of the three elements of mediated action can also be illustrated as a process:

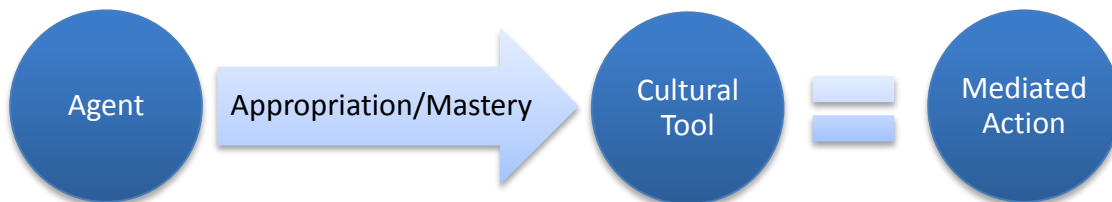


Figure 2 – The three elements of mediated action as a process.

As regards the first two elements, the agent and the cultural tool, Wertsch argues for their equal contribution to mediated action. He describes an *irreducible tension* (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25) between both and “outlines a way to live in the middle ... , [which] involves a version of the dialectic between agent and instrumentality” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 17): “While we might isolate one element for an analysis, we need to keep in mind that these elements are phenomena that do not really exist independently of action” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25).¹⁴

¹⁴ Wertsch’s emphasis on the equal contribution of agents and cultural tools to mediated action are derived from Lev Vygotsky and Kenneth Burke.

By giving structure (in the form of cultural tools) and the agent similar importance for behaviour, MAT resembles other sociological theories like Berger and Luckmann's constructivism which similarly argues for the equal importance of the social and individual. This duality is one of the advantages of Wertsch's MAT, as it provides a holistic and complex account of various influences on, and layers of, social behaviour. MAT fits, therefore, very well into the broader constructivism paradigm.

After having outlined MAT's main thesis, the sub-chapter focuses now on each of the elements and on the power relationship between the agents and the cultural tools. It first explains the agents and the tools, then outlines the power relationship and finally sheds light on mastery/appropriation.

2.3.1 The agent as the first element of MAT

Starting with the first element, the agent stands for the individual perspective behind action, which contains *multiple purposes* and a *background framework* (Wertsch, 1998, pp. 32-33). In other words, actors have multiple and deep purposes behind their actions. For example,¹⁵ somebody might view football media in a sports bar for various reasons at the same time: in order to relax, to meet with friends and to participate in discussions. The deeper purpose behind football media viewing might be to feel better or the affirmation of the social identity. In order to understand the agent's perspective, it is important to grasp multiple meanings of the behaviour for the individual's perspective.

2.3.2 The cultural tool as the second element of MAT

The second element, the cultural tool, is a physical or mental object influenced by broader social structure and culture (Wertsch, 1998, p. 24). It can be described as a material object as it always remains external to the agent. Although cultural tools are never absorbed, they nevertheless change the agent and are sometimes also altered by the agent (Wertsch, 1998, p.

¹⁵ The examples provided in this chapter are hypothetical and only used to illustrate the arguments. Due to the present thesis' specific topic all examples are related to football media viewing. They are, however, neither derived from the present research nor based on scientific knowledge.

31). During the process of mastery/appropriation¹⁶ agents are influenced by the tools. In order to account for this influence, it is important to understand the material properties of the tools.

A television screen can, for example, be a cultural tool during football media viewing. Similarly, a chair, a beer bottle or the football jersey can be regarded as physical cultural tools. Mental tools during football media consumption can be the language used in interactions, a cultural belief that it is important to support a football team, the ideology that means that the majority decides which football game to watch. These cultural tools have been constructed by certain social structures or evolved as a broader culture.

For many individuals cultural tools are like an objective reality¹⁷ – they have to accept them in their current state. Although cultural tools are never fully absorbed, they still change individuals. Some tools, especially the mental ones, are, however, also alterable, albeit only partially and in relation to a group of people.

2.3.3 The power relationship between the agent and the cultural tool

The present sub-chapter has described the agent and the cultural tool individually. It is now necessary to explicate the power and authority involved in their relationship. Power can be exercised through the decision to use certain tools or to build tools and gain authority through the use of tools (Wertsch, 1998, p. 45). For example, the cultural habit of discussing certain football statistics and knowledge about the football players and the football clubs means that, in order to participate in the behaviour, it is important to accumulate certain knowledge beforehand. Thus, those individuals who are not interested in this knowledge or do not have the time or means to accumulate this knowledge, are not able to participate in discussions. They are not perceived as authentic football media viewers and are excluded from the practice.

Those groups, then, who initially decided upon or influenced this habit, have the power to include or exclude members. Also, those individuals who provide or organise this knowledge

¹⁶ Mastery/appropriation is described further below.

¹⁷ *Objective reality* was more prominently used by Berger and Luckmann as part of their constructivism. The meaning of this concept goes back to Émile Durkheim, who described social structure as independent from individuals.

are similarly considered powerful and attain power. Finally, individuals who might join football media viewing activities can gain authority in the eyes of the other members through applying certain knowledge common to them. It is, therefore, apparent that those who control the cultural tools, have the power to define the rules of each practice, as well as who is allowed and able to participate. The next section moves away from tools and turns towards, how participants can learn or identify with tools in a certain context.

2.3.4 Mastery/appropriation as the third element of MAT

Having earlier discussed the first two elements and their power relationship, the present sub-chapter now turns towards the last element of MAT. Mastery/appropriation stands for agents learning to use or identifying with cultural tools. The concept of mastery and the concept of appropriation are thus explained below, their differences are outlined, and the underlying processes of mastery and appropriation are explained.

Mastery can be defined as the skilful use of cultural tools (Wertsch, 1998, pp. 46-50). There are different degrees of mastery and a higher degree means more successful mediated action. For example, an understanding of different tactics and strategies can be perceived as a cultural tool for football media viewing used to establish one's authority within a group of other viewers. Those individuals, who can demonstrate more profound knowledge of tactics and strategies, are perceived as the more authentic football media viewers.

The concept of appropriation also needs to be explained. It stands for the contextual identification with certain cultural tools (Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). The more agents appropriate cultural tools, the bigger meaning they have for individual actions. If the individual appropriates, for example, the wearing of a football jersey during football media viewing, he is, then, going to wear the jersey during each viewing. The jersey will be a substantial part of the practice. The individual might, moreover, decide to wear the same jersey in other contexts such as at home, during football activities or to work. Wertsch (1998) distinguishes, however, his contextual concept of appropriation from more general and static conceptualisations of *identification*:

Many, and perhaps most, forms of mediated action never ‘progress’ towards being carried out on an internal plane Agent[s] might be said to ‘wrap around’ cultural tools in such a way that mediated action does not ‘disappear’ into the agent. (p. 50)

In other words, agents never fully or generally identify with cultural tools. According to MAT, agents, social structure/culture and its use only exist as part of behaviour. Agents can, consequently, identify with cultural tools only for the specific context of an action in a specific situation, although identification might include various specific contexts. The appropriation of cultural tools never exists, therefore, outside specific mediated action. This is the reason why cultural tools always remain objective materials outside of agents and, to some extent, are appropriated for a specific period of time. This conceptualisation of appropriation is a particular advantage of Wertsch’s MAT. Although his theory might not have the scope to abstract and define general culture, it is able to account precisely for specific behaviour. It might have a smaller significance than larger-scale theories, but it is more accurate. As to the relationship between mastery and appropriation, both are connected but not interdependent (Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). Both can exist independently from each other: Agents can be able to master a tool, but might not be willing or allowed to use it. On the other hand, agents might use a tool without being able to master it.

An examination of the process of mastery reveals that it depends mainly on exercise and the related skills an individual already has. Appropriation is, in contrast, a less active process. Thus, “instead of involving conscious reflection, appropriation oftentimes is almost done to – rather than by – the agent” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 176). Here, Wertsch (1998) introduces the concepts of *intermental* and *intramental* functioning (pp. 109-111).¹⁸ Intermental functioning refers to interaction between agents and intramental functioning stands for inner processes. Intermental functioning influences intramental functioning, so that individuals learn how to act in certain circumstances from the interaction. Powerful and authoritative agents influence other agents to act in certain ways. Thus, agents appropriate action based on their interaction with powerful agents, who influence them to apply certain cultural tools in certain ways.

Intramental processes and the appropriation of tools, however, never resemble fully intermental functioning. One of the reasons why individuals rarely appropriate tools in the same way that powerful individuals influence them is because of the conflict between

¹⁸ Wertsch derived these concepts mainly from Vygotsky.

different powerful and authoritative individuals. A football media viewer might, for example, be influenced by other viewers to consume alcohol. She might, nevertheless, remember other social groups in other contexts that told her to refrain from alcohol consumption. She has, therefore, to negotiate between different authorities and their opinions about which cultural tools to use and how.

All in all, the present sub-chapter explained and illustrated Wertsch's MAT and outlined its position within the broader sociological field. It also explicated its three main elements, these being agents, socio-cultural tools and mastery/appropriation as well as their relationships. With this in mind, it becomes obvious that media takes on the role of a tool. Media content can be perceived as mental concepts, whereas the television set, mobile phones or speakers are physical tools. The present thesis does not, however, only focus on the immediate influence of media, but also on media culture, its use and the purposes it is used for. Mental concepts as to how to view television are, therefore, similarly important.

After dealing with Wertsch's social action theory, the next sub-chapter outlines the theoretical understanding of the particular practice of football media viewing in sports bars. This understanding will be structured along MAT's three main elements. The theories will therefore help understand the purposes behind the practice; its socio-cultural structure and the learning process.

2.4 Football media viewing in sports bars

This section focuses on the particular practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It is structured along MAT's three components, which were explained in the previous section. Football media viewing is perceived as a casual leisure activity, which results in (1) specific purposes behind the practice, (2) certain socio-cultural tools applied and (3) particular learning processes. The three main tools are *sociality*, *football media*, and *alcohol*. In the following discussion the most important concepts and theoretical arguments will be introduced.

The main purposes of football media viewing in sports bars are usually escape and relaxation (Eastmann, 1997), pleasure and enjoyment (Gastaldo, 2007; Weed, 2007), as well as

participatory and social needs (Eastmann, 1997). The present thesis does not, therefore, conceptualize football bar patrons as football fans focusing on football media content only (Giulianotti, 2002), but rather more generally as football media viewers with broader and deeper needs (Mehus, 2010; Osborne & Coombs, 2013). Football fandom is, in other words, perceived more as a tool to serve certain needs rather than an end in itself. The present thesis does, consequently, not apply normative concepts of football fandom, where identification with a football club and profound football knowledge are indicators for authentic fandom (Giulianotti, 2002). It rather utilises the value-free concept of *football media viewing*, which puts any bar patron, who consumes football media, on the same level and explores her purposes and applied tools.

The above purposes for football media viewing in bars are mainly emotional and frame football media viewing as a leisure activity (Gastaldo, 2007). Leisure can be conceptualised as the opposite of work (Rojek, 1997; Stebbins, 1997). Whereas work is serious and can be stressful, leisure is rather playful and relaxing. It is used to distract and escape from work emotionally and “re-create, or regenerate, its participants” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 21). Leisure can be further divided into serious and casual leisure with casual leisure being relevant for the activity of football media viewing. Casual leisure can be defined as

immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it. In broad, colloquial, terms it could serve as the scientific term for the practice of doing what comes naturally. (Stebbins, 1997, p. 18)

Besides relaxation and recreation, casual leisure is hedonic and provides pleasure and enjoyment (Stebbins, 1997) as well as a “deeply satisfying intimacy and interaction” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 306) with others. The types of casual leisure can be “play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversation, and sensory stimulation” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 18) or a combination of each. *Play* has the characteristics of “having childlike lightness of behaviour ... [being] expressive and intrinsic in motivation ... and [involving] a nonserious suspension of consequences, a temporary creation of its own world of meaning, which often is a shadow of the ‘real world’” (Kelly, 1990, p. 28 as cited in Stebbins, 1997). At last, a final characteristic of leisure is that its participants are rationally deciding when, where and how to engage in a leisure activity. In other words, although casual leisure is relaxing, its participants remain conscious about their work and their family and organise leisure accordingly.

Following an exposition of the main purposes of football media viewing in bars, the concept of a football media viewer and leisure theory the present section proceeds by shedding light on the three main tools of the practice: (1) sociality, (2) football media and (3) alcohol. Starting with sociality, various studies noted that media in general as well as football media in particular are used for social purposes in public spaces (Bale, 1998; Eastman, 1997; Gastaldo, 2007; Krotz & Eastman, 1999; Lemish, 1982; Weed, 2007). Here, sociality consists of two main characteristics: (1a) *sociability*,¹⁹ and (1b) *inclusivity*.²⁰ Sociability (1a) can be defined as a form of social interaction primarily aimed at a feeling of community and unity (Simmel, 1947). Rational discourse and individual problems are either left out, or subordinated to the main goal of commonality. Sociability is thus “spared the frictional relations of real life ... [and has] no ulterior end, no content, and no result outside itself” (Simmel, 1947, p. 255).

The second important characteristic of sociality is inclusivity (1b). Inclusivity arises due to the public nature of a place and means that participants might come in contact with strangers, with whom they have to establish an interaction (Krotz & Eastman, 1999; Lemish, 1982). In relation to football media (2) as the second tool of football media viewing in football bars, three main aspects can be outlined: (2a) *identification*, (2b) *uncertainty* and (2c) *unification*. Identification (2a) refers to football media viewers’ association with football players or teams (Mehus, 2010). They invest emotionally and have positive or negative feelings depending on the success of the player or team.

In the context of a football bar the identification is further enhanced through other patrons with a similar identification which provides a sense of community whenever patrons have similar emotions (Eastmann, 1997). Football viewers engage, moreover, in a practice called teasing (Adetunji, 2013; Gastaldo, 2007). Here, viewers who identify with opposing teams insult each other in a joking manner, depending on the success (or failure) of the teams. This practice contributes to the community feeling shared by supporters of the same team and to the excitement linked to football viewing. This excitement arises because of the emotional involvement of the patrons and the uncertainty about the game’s ending.

¹⁹ The present thesis differentiates between the concepts of *sociality* and *sociability*.

²⁰ Gender is another central characteristic and will be explained further bellow.

Uncertainty (2b) refers to the equal opportunity of the competing teams to win a game and furthermore to win the league or the championship (Mehus, 2010). Football viewers are, therefore, excited about the course of the game or the larger tournament and about the mutual teasing as they have invested in it emotionally and hope the finish will leave them feeling positive. Regardless of the ending, viewers feel a sense of community and are immersed in a different reality (Lemish, 1982), while relaxing and escaping from work and family. Finally, the third aspect of football media is unification (2c). Here, football talk is used by patrons to initiate and sustain conversations with other patrons and to create a feeling of community (Eastman, 1997; Gastaldo, 2007; Krotz & Eastman, 1999; Lemish, 1982; Weed, 2007).

Turning to *alcohol* as the third tool of football media viewing in football bars, it helps participants to relax as well as to escape work and family stresses emotionally, and it is an acceptable social practice (Szmigin et al., 2008; Gutmann, 1996). As a social practice, sociality influences and sometimes coerces participants to consume liquor, and equally liquor consumption mediates and supports communality and bonding. Viewed together with the above characteristics of casual leisure, liquor consumption can be recognised as a form of *calculated hedonism*, where participants rationally organise relaxation and escape as a “planned letting go” (Szmigin et al., 2008, p. 361).

The three features of football media viewing in bars as casual leisure as given above are usually combined, and reinforce each other (Weed, 2007). Specifically in the South African context, football, sociality and alcohol as casual leisure activities have been interrelated since the beginning of the twentieth century (Mager, 2010).

Turning briefly to process, which teaches participants how to engage in the practice of football media viewing in sports bars, it is important to introduce the aspect of social pressure. Any public *space* is transformed into a public *place* through an accumulation of people doing a similar practice (Bale, 1998). A place, which is regularly visited for particular purposes, has specific social behaviour rules which participants have to adjust and adhere to (Krotz & Eastman, 1999; Lemish, 1982). Participants, who do not know how to behave or behave differently, are put under pressure to conform.

All in all, the present section shed light on the theoretical understanding of the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It structured the understanding along MAT's (Wertsch,

1998) three categories and introduced purposes, tools and learning processes related to the practice. The next section explains the concept of *gender*, which is another tool for the present practice. Gender is introduced separately due to its central importance.

2.5 Gender and football media viewing in sports bars

In the following section gender is going to be conceptualised and related to the practice of football media viewing in bars. For this purpose *sex* can be defined as a classification of men and women according to their reproductive organs (Butler, 1990). *Sexuality* means orientation to a specific sex in relation to sexual intercourse. Here, one can be homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual or asexual, among others. Gender refers to socially accepted behaviour in certain situations depending on one's sex.

From the critical perspective, power-relationships between men and women can be unequal. Men can, for example, be expected to control social institutions with women taking supporting positions. In this case women would be discriminated through the assignment of specific gender roles, which prohibit them from taking control over social institutions.²¹ *Hegemonic masculinity* means the form of masculinity which oppresses other forms of masculinities and women in general. In relation to football media viewing in public spaces, male patrons dominate female patrons in terms of numbers and in terms of power (Bob & Swart, 2010; Eastmann, 1997; Gastaldo, 2007; Mager, 2010). This can be linked to men traditionally having greater access to leisure (Rojek, 1997), controlling public places (Krotz & Eastman, 1999), and having greater access to football and alcohol (Mager, 2010, Gutmann, 1996).

All in all, this section pointed to a critical dimension of football media viewing in sports bars. Although tools can support bar patrons and help them to relax and enjoy the social atmosphere, they can equally exclude certain patrons and hamper their ability to enjoy the practice. Altogether, the theoretical chapter explained (1) constructivism as the underlying

²¹ Moreover, men with a specific sexuality, for example heterosexual men, might be expected to be more dominating than men with other sexualities, for example homosexual men. Further, sex and sexuality are combined with other biological and social constructs like race, class, religion and ability, among others. For example, a heterosexual, white, upper-class, Christian, able-bodied man, might have more power in certain contexts than other men with different characteristics. The same would also apply to women and their relationships to other women or men.

research paradigm; (2) the present conceptualisation of media; (3) Wertsch's MAT as the social action theory, which provides the main framework; (4) useful concepts and theories related to football media viewing in sports bars; and (5) gender as the critical dimension of the thesis. The next chapter will situate the present study, within a broader field of research related to football, media and gender.

3 Literature review

The previous chapter argued that the most important concepts for understanding football media viewing in sports bars were football media, sociality, alcohol and gender. This section introduces research that engaged with the above concepts, and relates it to the present thesis, in order to emphasize its contributions to research. It is divided into three parts: it first sheds light on research concerned with football viewing and gender; secondly, it discusses research on football viewing and sociality and; thirdly, it examines studies about alcohol, sociality and gender. The separation of the literature into different parts indicates that to the best knowledge of the author there is hardly any research combining the four subjects listed above. At the end of this chapter the present work's position within a broader research discourse and its contribution to it will become apparent.

One of the advantages of the present thesis is its holistic and contextual approach. It looks at various disciplines in order to draw a most authentic picture of the practice. The flipside of this advantage is, however, that it cannot analyse each discipline in depth due to the lack of space. The present literature review, therefore, does not engage in the history of each of the above disciplines, but rather limits the introduction to the most formative studies.

3.1 Football and gender

Studies dealing with football and gender can be divided into two parts. The first part addresses sports and football viewing in general, whereas the second part looks at football media viewing and gender. Each part is structured along the specific focus of the studies and their research design.

Several studies tested the relationship between sex and sports fandom with quantitative surveys. The majority found that more men than women were interested in sports (Dietz-Uhler, 2000; James, 2002; Mehus, 2010; Melnick & Wann, 2010; and Wann, Waddill & Dunham, 2004) and that men socialised women into sports consumption (Melnick & Wann, 2010). Whereas some studies noticed that sports-interested men were more engaged (Dietz-Uhler, 2000; and Melnick & Wann, 2010) others argued that sports-interested men and women showed the same passion (James, 2002; Mehus, 2010; and Wann, Waddill & Dunham, 2004). Here, Wann, Waddill and Dunham (2004) stated that gender is a better predictor for deep engagement with sports than sex. In other words, irrespective of their sex, masculine fans were more passionate about sports than feminine fans.²²

The above studies conveniently point to the differences in sports consumption in respect of sex and gender. Due to their quantitative nature and the theoretical underdevelopment of the field they, however, fail to provide an explanation for these differences. The above studies, furthermore, fail to probe deeper into the motivations behind sports consumption and to understand the broader everyday meaning of sports for their consumers. As a result, despite some of the studies denying sex differences between engaged viewers and arguing for gender as a better predictor for sports fandom, they all in all leave the impression that sports fandom is biologically linked to the male sex.

More qualitative work in the field of football viewing and gender remedies some of the above disadvantages by pointing to the problems women encounter in football stadiums: they face the possibility of being sexually assaulted, they are discriminated against and they generally have to deal with a male-dominated environment (Ben-Porat, 2000; Chiweshe, n.d.; Jones, 2008; and Pfister, Lenneis & Mintert, 2013). As a consequence, women visit stadiums with male company for protection purposes and engage in traditionally masculine behaviour in order to fit in to the environment and be accepted by men. They have to negotiate between traditionally feminine and masculine behaviour (Pfister, Lenneis & Mintert, 2013).

Many women, however, do not identify with traditional understandings of femininity and masculinity (Pope, 2011, 2013). In other words, some female football viewers identify with traditionally masculine behaviour naturally and not for the sake of fitting in. Additionally, female football viewers are not uniform in their behaviour and identification and some women

²² Masculinity and femininity were defined traditionally.

manage to enact their own meaning of football viewing in stadiums, without giving in to social pressure of enacting particular behaviour (Rodríguez, 2005).

An assessment of the above qualitative studies reveals that they succeed in explaining sex differences in sports consumption behaviour with social dynamics and gender. Another advantage is that they provide insights into complex gender-identity negotiations and frame female football viewers as equal, active and conscious agents. The above studies, nonetheless, fail to explain the deeper meaning of football for the consumers (but see Ben-Porat, 2000), as well as give male perspectives on football and the reason behind discrimination.

The second part of the research on football viewing and gender focuses particularly on football media consumption. A few studies analysed media content (O'Connor & Boyle, 1993; and Rodríguez, 2005) and its reception (Mertens, 2002; Van Sterkenburg & Knoppers, 2004) and came to the conclusion that some football media linked football to traditional masculinity and that female viewers were portrayed either in a masculine way or as sexual objects. Studies on the reception of media content concluded that many football media viewers voiced dominant stereotypes and ideas about football. They noted, nevertheless, that it remains uncertain whether these viewers were influenced by football media or by other social structures.

Although the above studies offer useful insights about the way media portrays football and its viewers as well as indicate that gender discrimination is a serious issue reaching media content, they fail to account for the role that media plays in the viewer's lives. The influence of media on football viewers remains unclear. Other studies on football media and gender took a different approach and investigated the relationship between sex and sports media consumption (Gantz, Wang, Paul & Potter, 2006; Gantz & Wenner, 1995; Meier & Leinwather, 2012). They came, interestingly, to similar results compared with the above studies on sex and sports consumption in general. More men than women are interested in watching football media, but engaged male and female viewers show a similar behaviour. Meier and Leinwather (2012) proposed, consequently, that future studies should refrain from testing sex differences in football viewing behaviour and should instead

question to what extent masculine identity and sport fanship are actually linked Our results, thus, call for a more sophisticated reasoning that goes beyond characterizing sport as a masculine domain to

understanding the links between gender roles, identities, and consumption of sport entertainment. (p. 380)

One particular result, however, is noteworthy: Gantz and Wenner (1995) pointed to the importance of the context of football media viewing. Men would, for example, consume less alcohol when watching football at home and, given that fewer women were interested in football, it is probable that heterosexual men would not be able to discuss football with their partners at home. This indicates that football media viewing has to be analysed in connection to its context. The next three studies have the advantage of looking at the context of football media consumption.

Bob and Swart (2010) explored public viewing areas in Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in South Africa during the South African FIFA²³ World Cup in 2010. They found that a similar number of male and female viewers were mostly interested in the social interaction and the jolly atmosphere. Bob and Swart did not discover gender discrimination, but instead noticed that some women were sexually objectified by male participants and some marketing activities used scantily dressed women. Although this study offers contextual insights, it unfortunately remains descriptive and fails to explain motivations, the meaning of football, activities, and gender relations.

In contrast to Bob and Swart (2010), Whiteside and Hardin (2011) went deeper and broader by exploring the role of sports media for 19 housewives in the USA. They discovered that the female participants used sports media to fill the breaks in between their domestic labour. They were less passionate sports viewers as they could seldom afford to watch the complete sports event and they were often interrupted unexpectedly when they had to provide domestic labour. Furthermore, many female participants used sports media to spend time with their husbands and family as emotional labour. In these instances they were supporting their husbands' or other family members' media consumption needs instead of expressing their own interests and passions. Whiteside and Hardin (2011), therefore, succeed in showing the role of sports media for particular viewers as well as explaining their viewing in terms of social context and gender roles.

²³ FIFA is the abbreviation for Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

Although their study might have a limited applicability, it is nonetheless a positive example of an investigation of a particular context and the specific meanings of sports media in the lives of the participants. Their study is not media-centric and uncovers deeper meaning structures and the importance of gender for sports viewing. The male voice is, nonetheless, still missing and the importance of sports media for the husbands (of the surveyed housewives), as well as the connection between male behaviour and gender norms further remain unclear.

The male perspective is covered by Gastaldo (2007), who researched football media viewing in a few sports bars in the greater Porto Alegre area in Brazil. He mainly focused on male participants and discovered them watching football media as a leisure activity (1) to relax from work and family, (2) to take part in sociable conversations and (3) to re-enact masculine identities. Part of this practice was to identify with a particular team, to form groups of supporters and to engage in acts of playful teasing. Due to the unpredictability of the outcome of the game, male patrons engaged in risk-taking and bravery, as they were a constant target of public teasing and had to find a way to counter the attacks. This behaviour, Gastaldo argued, conformed to traditionally masculine behaviour in Brazil, whereas feminine behaviour would be to remain in the safe home environment.

Although Gastaldo (2007) hardly describes active gender discrimination, he shows how the male understanding of football fits into a broader masculine culture, which excludes women and homosexual men from public places. He also explains the role of football for many men as a domain with simple and familiar rules, where they can relax and escape from the complex everyday life of work and family.

The next part of the chapter turns to research on football media viewing in the context of sports bars and its relationship to sociality.

3.2 Football media in sports bars and sociality

With the exception of Gastaldo (2007) and Whiteside and Hardin (2011) the studies introduced so far mostly de-contextualised football media viewing. Although some general motivations behind football media viewing and some constraints related to gender roles have become apparent, it remains mostly unclear as to how football media viewers pursue leisure

and which opportunities social structure and culture provide. The following five studies emphasise the context of football media viewing particularly, although they mostly neglect the gender dimension.

Lemish (1982) and Krotz and Eastman (1999) observed various public media viewing places including sports bars in the USA and in Germany. Although both studies mentioned various motivations and purposes behind consumption, their main focus were the different social norms of sports media viewing in public places:

The focus in the present study is therefore on the common knowledge shared by participants; and, in particular, on that knowledge which is related to the form of the television experience. In other words, what shared or established knowledge do viewers bring with them to public places; the how of viewing television in public. (Lemish, 1982, p. 759)

Both studies discovered particular rules for each public viewing context and considerable social pressure to adhere to these rules. They also noticed television's role as a mediator for social interactions. In other words, consuming media content was hardly the viewers' main purpose. The main purpose are rather social interactions accompanying the consumption. Additionally, sports media viewing in bars contributed to the exchange of strangers and their unification.

The two studies have the benefit of providing a detailed account of the social structure of public media viewing places which enable specific social interaction. Their focus on the role of the television for sociality is also noteworthy. Nonetheless, their failings are the overemphasis on structure and the neglect of individual motivations and opportunities to manoeuvre within the structures. The role of sports media viewing in bars for the patrons' everyday life remains unclear.

Adetunji (2013) similarly focused on media as a mediator of social interaction. He analysed public football viewing centres in Ibadan and Oyo in Nigeria and concentrated particularly on the social discourse of teasing. Football media viewers appropriated football media content during more prominent football games of the English Premier League (EPL) for mutual and joking mockery. This leisure activity "was intended for humour, and ... to release tension" (Adetunji, 2013, p. 159). Like Lemish (1982) and Krotz and Eastman (1999), Adetunji emphasised football media's role for enabling sociality.

Eastman (1997) offers a more balanced account of media viewing in sports bars in contrast to the above studies. Her research was concerned with the social practices in various sports bars in a US mid-sized town. Although Eastman paid particular attention to social norms, she also gave weight to the individual motivations of the bar patrons. These centred mainly on their need to take part in a community, but also to add meaning to the sports media. On the one hand, football media viewing supported social interaction and a unification of strangers, but on the other hand the sociality also enhanced the pleasure of sports media viewing. In addition, football media viewing also served the need for simple diversion.

Eastman (1997) moreover points to the importance of food and alcoholic beverages accompanying sports media viewing. She noticed men being more engaged in liquor consumption and sports media viewing. She does, unfortunately, not elaborate on alcohol and gender – besides noting that sports knowledge can help women to gain credibility among mostly male sports fans. All in all, Eastman's study adds significantly to the field of sports media viewing and sociality by dealing with the psychological and socio-cultural side of sports media viewing in bars, although she fails to account for the importance of gender and alcohol.

Weed (2008) similarly stated that the “pub provides a place where the male holy trinity of alcohol, football and male-bonding come together” (p. 189), but yet failed to analyse alcohol and gender in a detailed way. Instead, his study on football bars in England during the 2002 FIFA football World Cup focused mainly on the connection between football media viewing in football bars and sociality. In contrast to the above studies, Weed gave, nevertheless, a more detailed account of the psychology of football media viewing and the importance of sociality. He elaborated on the concept of *shared communal experience* and the patrons' needs to experience a communal identification with football teams, in order to share the emotions during the game.

Here, football media viewing does not only serve the community, but the community likewise supports football media viewing. All in all, Weed's research is the most balanced one alongside Gastaldo's (2007) through giving equal importance to the motivations of the patrons and the sociological structure in the context of football bars. Weed's study would have been even more valuable, if it had focused more on gender and alcohol.

The next part of the chapter introduces research on alcohol, sociality and gender in public places without the connection to football media.

3.3 Alcohol, sociality and gender

Compared with the above research, studies on alcohol, sociality and gender seem to be more elaborated and reveal deep understanding of the role alcohol plays for individuals as well as its position within broader social structure. The following seven studies expose remarkable similarity between alcohol drinking and football media viewing in public places.

Campbell (2000) and McDonald and Sylvester (2013) emphasise alcohol's function for social structures and argue that alcohol drinking in public places serves identity negotiations and accumulations of social capital. Campbell analysed bars in rural New Zealand and documented, how liquor consumption along conversations enabled men to negotiate and establish a certain form of hegemonic masculinity. McDonald and Sylvester researched drinking functions of Japanese university sports clubs and stated that alcohol consumption thought students a certain form of social interaction which helped their integration into society. Both studies show a different perspective on alcohol consumption, which is otherwise framed as a relaxing and enjoyable activity. Their functionalistic approach, however, neglects participants' emotions, interpretations and appropriation/mastery of the given structure and culture.

In contrast, Szmigin et al. (2008) shed light on the personal motivations behind liquor consumption. They interviewed young men and women from three different areas in Britain about their practice of *binge drinking*.²⁴ Participants reported that drinking was part of their casual leisure activities, in order to escape from the stresses of school and work, and to relax and enjoy.²⁵ Alcohol served the function of mediating social interaction within friendship groups and creating a community atmosphere. Although Szmigin et al. noticed that "many participants ... expressed some unease when drunk young women acted the same way as drunk young men" (p. 365), the authors did not focus on gender or the social structure in more

²⁴ One can distinguish excessive alcohol consumption with the aim of entirely losing control called *binge drinking* and more moderate forms of drinking.

²⁵ Their motivations resembled those identified in the above studies about football consumption.

detail. As a result they overemphasise the psychological perspective and fail to highlight the social constraints.

Holloway, Valentine and Jayne (2009) avoid the same mistake through balancing individual and societal dimensions of alcohol consumption, although their main focus lies on gender and broader social structure. Their mixed-methods study investigated residents of a small city in England and illustrated several sex differences of alcohol consumers. For instance, more men consumed alcohol than women and men drank more in public places compared with women. Individual accounts, however, revealed complex relationships of different socio-demographic categories such as sex, age and religion, diverse motivations behind drinking and a relationship between various drinking places. Holloway, Valentine and Jayne, therefore, succeed in providing a contextual approach to alcohol consumption as well as accurate accounts of individual purposes and dimensions of social structures such as gender.

Gutmann's (1996) *thick description* (Geertz, 1973) of male drinking practices in Mexico City even more responds to the need of a contextual and complex research. His study successfully illustrated how men appropriated drinking to escape from every day and bond with other men, who they felt were more understanding than family. Gutmann also revealed how routine and excessive alcohol consumption could cross the line between social and anti-social drinking, which could result in violence and irresponsible behaviour towards work and family. He, furthermore, outlined traditional gender norms of liquor consumption, which excluded women from drinking in public places especially and expected them to provide social labour as well as take responsibility over family life. Intoxicated husbands entered into conflicts with their wives due to staying away from home and spending family money on alcohol. Similarly, male domestic violence was often a result of excessive drinking.

Gutmann (1996) also shed light on the transformation of gender roles with especially younger women consuming more alcohol, with men and women drinking together at home or at feasts and with many women drinking alcohol at home. Gutmann showed, moreover, the importance of drinking for social interaction and vice-versa. As a consequence, non-drinkers were often coerced into drinking during social events and drinkers searched for social events to be able to engage in social drinking. All in all, his study is a good example of how agents and structure, together with categories such as alcohol, sociality and gender, can be treated in an individual as well as interconnected way.

Lyons and Willott (2008) add to the discussion with their comprehensive study which comes to results similar as Gutmann (1996), although the study is more recent and from an entirely different context. Lyons and Willott interviewed men and women aged 20-29 years from Auckland, New Zealand and reveal a remarkably similar relationship between alcohol, sociality and gender compared with Gutmann. Their results, nevertheless, differ in three important ways: they show that younger men and women engage in public drinking in a more equal way than described by Gutmann, although gender norms discriminating against women still exist. Here, Lyons and Willott offer some more insights in this regard: For example, women are expected to be “in control and responsible ... ; [to be] unable to be legitimately drunk in public; [to be] dependent; [and to be] weak and vulnerable” (pp. 708-709). Moreover, women are associated with motherhood and a caring position, which is why female pleasurable, relaxing and excessive drinking is regarded as immoral. In addition, physical discrimination puts women, who lost control, at risk of being sexually assaulted.

Despite those forms of discrimination, Lyons and Willott (2008) introduce ways of female resistance. These entail forming communities of practice in which women feel safe enacting drinking behaviour which might not be tolerated broadly; combining traditionally masculine and feminine forms of drinking; and referring to discourses of equality, education and occupation to portray themselves as independent and deserving to seek pleasurable drinking.

The present chapter, finally, introduces Mfecane’s (2011) research on drinking in order to provide a South African example. Although his study was less comprehensive, he used an innovative idea to emphasise the deep social importance of alcohol for men. He interviewed men with HIV, who were taking medication and were thus strongly discouraged from consuming alcohol. Many of those men have been drinking considerable amounts of liquor before and some of them failed to stop drinking. On the contrary, they rather decided to compromise their HIV cure. Two of their most important reasons were that alcohol consumption was a central part of male sociality, so that non-drinkers were socially excluded and isolated. Additionally, masculine identity was linked to liquor consumption, so that abstinence could be linked to a loss of masculine identity and male pride.

In summary, the literature review reveals four major shortcomings, which the present study is going to address: first, with two exceptions hardly any study researched football media

viewing and gender in a contextual way; secondly, it would appear that there is a lack of research on football and alcohol, although both seem to be connected and seem to have similar roles for individuals and society; thirdly, male perspectives on and explanations of football media, alcohol and gender norms are missing; and finally, there are only few studies that balance research on individual motivations and societal structures in order to understand behaviour. The next chapter addresses the methodology.

4 Methodology

The following chapter discusses and justifies the choice of methods and their implementation. Methods are tools used to retrieve, structure, and analyse knowledge. Arguments concerning their choice and implementation can be defined as epistemology. The following epistemology is based on constructivism's axiology and ontology, which were introduced at the beginning of the theoretical chapter. The present chapter first addresses specific methodological criteria which differ from other research paradigms such as positivism. Thereafter, the choice of methods will be explained before each of the three methods (field observation, on-site interviews and off-site interviews) will be explicated concerning their implementation, such as choice of location, sampling and recruitment, among others. Finally, the chapter sheds light on the details of the further research process.

4.1 General methodological criteria

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005) criteria for constructivist research should be “grounded in concerns specific to the paradigm ... and apart from any concerns carried over from the positivist legacy. The criteria ... [should] instead [be] rooted in the axioms and assumptions of the constructivist paradigm” (p. 207).

Similarly, Lewis (2009) states that

constructivists and naturalists moved away from the strict scientific definitions of reliability and validity, arguing that by restricting qualitative research to these confining definitions, researchers were

unable to accurately report all the data they had collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Wolcott, 2005). (p. 4)

These authors argue for specific methodological criteria, which are deduced from constructivist assumptions and understanding of knowledge, in contrast to the more established positivist quality criteria, which centre on objectivity, validity and reliability. The main difference between positivism and constructivism is constructivism's assumption that knowledge is objective only within a particular social context for a particular group of individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). It is, therefore, located in between the subjective and objective. Moreover, as already stated in the theoretical chapter, social institutions are overlapping and groups of individuals take part in various contexts. Knowledge can, consequently, be conflictual.

Constructivism attempts to outbalance positivism's overreliance on objectivity with an emphasis on subjectivity. Its aim is to reach equilibrium between the individual and the social (Figure 3) – between the contextual and the general knowledge. This balance lies at the heart of the present methodology and characterises each quality criteria as well as the process of the present research. Criteria such as *flexibility*, *reflexivity* and *authenticity* will be introduced at a later stage, but for now the chapter provides general comments on the process of the research.

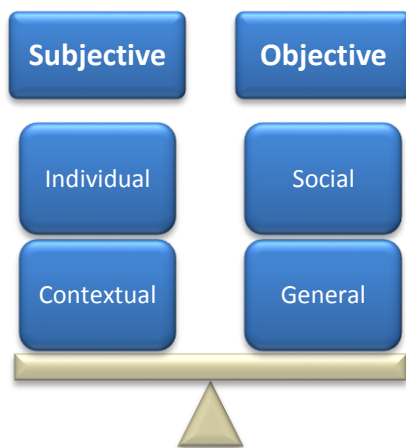


Figure 3 – Constructivism's balance between subjectivity and objectivity.

The above equilibrium can only be achieved through a process in which deductive knowledge leads to inductive knowledge, which leads to deductive knowledge and so forth (Figure 4). This process is well captured in the hermeneutic circle.

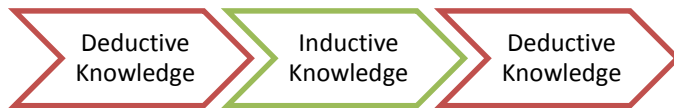


Figure 4 – The continuing process of deduction and induction.

The present thesis deduced theoretical knowledge to guide its field research and interviews. Thereafter, knowledge was induced from the research to adapt theoretical understanding. For example, the researcher assumed from relevant theory that football media viewing, sociality and gender were the central categories for understanding football media viewing in sports bars. Nonetheless, after a short period of time in the sports bar environment the researcher gathered that alcohol was another essential category for understanding the practice.²⁶ The researcher consequently adjusted the understanding about football media viewing in sports bars by integrating alcohol into the existing theory.

This approach adheres to constructivist criteria of reflexivity and flexibility (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Lewis, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Schröder, Drotner & Murray, 2003; Spitulnik, 2010). Reflexivity requires research to identify relevant categories and relationships in the field or during interviews, even if they contradict existing theoretical understanding. After that, reflexivity leads to flexibility, which implies that theory and methodology have to be adapted according to the new categories or relationships: “Operating with more open-ended analytical categories ... [research is] being able to allow a possible shift in the ontological status of observed or conjectured processes, categories, and even objects, as the study proceeds” (Spitulnik, 2010, p. 107). In the course of this chapter it will become apparent that the researcher was reflexive and flexible throughout research and adjusted theory, literature review and methodology frequently.

²⁶ The present chapter will reflect on the researcher’s experience of alcohol consumption during research in the further course.

Control is another central concept and will be discussed now. In the light of the criterion of reflexivity and the importance of inducing knowledge from social contexts, the researcher has to delegate some control to research participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Schröder, Drotner & Murray, 2003; Spitulnik, 2010). Ideally, research participants take part in the complete research process starting with defining the research interest up to the decision about the research presentation. The goal behind this approach is to understand as far as possible, “what is going on from the perspective of people’s lived experiences” (Spitulnik, 2010, p. 108). The more participants contribute, the more their perspective can be induced into research. Nonetheless, the researcher has to organise the overall process of induction based on theoretical knowledge, so that the research does not drift away into arbitrariness and triviality (Barker, 2003).

All in all, the above general methodological criteria entail (1) a balance between subjective and objective knowledge; (2) an ongoing process of deduction leading to induction and vice-versa; (3) constant reflexivity and flexibility; and (4) delegation of control over the research to participants. These criteria are reflected in all methodological decisions introduced below. Other general criteria will be introduced throughout the chapter. The next section addresses the choice of methods.

4.2 Choice of methods

The present research contains three methods: field observations, on-site interviews and off-site interviews. The following sub-chapter explains the choice of these methods based on constructivist epistemology.

To begin with, all three methods are qualitative and aimed at induction. Qualitative instruments are applied to explore social contexts as well as identify relevant categories and relationships between them (Luker, 2008). As the literature review revealed, it would appear that football media viewing in bars and gender are underexplored, especially in the South African context. Similarly, the role of football media viewing in the everyday lives of the participants is seldom examined. There is, consequently, a need for qualitative and inductive studies in this area.

Within the range of qualitative methods, ethnographic observations serve constructivism best for two reasons. First, they provide *thick descriptions* (Geertz, 1973). The researcher observes the practices both from a short distance through engaging with the participants and from a long distance through observing from afar. The short distance engagement provides the research with detailed information, which helps to uncover the deep meaning of categories for the participants and their relationships. In contrast, longer distance observations offer research a *wide lens* (Spitulnik, 2010) on the practice, in order to uncover objectives of the practice, relevant categories and the broader social structure. Long and short distance observations together adhere to constructivism's authenticity criterion, which can also be termed *credibility* or *truthfulness* (Lewis, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Authenticity is the equivalent to positivist's *internal validity* criterion and describes, how the induced knowledge is "related to the way others construct their social worlds" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 204) and "why what was being observed would have occurred naturally" (Lewis, 2009, p. 4). In order to be authentic, research has to provide deep and broad knowledge as well as various perspectives on the same practice, which ethnographic observations can realise best.

The second reason why field observations serve constructivism best are their subjective nature. As already stated, constructivism has to be subjective to some extent. During field observations the researcher can experience the practice and understand it through self-reflexion. In addition, the researcher can uncover personal biases best in order to reflect on them as well.²⁷

Similar to field observations, on-site interviews fit into constructivism's paradigm well. They "enable researchers to learn how people make sense of their worlds and how they interpret their own actions and circumstances" (Rakow, 2011, p. 417). The present research applied half-structured, personal interviews in the field, where the researcher also observed the practice. The interviews allowed participants to take some control and influence the direction of the conversation. The researcher, nevertheless, guided the interviews towards the general topics of football media viewing, sociality, gender and alcohol.

Compared with observations, half-structured, personal interviews take some control away from the participants and put them under greater influence of the researcher, so that they lose

²⁷ The subjective side of observations and self-reflexivity will be discussed at a later stage in the methodology chapter.

some authenticity. They were, nonetheless, conducted in the field, so that participants were in their natural environment. Moreover, interviews offer more directions than observations or casual conversations, so that the researcher can retrieve deeper and broader knowledge, in contrast to observations. In regard to the specific situation of the present research, on-site interviews complemented the observations in three ways. First, they provided additional information as the period of observations was considerably short, as will be explained later. Secondly, interviews were recorded and could be better analysed and reconstructed. Thirdly, interviews offered another perspective on the observed knowledge through *triangulation* (Lewis, 2009; Schrøder, Drotner & Murray, 2003) and added to its authenticity.

Finally, off-site, half-structured and personal interviews were conducted, in order to diversify the sample purposely and offer a wider range of perspectives on the practice. The interviews were also used to discuss the researcher's observations with the interview partners to include the participants into the process of interpretations and analyses, which contributes to authenticity. Moreover, the researcher conducted a limited number of on-site interviews due to the conditions on the field, so that off-site interviews added to the knowledge in general.

After the explanation of the choice of methods, the next section turns to each of the methods to describe their sampling and recruitment.

4.3 Sampling and recruitment

The following sub-chapter sheds light on the implementation of the observations, the on-site and the off-site interviews²⁸. The complete research period was between 8 January and 8 February 2014. The date of the period was chosen because of its practicality for the researcher. The length of the research was due to structural limitations of the thesis. In this period the researcher engaged in 14 field observations. Six observations took place in Bar 1²⁹ and seven observations were conducted in Bar 2. Although the reasons for the number of the observations were mainly structural limitations, the researcher nevertheless encountered *saturation* (Rakow, 2011) of research outcomes. After the third observation in Bar 2 the researcher felt more secure and was seldom surprised by the field, which were indications that

²⁸ The subsequent sub-chapter will provide more detailed accounts of the process of data collection.

²⁹ The names of the bars as well as all research participants are made anonymous to protect the identities of the research participants.

the research interest was met. Beside the number of visits, the researcher also chose particular times for the observations. Depending on the day of the week, the time of the day and particular football media events, the practice showed certain differences (see for example Adetunji, 2013; Eastman, 1997 and Gastaldo, 2007). Here, the researcher tried to observe the different situations.

The above bars were selected because of their close proximity to the researcher's home. The observations mostly finished after dawn and due to safety concerns the researcher had to order a cab, which would have been too costly if the bars were far away. The researcher, moreover, decided to observe two bars, in order to elicit specific characteristics of the practice through comparison of two different locations. Bar 1 and Bar 2 differed considerably in size and design. Bar 1 was a smaller venue with only little sunlight in contrast to bar 2, which was larger and had more television screens showing different programmes, more sunlight coming in, more seating arrangements further away from each other and several billiard tables. These were some of the characteristics which influenced football media viewing, sociality and gender,³⁰ which will be further dealt with in the results chapter.

All in all, both sports bars do not represent sports bars in general. The present research does not, however, aim at representation, but rather illustrates an authentic version of football media viewing in bars, which can be tested and modified in further research and applied to other contexts. This research aim follows the principles of ethnographic work, as Geertz (1973) explained that “the locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods...); they study *in* villages” (p. 22).

During the observations the researcher made field notes to remember his impressions afterwards. He observed various participants typing on their phones during the practice and simulated their behaviour, when he typed field notes on his phone. Only few field notes were, however, written, as the act of writing hampered the researcher's ability to observe and to participate in football media viewing (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). After his observations the researcher recorded them in the field diary to capture his experiences and feelings, in order to remember the observed practices and to trace his personal development (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). The researcher decided not to record observations on video or audio, as the recordings would have had to be overt and consented for ethical considerations (Wassenaar,

³⁰ The researcher has to limit the descriptions of the bars to keep them anonymous.

2006).³¹ The crowded bar setting with a steady influx of new people would, however, made it impossible to be given consent for such recordings, and it is probable that a fair number of participants, including the management, would have objected the recordings.

The second method contained on-site, personal and half-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted during the observations in the bar. Here, the researcher applied a purposive sample mainly aimed at self-protection. The researcher planned initially to interview a variety of patrons to provide a wide range of responses. On the second field day, however, the researcher had a troubling experience, one which made him change his approach and consider his own safety. Although he revealed his intentions during the recruitment and let his interview partner, Samuel,³² sign a research consent form which clearly stated the purpose of the interview, Samuel's intentions turned out to be ambiguous and his behaviour dangerous to the researcher. The following quote from the field notes and the three paragraphs describe and analyse the experience.

I was sitting at the bar and from time to time the South African national team almost scored, so that I exchanged words and emotions with people sitting around me. And Samuel was one of them. Sometimes I would look at him either to observe him or to figure out, if I could interview him. Eventually, after the game, he called me over. I took my beer and sat down at his table. After a few initial words I revealed my identity and asked him, if he was OK to give me an interview. His reactions were strange from the beginning. On the one hand he was complying, but on the other hand he always had to object. The problem was that I never understood his issues. First it seemed he wasn't comfortable with giving me an interview. Then he read the consent form very carefully and even offered to leave the bar and go to a more quite place for the recording. It seems to me that from the beginning he had unclear intentions. (field notes)

Samuel hardly responded to the researcher's questions and instead described his life as an activist. He portrayed himself as being passionate about his engagement, as being powerful, dangerous and as being very important for his community. Moreover, he invited the researcher to leave the bar and move to a quieter place. After the researcher turned down the request, Samuel repeatedly asked to meet at another date, and to exchange telephone numbers. The researcher remained polite and responded to the requests only vaguely, without accepting Samuel's offer, but not wanting to offend him. After some time, the researcher switched off the recorder, to signify the end of the interview. Samuel, nevertheless, kept inviting the

³¹ See the section on ethical issues further, below.

³² All names are made anonymous.

researcher to meet outside of the environment of the bar and asked where the researcher was staying. Thereafter Samuel explained that he had to catch a bus and asked the researcher to accompany him to the station. When the researcher turned this request down once again, stating that he had to keep researching the bar, Samuel became disappointed and angry, complaining that he offered a lot and expected the researcher to keep him company. At this point the researcher could not excuse himself politely once more and simply remained silent, ignoring Samuel's requests. Finally, after a discomfortingly long period of time, Samuel left the bar without saying goodbye and left the researcher feeling uneasy and alarmed.

It remains unclear as to why Samuel wanted to intensify the relationship beyond the context of an interview and what kind of relationship he hoped for. In any event, his intentions differed considerably from the researcher's and this was something he seemed unwilling to accept. Because the researcher knew virtually nothing about Samuel and because of Samuel's slightly intoxicated state and his intimidating nature, the researcher tried not to upset him and to forestall any confrontation. At the end of it all the researcher felt quite vulnerable as he was on his own and in an unknown environment together with intoxicated, socio-economically and culturally diverse patrons. Unfortunately, the experience described above was not an isolated one, as there were other occasions when research participants were persistent about intensifying the relationship for dubious reasons.

Palmer and Thompson (2010) report similar problems in their discussion of research in risky environments, especially in the context of alcohol and sports consumption. The general problem seems to be the mutual interpretation of intentions between researcher and participant. Many participants find it hard to understand the idea behind an interview in a bar and suspect ulterior motives on the part of the researcher. The present researcher consequently decided to sample research participants in consideration for his own safety. He chose participants who appeared not to be too intoxicated, who were part of a smaller group of people, and whose clothes and behaviour seemed acceptable for the researcher. Beside the safety aspect, the researcher sampled participants who did not seem to be part of a private gathering like couples or businesspeople. The above sampling technique reminds one of the non-representative character of the present research.

All-in-all, the researcher recorded four 20-40 minutes on-site interviews. This relatively small number of interviews is linked to the general characteristic of football media viewing in a

sports bar. As the results chapter will explain later, the practice resembles a game with particular rules. In the context of this game, participants behave in a certain manner they would hardly have outside the sports bar. By recording participants, however, the researcher “captured something which normally remains ‘on the spot’, and ‘exported’ it, so to speak, to other times and places” (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 34). In other words, the recording of participants was counter to their main aim of escaping to a different context with different rules and relaxing there. The records expose participants in a way they do not want to be seen outside the bar context. After several mistaken attempts to recruit participants, the researcher decided to record interviews mainly off-site. Before discussing these off-site interviews, the chapter will now explain the recruitment process of on-site interviews.

The general recruitment procedure was to approach a small group of participants, who were standing around a table or were sitting close to each other. The researcher then briefly introduced himself, explained that he was researching a sports bar and asked if he could join the group, if he bought them a round of alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks. Without exception each group allowed the researcher to sit with them, although some groups refused the offer of a drink. The researcher, thereafter, watched football together with the group and joined their conversations from time to time. More often than not, the researcher disrupted the group and became the focus of attention. Group members would ask the researcher personal questions, about his research, his occupation, and so forth. The participants would change the language of communication for him, as they would often talk in languages other than English. After a while, however, the group would relax and return to their normal behaviour and even switch back to their languages they were speaking originally.

In the course of the game viewing, new members would join the group or friends would pass by for a chat and the researcher would be introduced to others. Furthermore, members of the group would often buy a round of beer or other alcoholic beverages and invite – or rather coerce – the researcher to join them. During the course of this process the researcher would make contact and establish relationships with several groups and their friends. Sometimes different groups would also join in the discussions. These relationships would be the basis for the final recruitment. During each conversation the researcher would try to incorporate information about his role as a researcher and ask participants for their opinions. In addition, the researcher would make passing comments that he would sometime like to interview someone. Finally, when the atmosphere quietened a bit after the game and the group would

not consist of more than three members or there would be only one member left, the researcher would ask the participant(s), if they (he) wanted to give him a twenty minutes interview.

The above procedure was successful three times and failed five times. On four occasions participants voiced unease and asked to postpone the interview. On one occasion a participant who was already recorded asked afterwards if the recording could be deleted. The participants were male, the majority of the patrons being men. In order to now assess the above procedure, it is important to focus on the role of the researcher's subjectivity, alcohol and sociality.

In arguing for the important role of subjectivity Schrøder, Drotner and Murray (2003) state that "no media ethnographer entertains any ideas about being an objective, uninvolved, fly-on-the-wall observer" (p. 77). Similarly, Murphy (1999) advocates "more personalized and intimate ethnographic strategies" (p. 216) whereas Blommaert and Jie (2010) explain that "ethnographic work also involves active – very active – involvement from the ethnographer himself" (p. 10). At the beginning of the chapter it was stated that there are different reasons, why the researcher's subjectivity is important for constructivism. Within the context of the recruitment, as indicated above, subjectivity was important to establish a relationship with the research participants, before asking them to participate in the interview for two reasons. First, a good relationship is always important to convince a participant to share information for "ethnographic rapport refers to building up trust and friendship with respondents in exchange for information" (Bosch, in press). Secondly, relationships as part of sociality are essential in the analysed sports bars. Participants come to relax and enjoy the sociality – rational motives are difficult to find in sports bars. The researcher had to consequently frame the interviews as part of a favour in the context of a friendly relationship.

Alcohol was also part of the relationships with the participants (Donnelly, 2013; Palmer & Thompson, 2010). Buying and sharing alcohol signified commonality and friendship. It furthermore contributed to relaxation and group bonding. There are, however, serious ethical concerns regarding relationships between the researcher and the participants. Bosch (in press) reminds one of the "ulterior motive of an academic career underwritten by the fieldwork", so that

researchers need to think consciously about how to manage relationships with informants, particularly in terms of negotiating this line between informants and friends. While the relationship will always be tricky, they should remain aware of possible ethical and other implications as these relationships deepen over time.

The researcher took Bosch's advice serious and reminded participants of his ultimate motives, in order not to deceive them. Although moments of closeness and friendship were genuine and the researcher shared true stories, his main aim was to do research and he knew that he will not see the participants again once the research was over. It is consequently difficult to decide whether it was ethically permissible to utilise relationships and friendliness for the ulterior purposes of research. Of course, as regards the present research, its aim is to improve gender-relations and to contribute to a more equal society. It could, therefore, be argued that the relationships in the bar were created for a possible greater good of society.

The ethical question becomes even more important regarding the role of alcohol. Donnelly (2013) argues that intoxicated research participants might not understand the role of the researcher fully as well as the concept of the research consent. Although it was never the researcher's aim to lure participants into consenting to take part in the interviews, the purchase of alcohol for the participants might have taken away their ability to decide rationally whether they wanted to consent to an interview and what information they should have shared. These difficult questions can hardly be answered satisfactorily, except to note that many participants refused to be interviewed, thereby showing their awareness of the situation, despite them being intoxicated. Moreover, the written consent form, which the participants had to sign, and the recorder placed on the table were powerful reminders of the research situation.

One final observation regarding alcohol is that there are several arguments pro or con the researcher's drinking during field observations (Donnelly, 2013; Palmer & Thompson, 2010). Beside the above aspects, one major disadvantage is worsening coordination and concentration, which are necessary to be able to conduct research and to write into the research diary at home after the observation. Nevertheless, in order to participate in football media viewing in the bar alcohol consumption was essential. Therefore, the researcher decided to make a compromise and consume the most minimally possible amount by drinking slowly and refusing to participate in too many rounds by referring to his unfinished drink.

The final method used was off-site interviews which were conducted outside the bar. The researcher applied a purposive sampling which aimed at enhancing socio-demographic and cultural diversity. Six interviews were conducted which lasted 30 minutes to an hour. All interviewees were drawn from the researcher's personal networks, with a different degree of closeness. Half were women, in order to bring in female perspectives. Diversity was further enhanced because half the interviewees were foreigners who had lived in Cape Town for more than a year, and by the inclusion of different age groups (20s, 30s and 50s) and two non-drinkers.

The interviewees were recruited through personal communication. The researcher explained to all of them the general focus of his study and provided them with the consent form to sign. As all of the participants were either students or staff at a university, all the interviews were conducted either on campus or in close surroundings. All interviews were audio-recorded.

The next section looks at the research process after the recruitment and highlights the most important aspects.

4.4 Research process after recruitment

The following section addresses each of the steps after the recruitment of participants. It would be impossible to account for each detail, so it focuses on the most important aspects of the observation and interview processes, namely, the interpretation of the data, transcription, analysis, methodology, and results.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter the balance between subjectivity and objectivity is essential. This meant that the researcher had to “move between poles of strangeness and familiarity” (Schröder, Drotner & Murray, 2003, p. 58) during the field observations and the interviews: “to *participate* implies involvement, action and immersion in what is going on To *observe* implies distance, rest and reflection on what is going on” (Schröder, Drotner & Murray, 2003, p. 76).

On the one hand, the researcher embraced his subjectivity through his participation in the practice of football media viewing and through engaging in relationships with participants, as

described above. On the other hand, he distanced himself from the field through writing field notes and the field diary. Writing the field diary is also a form of self-reflexion, which brings in objectivity into the research (Lewis, 2009; Murphy, 1999). Although constructivism opposes foundational objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), some form of generalisation is important to prevent the research from containing mere intuition, fiction or arbitrariness. As a result, research had to “explore subjectivity – both the ethnographer’s and the research participants’ ... [and] recall the pleasures, difficulties, frustrations and contradictions that were central to the field of experience” (Murphy, 1999, pp. 216-217).

This form of self-reflexivity occurred when the researcher was writing the field diary and, later, analysed the initial emotions. For example, on the fourth field day he wrote:

I dislike the taste of alcohol, especially the taste of beer. I don’t like the bitter taste and I certainly don’t need the effects of it. I don’t need to be tipsy. I’m happy the way I am. ... I don’t need the waste of time. It is totally useless to just go to a place and watch sports all the time. Don’t I have more important things to do? I have my life to live, things to organize. ... Why would I pay the money and make the effort to watch sports in a bar? ... What is the fun in just sitting there and hanging out, while drinking alcohol. ... I just don’t feel like relaxing in a group of people doing nothing. If I meet people, we do things together. (field notes)

The above excerpt from the field notes reflects a certain *productive discomfort* (Murphy, 1999), which is a typical field experience. The researcher was frustrated and emotional. Beyond his personal feelings, which are irrelevant to the research, his frustration with the bar pointed to its main characteristics: relaxation and escape. As the researcher is personally concerned with organising his life and utilising each moment to the full, the nature of a sports bar contradicted his main life principles. This is the reason for his frustration. The above example, consequently, shows how self-reflexivity can overcome pure subjectivity and intuitive emotions and point towards broader *truths*.

More importantly, self-reflexivity helps to reveal a researcher’s biases. For example, at the beginning of the observations, the researcher noticed the clothes worn by some of the female bar patrons, their intoxicated state and their body contact to male patrons. His intuitive assumption was that they were interested in sexual intercourse or were sex workers. During the course of the research he encountered similar assumptions made by male patrons and had the opportunity to interview one of the female patrons. This started his personal self-reflection

process. He discovered his own sexism and how he sexually objectified female patrons. His initial and intuitive thinking, however, turned out to be one of the central forms of gender discrimination in football bars, which will be dealt with in the results section.

During the interview process the researcher had to constantly keep in mind the *meaning-making activities* (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) of the participants and the discursive application of the language (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). Interview partners always interpreted a specific purpose behind the interview and performed accordingly. Language was applied purposefully, in order to achieve certain goals. The researcher, therefore, always tried to clearly communicate his intentions and his expectations towards the interviewees. His questions reminded the participants of the particular themes he was interested in.

The researcher, moreover, tried to create a rapport during the interviews:

The researcher is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved. He or she forms a relationship with the interview, and that relationship is likely to be involving. ... The researcher is asking for a lot of openness from the interviewees; he or she is unlikely to get that openness by being closed and impersonal. (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 12)

The researcher similarly shared his views, his emotions and his relationship to football. Parts of the interviews emulated football talk in bars. The researcher, nevertheless, tried not to comment on key issues, unless his research partners brought the topics up or already commented on them. In other words, he was personally engaged during the interviews, but attempted not to influence the research partners regarding their opinions about the central categories. In order to share control over the research process, the researcher shared his feelings about some insights from the field with interviewees outside the bar and asked them to comment on them.

Generally, the interviews started with the least threatening and most open-ended questions (Luker, 2008). The researcher inquired about participants' general relationship with football and their experiences in different watching contexts. The aim was to make them comfortable and to give them the opportunity to name issues most relevant to them. In the course of the interview the researcher would ask more precise questions, in order to direct them towards his particular research interests. The final questions usually addressed most difficult topics about gender and alcohol.

In order to enhance the *dependability* (Lewis, 2009) – which is the constructivist pendant to reliability – the researcher repeated and rephrased certain important questions several times in the course of the interview. Another approach was to ask for examples or descriptions of certain topics and to check how authentic a certain response was or whether the interviewees tried to please the researcher.

Regarding ethical questions, the present chapter already addressed a few of these regarding the informed research consent and the recruitment process. In addition to these issues, the researcher did not push the participants to respond to issues whenever he noticed their resistance. Similarly, he tried not to address emotionally hurtful topics which could have caused emotional harm. During the recruitment process he did not exploit vulnerable members or those, who were not aware of his role as a researcher. He explained the nature of his research verbally and provided the consent form, which similarly explained his research. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time and could choose which – and how to – answer questions. They were, moreover, given the contact details of the research supervisor.

All the information about the participants and the bars which could lead to their identification was made anonymous, which meant that the researcher had to leave out essential information at times. In order to respect the participants, the researcher tried to include as many of their voices as possible and attempted not to take their responses out of context to support his position. In terms of beneficence, the researcher attempted to use the research to support gender equality in society. He also respected the research community by being most rigorous during the research process.

The transcription of the interviews focused mainly on the content and hardly included linguistic issues. Information was excluded whenever it could have led to the identification of the participants, or whenever it did not include but rather reflected their thinking process. Similarly, researcher's utterances were shortened to focus on their content mainly.

After the transcription the researcher applied qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) to analyse the field diary and the interviews. The sampling unit contained all transcribed and observed information. Contextual units were in the first instance the particular interviews or

the field days, but in the second instance information from other interviews, observations and theories was used. Finally, the main coding units were MAT's three parts: agent, cultural tool and mastery/appropriation (Wertsch, 1998), which were deduced. The sub-codes were half induced and half deduced and contained: football media viewing, sociality and alcohol. The sub-codes were a combination of theory and observations. Further sub-codes were mainly induced and contained sub-categories like gender ideology, sociability or identification among others. Finally, all three categories were related to each other for further abstraction purposes (Barker, 2003).

After this process of categorisation, the researcher adapted the theory, literature review and methodology. He paid particular attention to methodological issues in order to enhance *transferability* and dependability of research results (Lewis, 2009). Dependability was explained above and refers to a limited reliability of the results. A positivistic reliability is inconsistent with constructivism, as the subjectivity of researcher and participants are essential parts of the process. Transferability addresses a limited external validity, which means that research results can be utilised for further research. It is hardly probable that the particular expressions are going to be relevant, but certain categories and their relationships can be useful to get an entry into a similar context. Both transferability and dependability are achieved through documentation of the research process and the particular methodological dilemmas.

The relevant documentation has been discussed above and an explanation of the methods used has been given. What follows from this is an exposition of the results.

5 Results

The present chapter presents the research findings. It illustrates the practise of football media viewing in sports bars by looking at (1) the purposes behind the participation in the practice; (2) the tools participants apply during the practice; and (3) participants' mastery/appropriation of the practice (Figure 5).³³ The main emphasis lies on the tools, in order to shed light on the role of football media and the constitution of gender, which are of particular interest for the thesis. Purposes, tools and mastery/appropriation are deduced from theory. Further sub-categories are deduced and induced in part.

Purposes are divided into (1a) *relaxation*, (1b) *enjoyment*, and (1c) *acceptance*. Tools are divided into (2a) *football media*, (2b) *sociality*, and (2c) *alcohol*. Mastery/appropriation is not further separated. Finally, football media is divided into (2ai) *technicality*, (2aii) *identity* and (2aiii) *competition*; and sociality is divided into (2bi) *sociability*, (2bii) *gender*, and (2biii) *inclusivity*. After explaining the purposes and the tools, the chapter will illuminate the relationships between the three tools: football media, sociality and alcohol. After that, mastery/appropriation will be explained and some negative influences of the tools on the practice will be shed light on.

All in all, this section will reveal the practise of football media viewing in sports bars as a social game.³⁴ The rules are different to those of everyday life and are easy to learn. Those who comply with the rules win automatically and are rewarded with a positive feeling. In contrast, losers are usually penalised by being excluded from the practice. The game of football media viewing in sports bars simulates everyday life and provides positive feelings more easily for those who fit into the environment. The chapter will now illustrate the practice in more detail.

³³ Purposes, tools and mastery/appropriation relate to Wertsch's MAT's agents, tools and mastery/appropriation.

³⁴ This definition is related to concept of *play*, which is defined in the theoretical chapter.

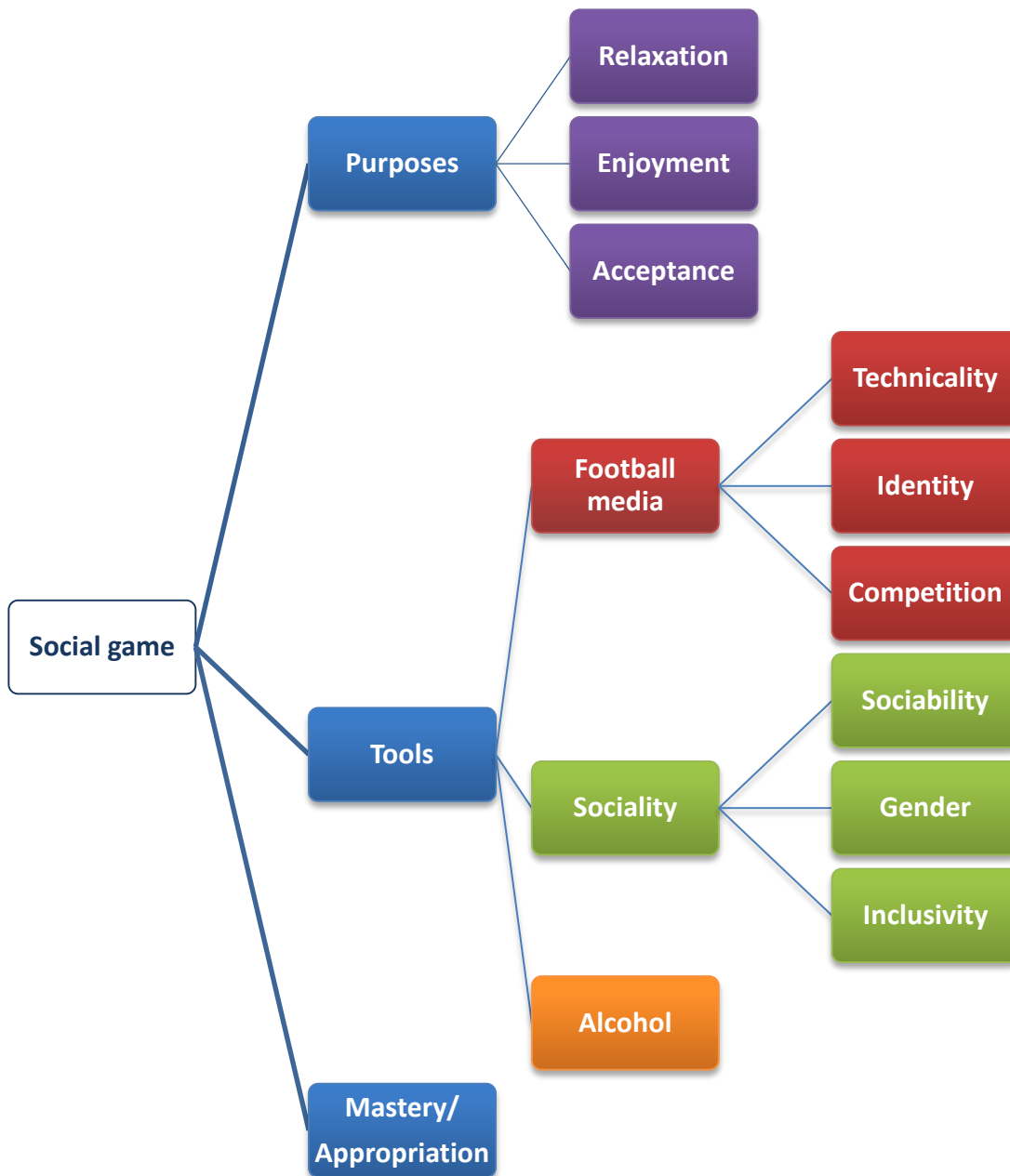


Figure 5 – The practice of football media viewing in sports bars divided into categories.

5.1 Purposes behind football media viewing in sports bars

Purposes are defined as the motivation to participate in the practice. The results show that the general motivation is to improve the emotional state. The general motivation can be divided in three sub-categories. The first sub-category of the motivation is relaxation.³⁵ It can be defined

³⁵ All categories and sub-categories are initially put into italics.

as a physical or mental escape from stressful situations. For example, Samuel³⁶ explained that he went to the sports bar in order to physically escape the stress from his everyday life related to work and family:

I just felt I needed some time to relax, because as an activist, me, working 24/7. I don't have clock card or anything where I drop in or drop out. Especially my house, it is like an advice office where I am staying. ... So people come to me whenever. ... So, I thought, let's go somewhere. I don't wanna go home, because that is going to be my father duties. So I jumped on a bus Nobody is bothering me [here]. (personal communication, 11 January 2014)³⁷

In contrast to Samuel, Katlego³⁸ describes the motivations of bar patrons to engage in football media viewing in his sports bar as a relaxation from mental stress: “[patrons come] for different reasons. First to relax. Second to ease down the stress from work and, if they are students, stress from the books” (personal communication, 22 January 2014). Similarly, Bashir³⁹ argues that watching football in a social context is a relaxing escape into a different reality (personal communication, 29 January 2014).

The second group of purposes behind the practice is enjoyment. Enjoyment is the equivalent of pleasure and fun, and can be defined as a feeling of happiness. For instance, George⁴⁰ explained that he would mostly enjoy watching football in the bar as compared with being on his own: “I don't think I would enjoy live streaming at my computer alone as much as I would watching it at a sports bar” (personal communication, 2 February 2014).

The third and final part of motivations behind the practice is acceptance. This term is used as a synonym for *personal appreciation* and can be defined as the validation of one of the participants' identities. Bashir describes the meaning of this sub-category:

[T]he pub is described as a place where you are always welcome and one is always happy to see you with the implication being even if they don't know you. [...] You are virtually guaranteed – not virtually

³⁶ Samuel was recruited on-site. He is a South African citizen in his 50s. The interview lasted for thirty minutes.

³⁷ All transcriptions contain the content of the interviews without paying attention to linguistic details. ‘..’ signifies a break of a few seconds. ‘[...]’ means an unfinished utterance, “[?]” stands for a part which was not possible to transcribe. The syntax was not altered.

³⁸ Katlego was recruited on-site. He is one of the bar managers of Bar 1. He is a South African citizen in his 40s. The interview lasted for thirty minutes.

³⁹ Bashir was recruited off-site as a friend of the researcher. He is a South African citizen in his early 20s. The interview lasted one hour.

⁴⁰ George was recruited off-site as a friend of the researcher. He is a Zimbabwean citizen in his 20s. The interview was conducted together with Jimmy at their shared flat and lasted one hour.

– you are guaranteed being accepted and someone is going to buy you a drink or you get involved in a game of darts or game of cards with people you don't know. (personal communication, 29 January 2014)

The above purposes explain, why the practice is defined as a social game: patrons aim to escape their everyday work and family life and choose to engage in a distant activity, which provides them with pleasurable emotions and the feeling of being accepted.

The next chapter addresses the tools the participants have to apply in order to gain the positive emotions.

5.2 Tools applied for football media viewing in sports bars

Three socio-cultural tools are most relevant for the practice.⁴¹ Within the practice football media, sociality and alcohol appear to be the most important tools. The present chapter proceeds by introducing each of the three sub-categories.

5.2.1 Football media as a tool

Football media can be defined as the football media content broadcasted by one of the televisions in the sports bars. It can be further divided into technicality, identity and competition. Technicality can be defined as any information about the practice of football playing. Football playing entails the management of football clubs, for example nominating national players for national teams, buying or selling football players for league clubs or building stadiums. Information about football playing also contains the strategy of a football team, its immediate performance and football rules.

For example, Nothando⁴² describes how patrons discuss the strategy of football teams:

⁴¹ As outlined in the theoretical chapter, Wertsch (1998) defines tools as objective representatives of the socio-cultural structure, which are applied by agents in the course of each practice. Usually, agents do not have the free choice among various tools, but are instead influenced by authorities or by routines to use certain objects. Tools can be physical or mental.

⁴² Nothando was recruited on-site, but gave the interview off-site. She is a South African citizen in the early 30s. The interview lasted forty minutes.

You know we are analysts. We analyse: No, no, no, the coach was not doing right. He was supposed to take out this. [...] [W]hen things are going wrong [...] you can talk about it with whoever is next to you: This is not on. You can even see this team is not going to win. [...] After few minutes you can see which direction it is taking. If they don't clear this, it is going to be a problem. (personal communication, 31 January 2014)

Similarly, Chimamanda⁴³ (personal communication, 3 February 2014) is interested in the technicality of football media. She is less interested in the management or strategy of the game, but rather enjoys the actual play.

The second way as to how football media can serve as a tool for the practice is the identity it provides. Identity can be defined as the perception of the self. One can identify with subjects or objects and relate one's emotional well-being to them. Football media viewers usually identify with football teams or football players and invest their emotions in them, so that the team's actions affect their emotional well-being. Sidney⁴⁴ describes his emotional relationship with a football league team, which has disappointed him with their performance frequently, so that he learned to keep his expectations low, to prevent himself from feeling bad:

I mean they have been doing badly from 2005, so I think I had enough time to adapt to the reality and not put my heart on the line, you know. I've kind of been with them for quite a long time to know how to react. [...] I don't want to say that I don't believe that they are winning, but the view that I get when they are winning I react more than when they are not winning. Usually I would say: Oh, they got back to not winning. But when they are winning, I say: Oh, now you are winning. (personal communication, 15 January 2014)

George (personal communication, 2 February 2014) explains that he and his former classmates started to support football teams because they identified with individual players, who were fellow citizens. Most of the football media viewers the researcher talked to identified themselves with football league teams from different countries and with their national team.

⁴³ Chimamanda was recruited off-site. The researcher knows her from a common university lecture. She is a Zambian citizen in her 20s. The interview lasted for thirty-five minutes.

⁴⁴ Sidney, a friend of the researcher, was recruited off-site. He is a Nigerian citizen in his 20s. Although he explained in the interview that he hardly watched football games in bars in South Africa, he frequently went to sports bars in Nigeria a few years ago.

The third way that football media serves as a tool for the practice is by providing competition between football teams. Competition can be defined as a football team's attempt to outperform other teams in a single game, in a tournament, or historically.

Several sports bar patrons, for example, told the researcher that they were most interested in the English Premier League (EPL), because it would have the strongest competition for the championship. At the time of the research four teams had equal opportunities to win the lead, which created a lot of excitement in the sports bars. This excitement became apparent when the researcher observed Arsenal F.C. and Liverpool F.C. playing against each other. Several factors came into play: Both teams were popular among the patrons; both teams had a similar number of points in the league and had the opportunity to win the championship; and both teams are long-term rivals with successful histories. The excitement and tension among the patrons got so high during the game in the sports bar that even the researcher found himself interrupting his writing of field notes in order not to miss a goal.

All in all, the three sub-categories of football media are technicality, identity and competition. Usually they interact, which increases the relaxation and enjoyment of the participants. The focus on technicality and the identification with football teams serves as an escape from everyday reality of work and family and helps patrons to relax. Identification with football teams creates a feeling of belonging and enhances the feeling of being accepted. Whenever a team that a patron identifies with wins a competition, the patron feels even more appreciated as a person. These are some of the ways that football media serve the social game of football media viewing in sports bars.

The following sub-chapter proceeds with sociality as the second tool for the researched practice.

5.2.2 Sociality as a tool

For the present purposes sociality can be defined as the social structure of the bar. It can be divided into sociability,⁴⁵ gender and inclusivity. Sociability (Simmel 1949) can be defined as a form of community, where the social emotional well-being is more important than

⁴⁵ Sociality and sociability are defined as different concepts.

individual problems and ulterior motives. Tsepo⁴⁶ describes a sense of community, when all patrons are supporting the South African national team (Bafana Bafana):

For instance, you see, when Bafana Bafana normally plays tournaments like your World Cup, your African Cup of Nations, your qualifiers and so on: there are times when fans are watching it in a way of trying to share. They team up. No, they are not going to win against us. It's normally influenced by the spirit of that kind. There are songs that we are normally singing like Shosholoza, which then unite all of us [...]. So that song has a historical basis of actually uniting all of us. (personal communication, 18 January 2014)

While patrons feel united through their common identification with the national football team, individual matters and ulterior motives are turned off. Similarly, the researcher felt sociability on his first field day, which was not related to football media viewing:

I've been treated really nicely. I was new when I came and people came towards me. Asking me out. Buying a drink for me. I feel they treated me like a friend. Even the cab driver was like a friend [...]. We mainly spoke about life, but never in a challenging way and more in a friendly, understanding way. Yeah, we all have our issues. We all have our problems. Let's drink on it. Let's forget it. Let's share the sorrow and let's think about something nice. That was my impression. I was on my own for 30 minutes maximum when they approached me. I was treated like a friend. (field notes)

In his experience sociability does not have to be linked to a common identification with a football team. It appears to be a general characteristic of the sports bar.

The second part of sociality as a tool for the practice of football media viewing in a sports bar is gender, which is particularly relevant for the thesis and will be illustrated in more detail. Gender can be defined with Butler (1990) as behaviour norms linked to sex. It is therefore important to first understand how a sex is perceived, and second to understand what behaviour is expected from it. Female patrons are predominantly perceived as either (1) sexual objects or (2) life partners (such as girlfriends), but hardly ever as friends who share the feeling of sociability.

Female patrons are perceived as sexual objects, when they visit the sports bar on their own. According to this thinking they are interested in sexual intercourse or physical contact and

⁴⁶ Tsepo was recruited on-site. He is a South African citizen in his late 20s. His interview lasted seventeen minutes.

invite men to approach them and to flirt with them. Men who believe in this gender norm perceive women as immoral. Samuel provides an example of this gender norm:

A place for a woman is supposed to be at a home. To be with the kids. Men go to the pub, to get away from that stress. I can take you into pubs in Khayelitsha. You will see exactly: Women you can find in pubs, the rural areas, they would be like. They wanna have a fuck. (personal communication, 11 January 2014)

Samuel frames the pub as a public place and the home as a domestic place. In his opinion women have to stay in the domestic place to provide domestic and emotional labour, whereas men can go to the public pub. Women who decide to go to the pub are interested in meeting men for sexual encounters.⁴⁷ Nothando also describes this gender norm and emphasises the objectification. It is important to note that Nothando does not believe in this norm and does not act accordingly, as will become clear at a later stage:

In our culture it is wrong for women to be in the bar. Initially, it is meant for men only [...]. And there was this element that those women who go in the bar, are those that [...] are not behaving well, not morally, if I may say [...]. And the other thing: the guy that you say would not let the woman talk, is because of some insecurities that you go with your woman in the bar and some man might take [...]. (personal communication, 31 January 2014)

Nothando (personal communication, 18 January 2014) explains that a pub has traditionally been a place for men, which is why women are believed to be approaching men, if they enter this place. Her last sentence illustrates female objectification, as, according to her, men believe that other men might take their partner/girlfriend, irrespective of her stance. Thabo⁴⁸ provides another example of the gender norm that women, in sports bars are sexual objects and are offering themselves to men:

Women are that kind of people who are more disciplined than men. And when we are talking about beer we are talking about an area where we just go to enjoy ourselves. Women are that kind of people who want to be displayed as someone being more focused, but not all of them of course. And that makes it minimal for most women to be in pubs, because they don't want to be regarded as people who are always in the pub. And you know when we see a woman always in the pub, how do we regard that

⁴⁷ Although Samuel mentions Khayelitsha, which is a partially informal settlement in the Cape Town city area, and although he also refers to rural areas, it remains unclear as to how this information relates to the other and how it is connected with his main argument.

⁴⁸ Thabo was recruited on-site together with Vuyo. He is a South African citizen in his 30s. The interview lasted for twenty minutes.

woman? We regard that woman as a slut, because she doesn't respect herself. A woman who is always in a pub, we tell you: That one, ah, is just a slut. So the image of the woman is being actually compromised, if she comes to the pub. (personal communication, 18 January 2014)

According to Thabo a pub is characterised by alcohol consumption, which supports relaxation and enjoyment, which can only be sought by men. In contrast, women should remain sober and disciplined, because undisciplined women engage in sexual encounters with strangers. In other words, according to Thabo, there is a constant female potential to engage in sexual encounters, which is only contained by discipline. Women who go to pubs decide to relax and thus seek sexual intercourse with men.

Chimamanda (personal communication, 3 February 2014) offers the next example for this gender norm, which she partially incorporates and partially resists. She describes her experience of going to the pub on her own with having a mixed feeling. On the one hand she does not want to be approached by men for sexual encounters or flirting. On the other, she believes that all men objectify women sexually, which means that if she is not approached by them she is not considered sexually appealing.

The above examples illustrate how women are perceived as sexual objects if they enter the bar on their own. Female patrons who accompany their partners or boyfriends are perceived differently. Although it may usually not be desirable to bring them along to bars, men nevertheless accept women in this role and do not perceive them as sexual objects or as being immoral. Vuyo⁴⁹ illustrates this thinking:

Women like to be taken out. So men must offer to take women out. She can be coming here, but she must come with her guy. [...] But if I [as a woman] come here alone it means that [?]. I'm looking for men, because men don't want me, so I'm hoping to be hooked up in the bar, because I can't find men. Because I know that there are lots of men in the bar. But women want to be taken out. [N]ot to come on her own, because you gonna start having: 'oh, she is lonely, or she is waiting to be taken. She is an easy woman, let me try to approach her. (personal communication, 18 January 2014)

Vuyo explains in the above excerpt that women are taken out by their partners or boyfriends. Women, who come on their own, do not have boyfriends and are willing to be approached by

⁴⁹ Vuyo was recruited on-site together with Thabo. He is a South African citizen in his 50s. His interview lasted for 20 minutes.

men. Similarly, Sidney gives an insight into his country's sports bar culture. Although it differs from the South African one to some extent, it has similar gender norms:

Like back home it is common for people to go to a pub in the company of girlfriends. [...] So the girls in there are not particularly football fans but it becomes a fun thing to do for them in the company of their boyfriends who are watching the game. [...] They would usually be in the company of a group of guys, but you might find them to be in a group on their own. What you would never find is one girl walking in a pub alone. (personal communication, 15 January 2014)

Sidney explains that men would usually bring women along to sports bars. Although female patrons would not engage in football media viewing, they would provide company. He then explains that while it might be acceptable for a female group to enter a bar, women might not enter the bar on their own. Similarly, Chimamanda shares her South African experiences with sports bars and comes to the same conclusion as Sidney:

But sports bar is a very, very intimidating place especially for walking in there by yourself. Maybe if you are walking with another woman or walking in there with your male companions it is fine. But if you are walking in there by yourself, it is very very tough. (personal communication, 3 February 2014)

George supports her argument by stating that women should not enter the bar without their male partners: "even if you go to a pub you should go in a company of your partner. Not alone, just like the man would just go there" (personal communication, 2 February 2014).

The chapter has thus introduced two parts of the predominant gender norm in sports bars. The first part states that women are sexual objects, if they come on their own, and are willing to be approached by men. The second part indicates that women are tolerated in sports bars if they accompany their partner or boyfriends. In either of those cases, female patrons are not considered to be friends sharing the same feeling of sociability. Jimmy⁵⁰, for example, wonders what commonality men and women might have:

Bars are for men. And women can venture to other things. Like we have been saying here, usually people would go to such places to socialize, to share emotions, if they are also watching football. So to bring a woman to such a gathering... What story, what commonality, what story would you be talking about? (personal communication, 2 February 2014)

⁵⁰ Jimmy was recruited off-site as George's friend. He is a Nigerian citizen in his late 20s. He was interviewed together with George at their shared flat. The interview lasted for an hour.

Similarly, Thabo finds that men should socialise among other men: “[o]ne thing that makes especially men more comfortable, because they find it very, very easy to be able to socialise with their closest friends, if the girlfriend socialises with her girlfriend in a bar” (personal communication, 18 January 2014). He later explains that he finds it easier to talk to other men in highly emotive situations during games. He can insult them in a joking way, without being taken seriously. In contrast, his wife would misunderstand and resent his insults. In addition, other interview participants add that women would prevent their partners or boyfriends from flirting with other women in bars, which is why men prefer to come to bars on their own (Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014; and Vuyo, personal communication, 18 January 2014).

All in all, the predominant gender norm during the practice is either that women who come on their own can be approached by men for the purposes of flirting or sexual intercourse, or they must be accompanied by their partners or boyfriends to the bar. In any case, men prefer to socialise among themselves and women are expected to stay away. There is, nevertheless, a competing gender norm, which was voiced by Nothando (personal communication, 31 January 2014) and Chimamanda (personal communication, 3 February 2014), although Chimamanda only partially appropriated this norm. They articulated the view that women are independent from male objectification and control and can have the same relationship to football, express this relationship in the same manner and can drink the same alcohol. This norm, however, appeared not to have been shared by others.

The chapter now moves from gender to inclusivity as the third type of the sociality tool, which is used for the practice. Inclusivity can be defined as accommodation of socio-economically and culturally diverse patrons. Although only few public places formally define the socio-economic status or culture of entrants, they have mostly informal rules regarding appearance and behaviour, which de-facto control for socio-economic status and culture. These rules are policed through social pressure by staff and patrons. Other limitations can be entry and consumer prices, geographical area and perceived safety among others. Sports bars, however, seem to be more inclusive than other places.

After the third day the researcher noted into his field diary that a

bar is a place, where you don't need to show manners. You can shout, you can wear anything. People won't really judge you. I think a bar acts like a refuge in a society where you have to play by the rules. It's like miniature wilderness. You get in. Nobody asks questions. You buy a drink. Nobody asks any questions. You sit down. And you just watch. If you don't want to talk to anybody, you don't have to. You are part of the group by virtue of being there. Nobody cares much. Your skin colour doesn't matter. Your age doesn't matter. Nothing matters much as long as you are a man (field notes)

The researcher observed that bar patrons can look different and behave differently. The observed diversity was linked to the variety of behaviour and apparent purposes of patrons. For example, some regulars seemed to focus on alcohol consumption and hardly paid attention to football or other patrons. Other patrons came just for a football game, did not converse with anybody, went to the bathroom at half time and left the bar immediately after the game was over. Further, among the patrons were couples and business partners (Katlego, personal communication, 22 January, 2014), and once the researcher observed a large group of freshman engaging in drinking games and chanting. Their actions fundamentally changed the whole bar environment.

The diverse behaviour and appearance was partly due to a minimal entry fee, which was normally a drink, although various patrons did not buy any drink at all.⁵¹ The other reason was a very informal and low- to- middle-range interior design, which did not indicate any higher social class. The situation also seemed more or less safe with security staff and bar managers looking after the place. Most of all, however, inclusivity was linked to a bar culture which was dominated by an acceptance of anyone as an unspoken rule, and can hardly be linked to any specific structure. This acceptance, however, was only limited to men, as the gender norms and the above excerpts note. In addition, time and money costs linked to transport, to drinks and the length of the games further limited the accessibility of the bars.

All in all, the present sub-chapter introduced three types of sociality as tools for the practice. These are sociability, gender and inclusivity. Gender was further divided into the predominant gender norms and an alternative norm. The predominant gender norm was divided into behaviour towards women as sexual objects or as life partners or girlfriends, but hardly ever as friends. The alternative norm reflected behaviour for women as being independent from objectification.

⁵¹ Due to alcohol consumption patrons had to be above eighteen years old.

Sociality serves the purposes of the practice in various ways. Sociability and inclusivity enhance the feeling of acceptance by patrons and help escape from everyday reality of work and family which can be linked to degradation and denial of one's personality. The specific gender norms indicate the particular rules of the social game, which are supposed to enhance male bonding and appreciation of (hegemonic) masculinity.⁵²

The next sub-chapter sheds light on alcohol as the last of the three tools.

5.2.3 Alcohol as a tool

Alcohol is the third main tool which is used by patrons during the practice. Alcohol can be defined as any alcoholic drink that can be purchased at the bar. It has biological and social functions. One of the biological functions refers to the intoxicating effect which relaxes the individual and supports intrinsic, natural behaviour (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014; George, personal communication, 2 February 2014; Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014). The social function refers to identification with alcohol and its role in interaction, which will be addressed further below.

In both cases various interview partners identified alcohol as central for sports bars: "people don't go to a pub without drinking" (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014); "in our culture, going to a bar means one thing: that you are going there to drink alcohol" (Buyiswa,⁵³ personal communication, 20 January, 2014); "the most important thing is that when we are watching the game, we are also having the drinks. ... Because when we drink we are also able to watch the game" (Thabo, personal communication, 18 January 2014)". Similarly, alcohol was essential for the researcher's field observations. As already explained in the methodology chapter, he used alcohol for recruitment and social bonding with other patrons.

⁵² Men might equally disregard sexism and feel not accepted because of their form of masculinity.

⁵³ Buyiswa was recruited off-site as a neighbour. She is a South African citizen in her 60s. The interview lasted thirty minutes.

All in all, alcohol can serve the practice directly by relaxing individuals and helping them to immerse into the different environment of a sports bar. The next sub-chapter addresses the relationship between the three main tools.

5.2.4 Relationship between football media, sociality and alcohol

Each tool plays a role for the overall practice. However, each tool similarly influences the other tools and enhances or hampers their functioning (Figure 6). The present sub-section focuses on the positive interrelationship between football media, sociality and alcohol.

Football media can support sociality in different ways. For example, football media can be a reason to meet with friends (Sidney, personal communication, 15 January 2014). After watching the game, the friends can still remain together and socialise. Football media can also help to form relationships (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014). Patrons can start a conversation via football talk as an ice-breaker and thereafter change the topic to something more personal.⁵⁴ Furthermore, football media can unite patrons, who support the same football team or who engage in the practice of teasing⁵⁵ (Katlego, personal communication, 22 January 2014). Football media can also enhance the feeling of national pride through identification with the national team (Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014). Finally, football media supports a form of male bonding (Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014), as it provides some men with a place where they can behave in a sexist manner.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The researcher used football talk to make contact with numerous patrons and to start a conversation with the interview partners.

⁵⁵ The concept of football teasing is explained in the theoretical chapter. It means that supporters of opposing teams mock each other in a joking manner, depending on the performance of their respective teams.

⁵⁶ Male bonding and sexism means discrimination and exclusion of women. The negative effect of football on sociality will be discussed below.

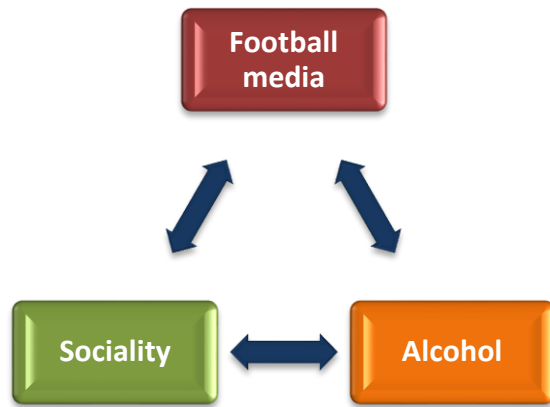


Figure 6 – The relationship between football media, sociality and alcohol.

Similarly, sociality also supports football media viewing. For example, patrons can discuss football’s technicalities and improve their knowledge (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014; Sidney, personal communication, 15 January 2014). Sociality also enhances viewer’s identification with their teams (Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014; George, personal communication, 2 February; Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014; Katlego, personal communication, 22 January 2014). Through common cheering, celebrating or grieving patrons feel that their relationship to their teams is validated. Sociality moreover supports the competition aspect through the common engagement in teasing, which also improves identification with teams (George, personal communication, 2 February; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014).

Alcohol and sociality can also have a supporting relationship. Drinking alcohol is for some a social ritual and offers an occasion to come together (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014). Others find that alcohol has a relaxing effect, removes the tension from a group of people and enhances social interaction especially among strangers (George, personal communication, 2 February). Alcohol can, equally, help to overcome shyness in order to engage in sociability (Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014). On the other hand, sociality can also support alcohol. Chimamanda (personal communication, 3 February 2014) explained that sociality can be used as an excuse to consume alcohol. The researcher encountered something similar in a conversation with a bar patron during the field research, who revealed that he enjoyed social drinking six times a week. Non-drinkers, however, would

cause him distress, as they reminded him of being an alcoholic. Social drinking, therefore, supported his alcohol consumption.

Moreover, football and alcohol can influence each other in a positive manner. Football enhances alcohol drinking, as there is a culture of consuming beer while watching a football game (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014; Thabo, personal communication, 18 January 2014; Vuyo, personal communication, 18 January 2014). Similarly, alcohol supports football media viewing through its relaxing function and helps viewers to immerse into the game, identify with the teams and cheer their teams to win the competition (George, personal communication, 2 February).

All together, football media, sociality and alcohol are interconnected and are all essential for the practice.⁵⁷ Various interview partners mentioned all three aspects and explained that football media viewing only worked in that combination (George, personal communication, 2 February; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014; Thabo, personal communication, 18 January 2014; Tsepo, personal communication, 18 January 2014; Vuyo, personal communication, 18 January 2014). The researcher also observed a fluid switchover between football viewing, broader discussions and drinking.

The next section illustrates the complicated relationship between each tool and between the tools and the general practice.

5.2.5 Negative influences of tools on football media viewing in sports bars

In order to avoid the trap of functionalism, the chapter will now describe the negative influences of tools on each other as well as on the practice altogether. Although the tools are interrelated, they keep some independence and do not serve an all-encompassing purpose.

To begin with, football media can have a negative effect on sociality, if patrons identify with their teams too far and take teasing too seriously. Fights can erupt between fans of opposing football teams, viewers can get very irritated over comments and become abusive. Sociality can likewise hamper football media viewing, if gender norms prevent female and male

⁵⁷ The chapter will later discuss exclusions from this rule.

patrons from enjoying football media in the bar. Inclusivity as part of sociality can also have a negative influence by making the bar appear as an unsafe environment and prevent patrons from entering the space.

In a similar way, alcohol can have a negative effect on sociality, if non-drinking football viewers stay away from bars, in order to avoid an environment with intoxicated patrons engaging in risky behaviour (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014; Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014). On the other hand, sociality can influence alcohol negatively, as in instances women are prevented from drinking based on gender norms. Alcohol drinking and football media can also have a negative interrelationship. For example, intoxicated patrons might not be able to consume football media content and follow the game. Similarly, football media viewing can hinder alcohol consumption, when viewers are too excited to focus on anything other than the football games and forget their drinks.

Beside each of the tool potentially impeding on the use of the other tools, tools can also have a directly negative influence on the practice. Football media viewing can negatively impact relaxation and enjoyment, if viewers identify with their teams too much (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014). In this case the practice stops being a social game, and becomes very serious. Patrons spend many hours in the bar and neglect work and family life. They spend a considerable amount of money on fan equipment, engage in sports betting and, most of all, invest a lot of emotions in the game. If their team loses, patrons feel a strong emotional pain and may even become physically ill.

Sociality can also hamper the practice. The above examples of gender discrimination illustrate how female patrons are prevented from relaxation, enjoyment and acceptance due to gender norms. Finally, alcohol can have equally negative effects through overindulgence and high levels of intoxication, which can prevent patrons from engaging in any behaviour and experience any positive feelings.

The next sub-chapter turns to mastery/appropriation as described in the third part of Wertsch's MAT (1998), and answers the question in respect of how patrons happen to use the above tools.

5.3 Mastery/appropriation of football media viewing in sports bars

Mastery/appropriation is the last component of the practice. Appropriation can be defined with Wertsch (1998) as the contextual identification with certain tools for the purpose of a certain practice. This identification is usually influenced by socialisation. Mastery can be defined as the cognitive or motoric learning to use certain tools for a certain practice. The present section will first explain appropriation and then move to mastery.

Three aspects of appropriation of the tools can be identified. The first aspect addresses the initial appropriation of the three main tools. Various interview partners reported how they learned to identify with these tools through socialisation at a young age. For example, Sidney (personal communication, 15 January 2014) identified with football media as a young boy due to his country's broad support of the national team, and through his father. Chimamanda (personal communication, 3 February 2014) was socialised into football media viewing by her older brother and then through her experiences in the common media room in her student residence. Bashir (personal communication, 29 January 2014) was socialised into football media viewing by his father and the neighbourhood at a young age.

Similarly, gender is cultural. Almost all interview partners referred to culture or religion when they explained gender (Buyiswa, personal communication, 20 January, 2014; Katlego, personal communication, 22 January 2014; Tsepo, personal communication, 18 January 2014; Thabo, personal communication, 18 January, 2014; Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014; George, personal communication, 2 February, 2014). Likewise, alcohol consumption and abstinence appear to be related to socialisation and culture (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014). Early socialisation into a certain use of cultural tools might be a reason why some male patrons feel at ease in the context of a football bar without knowing each other well.

In the event of some patrons appropriating tools differently, the bar context puts considerable pressure on them to conform to common forms of appropriation, which is the second aspect of appropriation. For example, several patrons admitted that they were not identifying themselves with football teams and disliked football, when the researcher had personal conversations with them. The same patrons would, nonetheless, usually engage in football

talk and cheer football teams when they were in a group. They felt the pressure to conform to common forms of identification and expressions of emotions.

Similarly, female patrons, who enter the bar on their own have to either endure male gazes or male patrons who would approach them for the purposes of flirting or sexual encounters (Bashir, personal communication, 29 January 2014; Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014; George, personal communication, 2 February; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014). Although female patrons would explain their purposes of viewing football media, men would not accept that behaviour and pressurise them to either engage in flirting or to leave the bar. Finally, conformity is equally expected with alcohol drinking. Patrons either voluntarily adapt their drinking behaviour (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014) or are pressured to take part in drinking (George, personal communication, 2 February), which the researcher experienced on his own. It is very difficult to escape conformity in the bar and can lead to isolation. In order to enact alternative behaviour, it is important to have a supporting group of patrons (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014).

The third aspect is that although the appropriation of certain tools might have its roots in broader culture or childhood socialisation, the particular use of the tools is linked to the bar context. For example, strong expression of emotions (Katlego, personal communication, 22 January 2014) or certain forms of teasing (Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014), violence (George, personal communication, 2 February; Jimmy, personal communication, 2 February 2014) or sexist behaviour (Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014.) occur only in the bar context and are not re-enacted outside the bar.

Mastery, in contrast, seemed almost irrelevant. Neither the interviewees nor the researcher experienced the need to demonstrate particular football knowledge, football identification or alcohol drinking abilities.⁵⁸ The researcher learned the basic rules for interaction on the scene very quickly and could easily apply his rudimentary football knowledge in conversations, which quickly changed direction to broader topics.

⁵⁸ One of the few exceptions are female patrons who are prompted to prove their football interest (Chimamanda, personal communication, 3 February 2014; Nothando, personal communication, 31 January 2014). However, demonstration of football knowledge or identification hardly contributes to their acceptance.

This form of mastery/appropriation is essential for the practice as a social game. Rules are easy to learn and result from broader culture and socialisation. This helps a large number of people to participate in the game. In the case of deviant patrons, the bar environment puts considerable pressure on viewers to conform or leave the game. The contextual appropriation of tools indicates the difference between the social game and everyday life, and helps to escape into a different world.

All in all, the present chapter defined the practice of football media viewing in sports bars as a social game and illustrated its purposes, tools and mastery/appropriation. It further divided each category into specific expressions and provided examples from observations and interviews. The chapter emphasised the different relationships between each of the categories and between the tools. These relationships can have positive or negative effects on the overall practice. The next chapter discusses this network and focuses specifically on its broader meaning for media and gender.

6 Discussion

This chapter outlines the advantages of the present study and its contribution to broader research and society in the fields of gender and media. It focuses on three particular benefits that the study offers: its holistic nature; the contextual approach; and its situational analysis. The holistic nature arises because of the focus on psychological and structural elements of the practice of viewing football games in sports bars. The contextual approach means that the thesis studied various related elements of the practice (football media, sociality and alcohol). The situational analysis entails a focus on the micro-context of the practice of the sports bar. These benefits contribute to a deeper and more authentic understanding of gender and media and enable constructive suggestions, how to improve society.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, gender is one of the main interests of the present study. The main goal is to understand discrimination against women and propose possible solutions. Due to the constructivist approach, the thesis dealt with the particular context of football media viewing in sports bars. The holistic nature of the present study helped to uncover the reasons for the male domination of football media viewing in sports bar. In contrast, the literature review showed that a considerable number of studies in the field

focused solely on the psychological dimensions of football viewing and gender, and argued that men and women have a different interest and engaged differently in sports consumption. The present research contributes to the field by explaining that women are prevented from participating in the practice through their gender by not being accepted as authentic football media viewers. The thesis, therefore, contributes to a sociological understanding of the differences of football media consumption.

The holistic nature of the thesis, also, contributed to sociological studies about football viewing and gender. These studies emphasised the gender discrimination of women, but failed to explain discrimination. The present research, however, illustrated gender discrimination from the perspective of male and female patrons. It revealed that some men do not perceive women as friends sharing sociability, but rather as sexual objects or patronised girlfriends or partners. Some male patrons require a sociable and homosocial atmosphere in order to relax.

The present thesis' contextual approach, furthermore, helped to uncover other structural elements which contribute to gender discrimination. In contrast to the majority of relevant literature, the present research revealed how alcohol consumption can contribute to relaxation, which can enhance further gender discrimination in the field of football consumption. Relaxed and intoxicated male patrons tend to reveal sexist attitudes. Finally, the situational analysis revealed the strong influence of social pressure on gender discrimination in sports bars. Other micro-contexts might influence different forms of discrimination. The thesis, therefore, contributed to what was largely de-contextualised research in the field that tends to make general claims about gender discrimination and football consumption.

These contributions to literature in the field of gender and football viewing allow the researcher to make a few constructive suggestions to enhance gender equality. The researcher observed in the particular context of football media viewing in sports bars that a larger sports bar with a lower density puts less pressure on patrons to conform to norms. Similarly, other activities like billiard playing or different media content, which are traditionally less connected to men, allow more female patrons to be in the bar environment. Consequently, women are accepted by men to consume liquor in a public place if such consumption is linked to activities other than football media viewing. If sports bar owners aim at a mixed clientele, or if they want to promote gender equality, they therefore have to allow a smaller density of male patrons inside the bar and to provide a wider variety of activities and media content.

Another suggestion to enhance gender equality in general is to improve female education and the status of their occupation.⁵⁹ Nothando (personal communication, 31 January 2014) and her friends perceived themselves to be independent women and stated that they were less influenced by the fact that they were sexually objectified and patronised. Finally, the most important suggestion is to counter broader socialisation which depicts women as sexual objects and dependent girlfriends or wives. Families and schools have to educate children and youth to perceive each other as friends beyond the sexual level. Children and youth have to perceive women to be equal with men.

The second main focus of the present thesis is media. The research focused on the influence of the media on public sociality in the particular context of football media viewing in sports bars. The holistic nature of the thesis meant that it investigated the purposes behind this form of media consumption, which turned out to be relaxation, enjoyment and acceptance. These purposes were only partly served by specific media content like replays of goals, dramatisation and focus on individual players. Broadcasting times, additional information about football technicalities provided through other media forms and a wide broadcasting were, however, more important to enhance sociability of football media consumption. In other words, the present thesis contributed to the field of media studies which is overemphasising the role of media content and its reception, instead of focusing on other media features.

The present thesis' contextual approach helped to uncover structural factors which support or hamper media influence on the users. For example, sociability and alcohol supported media's role for the patrons. Sociability enhanced identification with football teams, whereas moderate alcohol consumption supported the immersion into media content. Sociability and alcohol, however, also hampered media's influence. Gender norms prevented female patrons to consume football media in sports bars and sociable conversations diverted patrons' focus from media content. Heavy drinking also weakened media's influence, as intoxicated patrons could hardly recognise media content. The contextual approach, therefore, advanced media studies, a discipline which tends to focus mainly on media and neglects other structural factors which influence media's role in respect of the audience.

⁵⁹ This is not to say that female education is worse than the male one. It is rather implied that the better women are educated, the more independent they might feel. There are of course several other factors which might create a feeling of dependence.

Finally, the situational approach enabled the thesis to discover micro-contextual forms of appropriation – which might have been different elsewhere. For example, gender norms might not have hampered media use at home, or alcohol might have been less important elsewhere. Patrons applied tools in a specific way, which resulted in the particular practice. Other media studies, which tend to make general statements about media's role for its users, have neglected to take the specific micro-context into account, which itself can change media use and the use of other related tools considerably.

This holistic, contextual and situational approach enables the thesis to make suggestions about how to apply media as a tool for sociability. Media has the potential to unite viewers through common emotional engagement and media talk. Other media content such as fictional stories (Jenkins, 2006), live-broadcasts of mega-events (Dayan & Katz, 1994), comedy or news (see Keane, 2000, for a less rational interpretation of the public sphere; and Wasserman, 2010 for an example of, how tabloid news can create a community) have the potential to engage the consumers emotionally and enable discussions. This media content can have different channels such as television, print media, radio or online media (which can also be mobile). Similarly, the discussions can take place face-to-face, online (see Anderson, 1983, for the concept of *imagined communities*) or both (see Proulx & Shepatin, 2012, for the concept of a *second screen*). The important question is the access to media content, channels and discussion platforms, which can be often gendered (see Fahs & Gohr, 2012 for gendered online spaces). Gender norms, broadcasting times as well as the time and money to consume media, to access discussion platforms and to participate in them, all influence media's ability to enhance societal access to enjoyment, relaxation and acceptance through sociability.

The next chapter concludes the thesis and provides further questions for research.

7 Conclusion

The last chapter summarises the thesis and proposes, how future research can build on the present study. The thesis set out to explore the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. It applied Wertsch's (1998) MAT and researched (1) the purposes behind the practice, (2) the socio-cultural tools which were applied for the practice and (3) the way how participants identified with the tools and learned to apply them. Football media and gender

were defined as tools and the main research focus was to find out which role media and gender played for the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. The study also researched which other tools were applied and how they were related to each other.

Two sports bars and one football game in the stadium were observed during fourteen field days, four on-site interviews were conducted with bar patrons and six off-site interviews were conducted with general football viewers. Constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) was the overarching research paradigm and the researcher balanced the subjective and objective side of research to receive authentic results. At the end the researcher found that the practice appeared to be a social game: it followed its own rules which were easy to learn, and resulted in positive feelings. Those participants who were not playing by the rules were excluded from the game. The practice provided participants with positive feelings in an easier way than did engagement with the everyday reality of work and family.

The purposes behind participation in the practice were mainly relaxation, enjoyment and acceptance. In order to gain those positive feelings patrons applied in the main three tools, namely, (1) football media, (2) sociality and (3) alcohol. Whenever they applied football media, they (1a) focused on the technicalities of the game, (1b) identified with football teams, and (1c) were excited about the competition of different teams. When patrons applied sociality, they (2a) engaged in sociability, (2b) followed gender rules and (2c) were part of an inclusive atmosphere. According to the predominant gender norms, female patrons entering the bar alone were regarded as sexual objects for men and were regarded to be willing to be approached. Gender norms also stated that female patrons were not sexualised when they accompanied male patrons as wives or girlfriends. Female patrons, however, were not regarded as friends sharing the common feeling of sociability.

All in all, football media appeared important for the practice and contributed to these main purposes. The focus on technicalities helped patrons to distract and relax from everyday reality of work and life. Following technicalities also created enjoyment. Identification with football teams and the excitement about the competitions further contributed to distraction and relaxation, as well as a feeling of validation, if the favourite team won. Football media also contributed to the purposes of the practice by enhancing other tools: Football talk helped patrons to engage in sociability and football media provided an excuse for patrons to consume alcohol.

The role of football media on the practice was, moreover, enhanced through sociability, which supported the feeling of identification and through alcohol, which helped to immerse in the games. Football media had, nevertheless, also negative effects: extended focus on technicality could hamper sociability, cause disputes and lessen relaxation and acceptance. Excessive identification with football teams could also cause stress. A strong identification with teams and exaggerated involvement in competitions could result in conflicts with other patrons.

Gender was similarly implicated into a complex network of tools and purposes. On the one hand, gender had a negative impact on the purposes of football media viewing in bars, as it denied acceptance to women. It also hampered other tools such as inclusivity. On the other hand, gender contributed to the relaxation of many men, who felt more at ease in male company. Other tools, such as football media and alcohol, supported gender norms, as they were equally connected to male use. Patrons had learned to identify with the above tools when they were children or youth as they were socialised by the family or other institutions. The specific identification with the above tools occurred, nevertheless, in the bar environment. Deviant patrons were immediately pressurised to conform to common behaviour.

In summary, the above results provide an authentic account of the practice of football media viewing in sports bars. The holistic approach helps to understand the role of media and gender for the practice. The contextual analysis reveals how media and gender are connected and related to other tools, which can both enhance and hamper their functioning at the same time. The situational exploration displays that the practice and the use of media and gender are related to broader social culture, but find their particular expression only in the bar environment.

The advantages of the present research are, consequently, a broad and specific analysis. Further studies can engage in more detailed analysis of purposes, tools and their appropriation. For example, it is important to gain more understanding about deviant bar patrons, their media use and changes of culture in football bars. The present research came across several patrons who did not conform to all norms: Nothando (personal communication, 31 January 2014) was female and visited the bar with her female friends irrespective of gender norms; Bashir (personal communication, 29 January 2014) and Jimmy (personal communication, 2 February 2014) were non-drinkers and managed to resist the social pressure

of alcohol consumption; and various patrons were not interested in football media and still engaged in football media viewing. On the other hand, some patrons seemed to accept forms of diversity. For example, Tsepo (personal communication, 18 January 2014) and Katlego (personal communication, 22 January 2014) explained that their culture forbade female drinking, but that they would respect democracy, freedom of choice and diversity of cultures. It is, therefore, worthy to explore deviance in situations of high social pressure and media's role in it.

Another interesting question is how football accompanies patrons beyond the bar environment. In order to participate in football talk it is likely that some patrons read football news, which is available in print, radio and (mobile) online media. Beyond football news one can engage in football games and participate in football discussions on news portals, social networks or social media. It is, therefore, interesting to establish what role football media plays in the everyday reality of football media viewers beyond the bar environment.

Finally, the researcher encountered a complex concept of sociability. Some patrons met only in the bar, but others knew each other beyond the bar environment as working colleagues or friends. The researcher was, equally, invited to meet patrons outside the bar environment several times, for personal meetings, to join informal gatherings, to go dancing and once a patron invited him to even meet his daughter. A valuable question to ask is which role sports bars and football media can play for patrons' relationships beyond the sports bar environment.

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