PARTNERSHIP WORKING FOR THE PROMOTION OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: AN INVESTIGATION INTO COMMUNITY SPORTS NETWORKS IN ENGLAND

COLIN BAKER

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

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Abstract

Background:
Low participation in sport and physical activity pose a continuing public health challenge. In response, partnership approaches have commonly been employed in community public health interventions. However, evidence concerning sport and physical activity partnerships remains underdeveloped.

Aim and methods:
The aim of the research was to investigate the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of community stakeholders participating in Community Sports Networks (CSNs) in England. A mixed methods research design was adopted. The quantitative component consisted of a sample of 171 CSN members from across England. The qualitative component consisted of a sample of 23 key informants from a single county in the South West of England. A synthesised grounded theory approach was used to integrate data. This involved:

1. Analysis of survey responses.
2. Analysis of interview transcripts.
3. Analysis of additional data including notes from CSN meetings and secondary documents.

In addition, inferential statistical analyses were conducted on the quantitative data to assess the contributions from sets of predictor variables on the value of binary outcome variables.

The results showed:

1. Participation in CSNs could be explained by a conceptual model which located 'searching for value' as the core category. Four sub-categories of notionally endorsing, speculating, scrutinising, and embedding helped to explain the participation process.
2. Perceived costs (OR = 0.89, 95% CI 0.82 to 0.94, $P < 0.05$) were more important than perceived benefits (OR = 1.05, 95% CI 0.98 to 1.14, $P > 0.05$) for predicting sense of satisfaction. Perceived costs (OR = 0.83, 95% CI 0.74 to 0.94, $P < 0.05$) and communication (OR = 0.83, 95% CI 0.67 to 0.81, $P < 0.05$) were strong predictors of sense of ownership.
3. Perceived benefits may have to be at least twice the level of perceived costs for a favourable cost-benefit ratio.

Conclusions:
Factors facilitating the creation of value promote stakeholder participation in CSN activities. However, the participation process is subject to a range of challenges which require constant attention.

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Book chapters

Crone, D. and Baker, C. (2009). Physical Activity Interventions in the Community. In: Dugdill, L., Crone, D. and Murphy, R. (eds). *Physical activity and Health Promotion Evidence Based Approaches to Practice*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Conference presentations

Baker, C., Crone, D. & El Ansari, W. (2008). Poster presentation: *Community sports networks*. Longleat: Sport England South West Regional Conference, February 13th - 14th.

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List of abbreviations

CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CSN	Community Sports Network
CSPAN	Community Sport and Physical Activity Networks (local derivative of a CSN)
CSPAP	County Sport and Physical Activity Partnership
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HI	High Involvement
HIHS	High Involvement, High satisfaction
HILS	High Involvement, Low satisfaction
HS	High satisfaction
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LI	Low involvement
LIHS	Low Involvement, High Satisfaction
LILS	Low Involvement, Low Satisfaction
LoI	Level of Involvement
LS	Low Satisfaction
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NGB	National Governing Body
NHS	National Health Service
NI8	National Indicator 8
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
OR	Odds ratio (*Exp. β*)
RDT	Resource Dependency Theory
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SHT	Stakeholder Theory
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

List of definitions

Benefits	The advantages or positive effects of participation
Costs	The disadvantages or negative effects of participation
Main components	Core constructs employed to measure stakeholder perceptions
Network member	An individual without a specific executive role within CSN processes
Core group member	An individual with a specific executive role within CSN processes
Network Chair	An individual with a principal role of authority and accountability
Stakeholder	An individual or organisation with a legitimate interest, contractual obligation, or ethical motivation for participation in CSNs. A stakeholder may be defined as a CSN member (of any type) when participating in CSN activities.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0   The problem

The state of the nation's health is an increasing preoccupation for policy makers. The costs of treating coronary heart disease and conditions associated with physical inactivity including obesity and poor mental health are in excess of £10 million per year (Department of Health, 2004a). Although physical activity is recognised as a fundamental means of improving health (Churilla and Zoeller, 2008; World Health Organisation, 2006), a large proportion of the UK population are failing to meet recommended levels of physical activity (Department of Health, 2009a). As such, physical activity promotion has become a pervasive feature of UK health policy and is recommended as a principal means of securing the healthy growth and development of children (NICE, 2009), and for maintaining general population health (Department of Health, 2005a).

The physical activity agenda incorporates a broad spectrum of activities completed in different settings by a range of people. These include activities completed as part of daily living, those undertaken as active recreation such as active play and dance, and those completed as a structured and competitive sporting activity (Department of Health, 2009b). Whilst physical activity presents an inherently useful means of improving health (Department of Health, 2009c), it is acknowledged that it is easier for some people to make healthy lifestyle choices based on the environments in which they live and the lifestyles which they lead (Department of Health, 2004b). On this basis it has been recommended that interventions to improve physical activity participation take place in a variety of settings (NICE, 2006). Hence, it is crucial that a range of actors including government

departments, industry, the media, and the voluntary and community sectors work together to ensure that policy is delivered through the most effective means possible (Department of Health, 2004b).

Recent Government policy has polarised the physical activity spectrum by distinguishing between general physical activity and the pursuit of pure sporting outcomes. Here, the Labour administration preceding the incumbent Coalition government implemented a strategic framework that established specific pathways through which sports participation and national sporting success were promoted (Sport England, 2008a). The subsequent shift to the sport-for-sport's-sake agenda effectively eschewed the wider health benefits of physical activity in favour of focusing on the specific aims of sporting success and national prestige in the run up to the 2012 London Olympic Games and beyond (Sport England, 2008b). This, essentially, represents a departure from previous sport-centred strategy which had blurred the distinction between sporting and health-based outcomes (DCMS, 2002), electing instead to promote sport as a specific and separate governmental objective.

Despite the delineation of sport and health-based outcomes it could be argued that the perceived symbiotic relationship between elite sporting success and more general physical activity participation highlighted in Game Plan (DCMS 2002; Houlihan, 2005), remains a pervasive feature of contemporary policy. For example, it is projected that sporting organisations, such as National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs), will engage with a variety of local partners including local authorities in order to support the development of both sporting and physical activity opportunities (Sport England, 2008b). What is different, however, is that the sporting element is likely to take greater precedence in the lead up to the London Olympic Games in 2012. Furthermore, cost-saving measures proposed as part

of the Coalition government's attempts to reduce public spending are likely to lead to structural changes within sport and health. As recent developments demonstrate, departmental mergers have been proposed on the basis that they will enhance frontline services in sport (Robertson, 2010) and health (Department of Health, 2010) whilst reducing costs and increasing efficiency. However, whilst these changes may herald significant restructuring and changes in funding one could argue that they are unlikely to reduce the long standing commitment to sport and physical activity as mutually beneficial priorities. Indeed, the sport and recreation sector is being increasingly used as a setting for health promotion (Casey *et al.*, 2007). What remains unclear is whether sport, as a traditionally divisive aspect of society (Jarvie, 2006; Roche, 2007), can be reconciled with a wider public health agenda within a period of severe austerity.

Historically, New Labour had endorsed sport and physical activity as a principal means of addressing public health issues, for example obesity, in addition to broader social problems including crime and social exclusion (DCMS, 2002). This approach was married to a public health discourse that extolled the virtues of individual responsibility and community ownership (*cf*: Department of Health, 2004b). This was part of a broader political modernisation agenda that sought to delegate increased power to sub-national levels (Harrison, 2006), and which emphasised the public's role in policy making processes (Department of Health, 2000). In line with this, partnership working was promoted as a principal means of engaging a wide variety of agencies and individuals necessary to tackle complex health issues (Department of Health, 2004b). More recently, the Coalition Government has reaffirmed partnership working as a principal mechanism through which to deliver services (Department of Health, 2010). Problematically however, it is still not generally well understood how to translate the partnership mantra, replete with references

to community participation and the joining up of public agencies, into practical reality (Asthana, 2002; Halliday *et al.*, 2004). Indeed, it is argued that whilst public involvement may yield more inclusive and empowering opportunities it often escapes critical investigation regarding the potential down-sides (Bunton, 2008). In addition, although evidence suggests that the reality of community participation in local health initiatives is often more complex than is first anticipated (Ritchie *et al.*, 2004), partnership continues to be pursued as a principal means of enacting strategy at the local level.

In seeking to undertake a critical investigation of partnerships in community-based health promotion strategies this research proposes to identify key factors and processes that characterise partnership working within the context of community sport and physical activity. In doing so it seeks to understand the implications of these factors for stakeholder participation. From an academic perspective it seeks to add to evidence concerning partnership working developed in other health related environments and to establish new data within the field of sport and physical activity. From a professional perspective, this research seeks to illustrate factors affecting those involved in partnership working thus providing evidence which allows professional and non-professional community stakeholders to better understand the processes and patterns of activity within local settings.

In order to understand partnerships in the context of sport and physical activity it is pertinent to comprehend the place of sport and physical activity within the broader field of health.

As such, the remainder of the chapter contextualises partnership working within sport, physical activity and the wider health agenda. Firstly, the relationship between physical activity and health is explored with reference to present challenges and recommendations. Secondly, attention is given to modern perspectives of public health that emphasise broader determinants of health. The third section of the chapter explores the significance of sport and physical activity and introduces community level partnerships that are promoted as mechanisms with which to develop local opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary and introduces the research questions. The structure of the thesis is presented in order to orientate the reader to its component parts.

1.1   Physical activity and health: continuing challenges

The World Health Organisation (2006) recognises that physical activity[1] provides a fundamental means of improving physical and mental health status. Physical activity plays a significant role in reducing risk factors for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, overweight and obesity and high levels of low density lipoproteins (World Health Organisation, 2007). Furthermore, people who are physically active are less likely than sedentary individuals to develop health problems (Blair *et al.*, 2001). Such are the potential benefits of physical activity it has been suggested that if a 'medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a 'wonder drug' or 'miracle cure' (Department of Health, 2009c: p21). Despite these positive effects physical inactivity continues to present a

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[1] Physical activity is any voluntary bodily movement or action that results in energy expenditure (Caspersen *et al.*, 1985). Evidence shows that regular leisure-time physical activity for example, walking (Wannamathee and Shaper, 2001) is associated with reduced mortality even after genetic and other factors are accounted for (Hardman and Stensel, 2003; Kujala *et al.*, 1998; Lee and Skerrett, 2001). Such activity helps prevent against obesity, the risk of developing coronary heart disease, and improves psychological well being (Department of Health, 2004b). In addition it can provide an effective treatment for a range of mental health problems including depression and schizophrenia (Department of Health, 2004a; Faulkner and Biddle, 2001; Paluska and Schwenk, 2000).

major public health challenge in the developed world with considerable economic ramifications (Department of Health, 2004a; 2004b).

Physical activity recommendations for general public health proposed by the Chief Medical Officer (Department of Health, 2004c: piii) propose 'a total of at least 30 minutes a day of at least moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week.' In addition, guidelines for general health recommend 'a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (including but not limited to sport) per day for adults and 60 minutes for children' (Commission of the European Communities, 2007), and for obesity prevention it is advised that adults should undertake 45-60 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity each day (Wolf and Woodworth, 2009). Despite these recommendations evidence indicates that between 1993 and 2007 the proportion of adults with a normal BMI (18.5 to 25 kg/m^2) decreased from 41% to 34% among men and from 49% to 42% among women (The Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2009). Increased body fatness is associated with increased risk of experiencing numerous medical conditions including type-2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, coronary artery disease and stroke (Kopelman, 2007). Evidence also suggests that the increase in overweight and obesity in the UK population shows little sign of abating. Government predictions suggest that obesity levels will continue to rise so that by 2025 almost 50% of men and in excess of 30% of women will be classified obese. Furthermore, the same estimations indicate that 14% of young people (< 20 years old) will be obese (The Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2009).

1.2   Responding to public health challenges: ecological approaches

Beyond the UK's borders the increasing complexity of the global public health situation is challenging public health practitioners to develop programmes that focus on the broader

effects of socioeconomic and environmental circumstances on health (Beaglehole *et al.*, 2004). Contemporary public health strategies emphasise multiple determinants of health rooted in aspects of physical and psychological health in addition to social, political, and economic factors (Nutbeam, 1998; Raphael, 2000; Stokols, 1992). These augment individual and community responsibility for health (Bracht, 1990) and emphasise the reciprocal relationship between individual behaviour and the environment (Green and Tones, 2010). Here, the causes and conditions of individual behaviour have a complex and deterministic effect on each other (Best *et al.*, 2003; Butler, 2001; Commers *et al.*, 2007; Green *et al.*, 1996). The emphasis on the broader determinants of health focuses attention on wider questions of equity in health and the existence of systematic differences in health outcomes within society (Raphael, 2000). This has resulted in the reorientation of public health practices away from those focused purely on communicable disease (Beaglehole *et al.*, 2004).

However, the focus on multiple determinants of health increases the number and complexity of factors that both influence and that are influenced by health status. Nutbeam (1998: p351) usefully highlights this complexity stating that health promotion represents a 'comprehensive social and political process' that is directed at developing individual and community skills. These allow people to make changes that alleviate the impact of social and environmental conditions. In this sense, argues Bell (2003), health promotion is essentially about the rejection of a biomedical reductionist model of health instead drawing on family, culture, and the social environment. Thus, health promotion is less to do with disease prevention than 'efforts to enhance positive health and reduce the risk of ill-health, through the overlapping spheres of health education, prevention, and health protection' (Downie *et al.*, 1996: p60). Given this overlap, multidisciplinary team

approaches have been recommended as key elements in successful health-promoting strategies (Sparling *et al.*, 2000).

The ecological perspective increases the potential to understand behaviour by conceptualising multiple levels of influence at the organisational, community, public policy, individual and interpersonal level (Kegler *et al.*, 2002). This, one could argue, facilitates the development of more meaningful and effective strategies such as those based around physical activity (Wanless, 2004). However, the shift in focus to social and environmental contexts of behaviours has not necessarily been followed by the emergence of new approaches to the evaluation of health promotion programmes (Porr *et al.*, 2008). Community initiatives are often influenced by a medical rather than social model of health (Carr *et al.*, 2008), and academics have struggled to agree over what constitutes acceptable evidence of intervention success (Millward *et al.*, 2003). Despite this, public health initiatives have increasingly employed community-based approaches to address health and social problems (Department of Health, 2004a; Norton *et al.*, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2005). Furthermore, it is apparent that the community has become the principal arena in which the contemporary health promotion discourse is played out. It is recognised that this approach may help to develop 'culturally sensitive' initiatives that build both individual and organisational capacity to affect behaviour and the environment in which it takes place (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002: p162).

1.3   Partnerships, sport and physical activity

With the potential to address multiple domains partnerships provide promising strategies for dealing with complex public health issues (Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Wandersman *et al.*, 1996). Through increased access to resources such as personal and organisational skills

communities and individuals are able to gain greater control over decisions that affect their health (Nutbeam, 1998). As such, partnerships can maximise the scope of interventions targeted at improving community health (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). Consequently, partnerships have played an increasing role in public policy areas including healthcare (Department of Health, 2000a), social exclusion (Department of Health, 2006a), and public service delivery (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2001). Historically, this has been underpinned by a party-political ethos which has endorsed partnership working between service providers and users as a principal mechanism for delivering effectiveness and responsiveness in public services (Cabinet Office, 1999; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006a; Department of Health, 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2004b; 2006b; NICE, 2006). Within health specifically, partnerships have been seen as vehicles for engaging communities in decision making processes at the local level in order to encourage greater individual responsibility for health and social change as part of a multi-disciplinary approach (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007a; 2008a; Department of Health, 2004b; 2004c; 2005b; 2008).

Community-level partnerships of this type have been identified as mechanisms that enable stakeholders to mobilise in order to collectively address complex health issues (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008), empower individuals for social and political action (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001), increase social capital and trust (Jones and Burgess, 2005; Miller and Ahmad, 2000), and address issues of social exclusion (Collins, 2008; Jarvie, 2006). This is because the engagement of a broad variety of community actors means that partnerships are better able to respond to community health needs on a number of levels (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000) and ensures accountability for the use of resources (South *et al.*, 2005). In this respect, the significance of partnership has been reinforced by notions of success that are

premised on effective collaboration between organisations and agencies responsible for implementing community strategies (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007a; 2007b). The problem with this is that defining effectiveness within the complexity is difficult and . Despite this, recent proposals in the field of health would seem to confirm this as a fundamental component of contemporary policy (Department of Health, 2010).

As a key partner in the development and implementation of community initiatives for physical activity and sport, Sport England, as part of a broad delivery system that seeks to address increasing organisational and administrative fragmentation in the sporting landscape (Green, 2004), has overseen the creation of Community Sport Networks (CSNs) (Sport England, 2004; 2007a;2007b). With a commitment to partnership working these networks operate at the local level to facilitate the bringing together of community stakeholders (Sport England 2008a; 2008b). These stakeholders include volunteer groups, local authorities and Primary Care Trusts tasked with developing initiatives that contribute to broader strategies on population health and well being (Department of Health, 2004b). CSNs operate in all County Sports Partnerships in England (N = 49), their overall objectives being interpreted at the local level to determine strategy, function and membership. Whilst CSN is a generic term CSNs are commonly ascribed different names which reflect local preferences. Supported with Sport England funding representatives from agencies including local authorities, schools, community groups and health services use CSNs as a means to formally convene, determine, and plan local action in support of local targets for participation in sport and physical activity.

One might argue that the rationale for CSNs is predicated on the same underpinning logic that characterised New Labour policies. Here, greater collaboration between government

departments was encouraged to remedy deficiencies within decision making that lead to a perceived lack of cohesion and cost effectiveness in government (Cabinet Office, 2000a). However, whilst it has been suggested that the inter-relatedness of sports organisations develops a natural compulsion for them to work together (Robson, 2001), it is recognised that more evidence is needed concerning how structures for sport and physical activity might achieve this (Sport England, 2004). This may be particularly important given the myriad of local agencies involved with sport and the inherent tensions between formal governmental and sporting organisations and less formal sports bodies (Nichols *et al.*, 2005). In addition, the contribution of volunteers in sport, estimated at up to 6 million adults (Gaskins, 2008), provides a unique ingredient within the sporting landscape.

Partnership research from other fields suggests that a high degree of internal function for example, effective planning and decision making processes, may lead to improved external outputs (Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). Further, factors such as satisfaction and perceived costs and benefits have been demonstrated as being significant to stakeholder participation (Chinman and Wandersman, 1999; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004). Hence, consistent with recommendations (Carter, 2005), a greater understanding of partnership processes in the present context might facilitate understanding of stakeholder action and interaction and better inform collaborative efforts addressing sport and physical activity. Although studies have investigated partnership working in the field of community health (Alexander *et al.*, 2003; Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1996; Chinman *et al.*, 1996; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003; Israel *et al.*, 1998; Kegler *et al.*, 1998; Lachance *et al.*, 2006; Rogers *et al.*, 1993; Weiner *et al.*, 2002), few studies have undertaken empirical research in the area of partnerships for sport and physical activity. This is surprising given the potential pressure

on community stakeholders to collaborate in order to access funding for initiatives (Lasker *et al.*, 2001) and the increasing use of sport and recreation within public health initiatives (Casey *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the range of approaches adopted in research investigating partnership working in other areas has established a number of resources that may be usefully drawn upon within the present context. As a consequence there is considerable scope for empirical research in this area.

1.4   Study rationale

In response, this thesis investigates the phenomenon of participation in CSNs in England. For the purpose of the thesis, realising the individual and social benefits of sport and physical activity participation are assumed to be worthy objectives.

This research investigates factors relating to participation including contextual conditions, leadership, and features of network structures that influence stakeholder participation in CSNs which oversee the development and delivery community based sport and physical activity programmes. In view of these factors the research poses the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of stakeholders participating in CSNs?

2. Of these perceptions, what is the nature of the relationships for stakeholders participating in CSNs? For example, certain factors e.g. sense of satisfaction might be more important in determining participation than others e.g. outcomes.

3. What principal factors characterise the experiences, attitudes and opinions of CSN stakeholders?

Developing greater knowledge of stakeholder participation in CSNs will help establish useful evidence concerning the interconnectedness of factors and may develop evidence that nurtures partnership working through a deeper understanding of the processes involved. The contribution to knowledge that this study makes is founded on the application of measures of partnership processes applied in health promotion and voluntary sectors to partnership working in sport and physical activity.

1.5   Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part 1 explores the concept of partnership. Included is a review of literature which explores partnership within the wider context of political, economic and social context. In addition, specific attention is given to partnership working within the context of sport and physical activity. This establishes the current state of evidence in this area and identifies factors relating to participation in partnership. Part 2 outlines key theoretical, epistemological and methodological considerations including the mixed methods research design, quantitative and qualitative methods, and the data integration process. Part 3 provides the results from the qualitative and quantitative components. Also included is the conceptual model that emerged through the integration of qualitative and quantitative components. Finally, Part 4 presents the discussion of the results and associated conclusions. Implications of the findings for research and practice are outlined.

PART 1

Part 1 contains two chapters. Chapter 2 explores the significance of partnership within the wider context of political, economic and social context. This highlights a variety factors which underpin the predilection for partnership working in contemporary policy. This is based within a governance perspective which emphasises the roles and responsibilities of individuals in society.

Chapter 3 reviews literature investigating partnership in the specific context of sport and physical activity. It identifies three key themes including structural dimensions, stakeholder skills and knowledge, and stakeholder interaction. These help to unpack the complexity of stakeholder participation in partnership in the context of sport and physical activity. In addition, the chapter reviews evidence on partnership working from research elsewhere in the literature. This highlights a number of factors relating to participation in partnership which may be usefully employed in the present area.

Chapter 2

Context and complexity in partnership working

2.0   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the concept of partnership and explores this in the wider social, political and economic context. Terms commonly equated with partnership working are highlighted after which a range of theoretical perspectives are introduced. These provide a set of justifications for the increasing emphasis on partnership working. In addition, partnership is explored within the field of contemporary governance. Two contrasting themes are explored which help to illustrate the significance of partnership working in contemporary society. The final part of the chapter introduces CSNs as a specific form of collaboration in the context of community sport and physical activity. This orientates the reader to the role and function of CSNs and their place within local governance.

2.1   The significance of partnership

Chapter 1 highlighted the link between concerns for public health and the increasing use of partnership approaches. Given the widespread adoption of partnership working it is pertinent to outline why it has become such a compelling aspect of social policy. In doing to it is useful to explore the broader concept of partnership so that its significance may be better understood.

2.1.1   Defining collaboration

Collaboration is ultimately about developing the social relationships needed to achieve desired goals (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). It represents the highest level of relationship

between organisations (Butterfoss, 2007). Collaboration can be defined as 'a way of working with others on a joint project where there is a shared interest in positive outcomes' (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002: p1). This represents a process through which different organisations and individuals define a common purpose or issue at which to direct their different perceptions constructively towards joint solutions (Hornby and Atkins, 2000; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). As a process, it has temporary and evolving characteristics (Gray, 1989). Collaboration occurs in multiple formats, for a multitude of purposes, and is subject to a wide variety of descriptive terms (Butterfoss, 2007; Huxham and Vangen, 2005). The need to collaborate, suggests Butterfoss (2007: p26), is based on 'intentionality and openness to envision accomplishments that are beyond the expectations of any single organisation...' This involves the pooling of financial and other resources to produce added value (Geddes, 2000).

Collaboration is undertaken to achieve particular social and political goals (Whittington, 2003). It entails a variety of forms through which organisations and individuals work towards common goals which arise in a variety of contexts, between a range of organisations and individuals, and for a range of purposes. Takahashi and Smutny (2001) suggest that it is useful to understand the degree of formality within collaboration and the degree of independence within collaborative tasks. The utility of this approach is that it asks questions about the nature of relationships within collaboration and the types of functions it performs. Following this recommendation, sections 2.1.2 to 2.1.5 introduce forms of collaboration which may be distinguished by the degree of formality and function.

2.1.2   Partnerships

Armistead *et al.* (2007: p212) suggest that partnership represents 'a cross-sector, inter-organisational group, working together under some form of recognized governance,

towards common goals which would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve if

tackled by any single organisation.' As such, partnerships reflect formal institutional-level

working arrangements (Whittington, 2003). This involves the formal mobilisation of

interests drawn from a number of areas with which to devise shared strategies for specific

concerns (Butterfoss, 2007; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Within the community context it

is possible to identify partnership as an approach through which agencies, organisations

and individuals work together to achieve better outcomes as measured by the needs of

local stakeholders (Department of Health, 2000a). This entails the merging of resources

from otherwise independent partners to create new organisational structures with a view

to achieving common goals (Audit Commission, 1998; Butterfoss, 2007).

Partnerships come in a variety of shapes, sizes and structures (Health Development Agency,

2003), and operate for different purposes including urban regeneration (Coulson, 2005;

Hastings, 1996; Lawless, 1994), and community health development (Israel *et al.*, 1998;

Roussos and Fawcett, 2000; Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). As such, it is possible to

conceptualise partnerships as strategic devices through which to coordinate action for the

purposes of achieving specific outcomes. This involves the sharing of goals (Butterfoss *et al.*,

1993; Francisco *et al.*, 1993; Lasker *et al.*, 2001; Nutbeam, 1998), the exchange of

information and resources (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Himmelman, 2001; Huxham and

Vangen, 2005; Weech-Moldonado *et al.*, 2003), and the building of organisational capacity

(Butterfoss, 2006; Health Development Agency, 2003; Jones and Burgess, 2005; Roussos

and Fawcett, 2000; Sullivan *et al.*, 2006; Victoria Health Partnership, 2007).

2.1.3   Networks

Rather than a single organisational entity a network represents a 'collection of programs and services that span a broad range of cooperating but legally autonomous organisations' (Provan and Milward, 2001:   p417). These create the conditions for groups and organisations to develop (Gilchrist, 2009). Characteristically, networks can be regarded as non-hierarchical systems for exchanging information for mutual benefit formed around specific concerns and issues (Butterfoss, 2007; Himmelman, 2001; Nutbeam, 1998). Networks have been recognised as a flexible form of organisation that provide access to a wide range of resources and promote innovation through the sharing of knowledge and experience (Pedler, 2001). Characteristically, networks are less formal structures than partnerships. It is possible to identify two principal types of network. Policy networks are arranged around specific policy objectives. These involve close-knit groups of interdependent governmental and non-governmental actors with separate goals in order to achieve targeted public policy outcomes (Rhodes, 2007). Hence, as a form of governance, networks allow actors with divergent interests in policy making and implementation to achieve targeted public policy outcomes through bargaining processes (Börzel, 1998; Rhodes, 2007). These are characterised by trust, shared values and norms (Rhodes, 2007), although Gilchrist (2009: p59) warns that these 'policy communities' may in some circumstances seek to subvert, as well as influence, agendas. In contrast, however, issue networks may be understood as a loose amalgam of relationships between stakeholders with a range of interests that lack stability (Lindsey, 2006; Löffler, 2009). Exploring a local health alliance in the UK Hamer and Box (2000), suggest that this type of network may have limited use in formal decision making where specialised skills may be required to address certain issues. Hence, these may have much less potential to affect changes than the more formal, close-knit and focused policy communities outlined by Rhodes (2007).

2.1.4 Alliances

Alliances have been described as connections of less formal interests which operate on a non-hierarchical basis to limit duplication of services based around common concerns (Butterfoss, 2007; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Nutbeam, 1998). In contrast to networks therefore, one can suggest that the function of alliances is less concerned with service outcomes than with the need to minimise the impact of poorly coordinated services.

2.1.5 Coalitions

Coalitions represent formal alliances of diverse organisations that agree to work together towards common goals and use joint systems and strategies to achieve this (Butterfoss, 2007; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Francisco *et al.*, 1993; Himmelman, 2001). Butterfoss (2007) suggests that coalitions and partnerships function as comprehensive models of collaboration which intentionally include a range of community stakeholders that, although autonomous, rely on a central governance structure to operate.

Sections 2.1.2 to 2.1.5 highlight different terms associated with collaboration. These demonstrate that collaboration occurs in multiple formats and for a wide range of purposes including strategic development and the delivery of specific projects (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). One might suggest that at one end of the spectrum it is possible to locate issue networks that operate on an informal basis to address specific issues. At the other end of the spectrum it is possible to locate partnerships. These offer a much more formal and potentially structured type of collaboration. Importantly, however, whilst this spectrum is useful in outlining the underpinning rationales for partnership working it potentially fails to completely capture the true complexity of the situation. For example, partnerships are subject to a range of influences including regulatory demands, questions concerning power

and legitimacy, contrasting and interconnected political pressures, and the expectations of those involved (Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003; Clarke and Glendinning, 2002; Geddes, 2006; Frisby *et al.*, 2004; Selsky and Parker, 2005).Hence, it is useful to identify perspectives of collaboration, as a term which includes a range of terms, which help to unpack some of the wider factors underpinning partnership working.

2.2   Perspectives of collaboration

For the purposes of this thesis it is useful to orientate the reader to the relevance of collaboration in contemporary society. This helps to illustrate some of the theoretical and practical challenges posed by the broader context in which CSNs are found. As such, the following section introduces a range of perspectives which justify the use of collaborative approaches. These highlight a range of social, political and economic stimuli which have underpinned the increasing relevance of collaboration. Rather than seeking to provide a comprehensive account of the myriad perspectives available this section aims to provide the reader with a flavour of the various perspectives discussed in the literature.

2.2.1   The stakeholder perspective

Stakeholder theory (SHT) is concerned with the morals and values of organisations in consideration of those affected by their activity (Pesquex and Damak - Ayadi, 2005; Phillips *et al.*, 2003; Sternberg, 1997). Stakeholders include individuals and organisations with legitimate interests, contractual obligations, and ethical motivations (Jones *et al.*, 2007; Lépineux, 2005; Pesquex and Damak - Ayadi, 2005). Stakeholders can be defined according to their power within a relationship, their level of legitimacy, and the urgency of their stake (Lewis, 2007). Organisations that ignore the formal and informal rules that govern

interaction with stakeholders may experience negative consequences e.g. a loss of profit (Jurgens *et al.*, 2010).

SHT is useful in highlighting the moral dimension of partnership. Here, it is possible to envisage that organisations have a moral duty to recognise a community's stake in local policies which affect the nature of services they ultimately consume. Hence, advantages obtained through partnership working may include increased organisational legitimacy and validity in the eyes of those affected by their activity. For communities, advantages may be conceived as a greater sense of control over or influence in local decision making processes. The relevance of SHT is that it focuses on the rights and responsibilities of organisations and individuals. Broadly speaking, this reflects the principles of the ecological model of public health which promotes greater collaboration between communities and organisations for the improvement of population health (Department of Health, 2004a).

2.2.2   The social exchange perspective

Social exchange theory (SET) is based on decisions concerning the economic and social payoffs, costs, and rewards of exchange situations (Hogg and Vaughan, 2010). Here, the principle of reciprocity is important. This regulates patterns of behaviour by establishing a mutually-reinforcing rule of exchange (Ekeh, 1974) and helps relationships to evolve into trusting and mutual commitments (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). If individuals perceive that an exchange relationship is mutually satisfying it is likely that they will increase the type and quality of their contributions (Tekleab and Chiaburu, 2010). Literature investigating partnership working between non-profit, public and private organisational representatives in the sporting context has shown that competition for resources draws attention to exchange issues (Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Here, partners use exchange-

based strategies that that help them to make decisions concerning the nature of their involvement.

Importantly, a key characteristic of exchange situations is the tendency for individuals to seek to maximise benefits and minimise the costs (Hogg and Vaughan, 2010). However, this is limited by the notion of reciprocity and broader moral values i.e. trust (Ekeh, 1974). When individuals perceive that the consequences of an exchange are comparatively less rewarding than for the other party the exchange may become unacceptable and the exchange relationship terminated as a result (Hogg and Vaughan, 2010). Thus, the utility of SET is that it highlights a social-psychological perspective of relationships between individuals and organisations. In addition to a moral dimension in keeping with SHT it also demonstrates that behaviour is influenced by the potential economic and social rewards of exchange situations. Thus, behaviour is characteristically more individualistic. This is characterised by notions of altruism, ego, and power (Blau, 1964). The focus on individual behaviour within collaborative arrangements has provided the basis for research investigating collaboration for the promotion of public health. This is because applying the principles of exchange to partnership provides a way of understanding behaviour that seeks to maximise economic or psychological benefits (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001). As such, partnership has been couched in terms of a joint enterprise from which it is expected that some form of benefit will be produced. These benefits may include:

1. Access to comprehensive data and information concerning community issues

2. Sharing best practice

3. Improved understanding of community needs and aspirations

4. Greater influence in decision making by local stakeholders

5. Economies of scale through the pooling of resources

6. Shared risk

7. Access to a broader range of skills through joint appointments, secondments and shared training

8. Access to financial resources

9. Increased potential for coordination, innovation and efficiency

10. Developing opportunities for shared learning

11. Reduced overlap in services

12. Enhanced legitimacy through the involvement of stakeholders

(Derived from: Audit Commission, 1998; Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability, 1997; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2001; Gray, 1989; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; McQuaid, 2000).

The benefits of participation have been presented as a typology of material (tangible), solidary (social), and purposive (personal and organisational) benefits (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Chinman *et al.*, 1996). These benefits appeal to different stakeholders in different ways although Chinman *et al.* (1996) highlight purposive benefits may provide the essential basis for partnership. Applying the principles of exchange, benefits are set against the costs incurred in the process of producing them. A range of costs, or negative consequences associated with participation in partnership have been identified including those relating to financial and non-financial aspects. These include:

1. Personnel

2. Overheads, capital, and rent

3. Conflict

4. Time lost on collaborative activities

5. Lack of appreciation

6. Burnout or overload

7. Lack of appreciation or recognition

8. Pressure for commitment

9. Lack of support

10. Negative feelings e.g. frustration

11. Lack of accomplishment

(Derived from: Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Chinman and Wandersman, 1999; Divita and Cassill, 2002; El Ansari and Phillips, 2001; Kahn *et al.,* 2002; Kelly *et al.,* 2006; Lasker and Weiss, 2003a).

Benefits and costs provides a useful platform from which to understand the willingness of stakeholders to participate in partnership (Chinman and Wandersman, 1999). Evidence suggests that benefits and costs are associated with stakeholder participation in partnership (Chinman *et al.*, 1996; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Prestby *et al.*, 1990). Furthermore, the potential for participation is increased if benefits of participation can be maximised and costs minimised (Chinman and Wandersman, 1999). For example, where members perceive competent leadership, shared decision making and a supportive environment they are more likely to perceive that the benefits of participation outweigh the costs (Lachance *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, it is important that the benefits are maintained in the long term in order to sustain stakeholder participation (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002).

The relationship between benefits and costs has been cited as a key influencing factor in member decisions to actively engage in partnership (Kehler *et al.*, 1998; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). However, research suggests that this relationship may be more complex than simply

providing more benefits than costs. El Ansari and Phillips (2004) found that even when members perceived that the costs were less or equal to the benefits the ratio between the two was rated as unfavourable or worse. Even when members perceived equal benefits and costs, data revealed that the actual level of costs was still less than the benefits. Consequently, the authors suggest that members need to perceive up to 60% more benefits than costs in order to rate these as equal. In practical terms, therefore, it may be that the benefits of participation must be maximised in order to encourage member involvement in partnership (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004).

2.2.3 The resource dependency perspective

Resources are fundamental to an organisation's survival (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Resource dependency theory (RDT) proposes that organisations react to pressures in the external environment to secure the resources needed for survival (Zakus, 1998). Organisations rely on individuals and other organisations to reduce uncertainty and share the burden of maintaining the organisation (Weissbrich, 2009). This is because organisations are unable to generate all the resources needed for survival and so these are sought within the wider environment (Zakus, 1998). Thus, from an RDT perspective collaboration represents a calculated response to the need for organisational survival, the advantage of which is access to additional resources. This is true of the sport and physical activity context in which it is recognised that stakeholders often compete for similar resources (Babiak and Thibault, 2008; 2009).

Problematically, as a result of entering into collaborative arrangements, such as partnerships, organisations must relinquish a degree of autonomy in exchange for the stability provided by inter-organisational structures (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). This

presents the challenge of maintaining organisational autonomy whilst simultaneously entering into relationships that yield the resources on which survival depends. Consequently, organisations use various strategies for example, denying the legitimacy of other organisations, in order to avoid the influence of others where possible (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). As such, RDT draws attention to the presence of power and influence within partnership and demonstrates that collaborating could be considered a non-neutral act in which organisations and individuals employ tactics to maintain control over their interests. Usefully, Lukes (2005) alerts us to various aspects of power which draw attention to the various ways in which it is expressed. For example, coercion represents an extreme form of power in which one actor causes another to do or think something that they would not normally do within an environment characterised by conflict. A less overt, or latent, form of power may arise whereby an actor influences another's actions within a more consensual environment through manipulation. What these contrasting perspectives demonstrate is that in situations where resource dependence is a concern it is likely that a range of collaboration will be subject to varying expressions of power and conflict.

The perspectives highlighted in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 explore some of the rationales for partnership. However, these are essentially dry concepts which focus on theory rather than specific context. Therefore, in order to understand the modern imperative for partnership it is pertinent to rationalise this within the context of contemporary governance.

2.2.4   The governance perspective

Governance commonly refers to the sets of relationships that legitimise authority, define rights and responsibilities in society, and which characterise the relationship between state intervention and societal autonomy (Hirst, 2000; Treib et al., 2007; Williamson, 1996). The

advantage of exploring governance is that it draws attention to changes in government and asks how these changes affect the state and policy making processes (Rhodes, 2000). It is possible to identify a range of definitions of governance which explore contrasting social, political and economic perspectives (Rhodes, 2000). These have commonly been classified according to hierarchies, markets and networks (Table 1, overleaf). Problematically, these are somewhat stylised and not necessarily distinct or inseparable forms of governance, each potentially sharing similar features (6 *et al.*, 2003).

A contemporary perspective of governance offers an updated theoretical perspective that is fundamentally concerned with the concepts of citizenship and consumerism within mutually dependent relationships (Bevir and Richards, 2009; Bevir and Trentman, 2007). This interpretive perspective is more sophisticated than traditional perspectives focusing on the importance of class, culture and human behaviour (Bevir *et al.*, 2003; Newman, 2007). This elevates the significance of the local context in which individuals actively create, modify, and reject their beliefs in an ongoing process of interaction with their environments (Bevir and Trentman, 2007). However, whilst this perspective draws attention away from traditional notions of power in policy making Grix (2010), urges scholars not to completely ignore the influence of social structures and institutions which he maintains are essential for understanding policy making processes. Maintaining the relevance of these factors within a bottom-up interpretive perspective of governance helps to develop a 'more nuanced approach to public administration and policy' (Grix, 2010: p161). Here, one might argue, it is possible to explore the blurring of the boundary between traditional state institutions and networks of informal organisations as new approaches to social policy emerge (Peele, 2004).

Table 1: Conventional modes of governance

Key features	Market	Hierarchy	Network
Normative basis	Legal contracts	Employment relationships	Complementary strengths, social contracts
Means of communication	Prices	Routines	Relational
Conflict resolution	Haggling – resort to law	Supervision	Reciprocity, concern for reputation
Degree of flexibility	High	Low	Medium
Level of commitment	Low	Medium to high	Medium to high
Climate / tone	Precision / suspicion	Formal, bureaucratic	Open ended, mutual benefit
Actor preferences	Independent	Dependent	Interdependent

(Derived from Powell (1991) and Jones *et al.* (1997)).

The interpretive perspective is useful in highlighting processes underway in the implementation of social policy whereby horizontally organised and self-regulating systems are, ostensibly, replacing traditional centre-led decision making hierarchies (Klijn, 2002; Scott and Hofmeyer, 2007; Sørensen, 2002). Here, decision making power, suggests Rhodes (2007), is contingent, depending more on relationships with other actors than any specific position of power. The resulting shift toward network governance, it has been suggested, offers a potentially richer form of democracy and leads to more effective governing through learning and shared ownership (Stoker, 2004).

However, whilst an interpretive perspective might offer a more sophisticated and elaborate perspective of governance this is not to say that traditional perspectives, for example, that which views the State as performing an instrumental and top-down approach to governance (McDonald, 2005), should be completely ignored. Despite the suggestion that political institutions no longer possess the capacity to address all of the problems facing

contemporary society (Pierre, 2000), the shift to network governance is likely to be characterised by 'persistent asymmetries' (Rhodes, 2007: p1253), between the power of national government and those at the local level. Given that governance inspires such a compelling but complex set of arguments one might argue that partnerships offer a useful means of exploring this complexity and thus unravelling some of the nuances of contemporary political discourse. These are now explored within two principal themes.

The renewal of state -citizen relations

The first theme relates to changes in the relationship between citizens and the state. Via a programme of modernisation (Cabinet Office, 1999), the active involvement of communities in local politics has been promoted as a means to combat declining trust in Western political institutions and increasing levels of distrust among citizens concerning the relevance of the state (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2001; Vigoda, 2002). Consequently, political rhetoric would suggest that Britain has been heading towards a more collaborative agenda that increases local autonomy over services (Collins *et al.*, 1999; Milewa *et al.*, 1998; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002) which promotes civil cohesion (Ozga, 2002). Here, partnership working has been endorsed as a means of encouraging the involvement of communities in local politics to improve transparency and accountability in decision making (Daly and Davis, 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). This is evidenced by comprehensive recommendations for greater collaboration and partnership in public services (Audit Commission, 1998; Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability, 1997; Government Offices for the English Regions, 2008), and mandatory requirements for partnership working at the local level (Department of Health, 2000b; 2010; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006b; 2008).

It is apparent, therefore, that partnership approaches are congruous with modern political values that promote equality, responsibility and community (Temple, 2000). Here, the state is transformed into an enabling partner that facilitates networks of cooperative institutions and individuals to deliver services (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003). This has taken place in a climate in which the complexity of contemporary social issues for example, social exclusion make the task of governing more difficult (Giddens, 1998; Newman *et al.*, 2004). As such, partnership approaches identify individuals and communities as resources for change and promote the defining of needs by place and interest (Department of Health, 2000a; 2004b; 2006a; Màson *et al.*, 2008; Norton *et al.*, 2002).

It has been suggested that the shift toward collaborative approaches to governance has been underpinned by a political ideology that seeks a renewed sense of democracy (Bennett *et al.*, 2004; Daly and Davis, 2002; Newman *et al.*, 2004). In contrast to the stark political ideology of the Thatcher era, this shift has tended to reflect a commitment to continually search for a means, whatever that may be, that enables Government to achieve its goals (Giddens, 1998; Temple, 2000). Referring to the perspectives of collaboration which help to identify some of the wider factors underpinning partnership working, it is possible here to locate aspects of SHT and RDT in respect of the increasing need to look for new resources and forms of moral authority in the face of increasingly complex social problems. This, arguably, is in contrast to the interpretive perspective of Bevir and Trentmann (2007). Whilst these authors encourage us to understand and respond to the 'beliefs, traditions, and practise of those one hopes to influence' (Bevir and Trentmann, 2007: p17), it also seems important to remember that Government itself has its own interests and objectives that help to sustain its position of authority in society.

With this in mind, Government has actively sought to employ concepts including citizenship, consumerism, and social capital (Bridgen, 2006; Clarke *et al.*, 2007; Fine, 2006) in order to experiment with new ways of developing policy (Dowling *et al.*, 2004; Solesbury, 2001; Temple, 2000). Partnership working has provided a principal means of achieving this. For example, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) that facilitate closer consultation with the users of local services (Department for Education, Transport and the Regions, 2001) have become a central feature of the local political landscape (Geddes *et al.*, 2007). LSPs commonly include representation from local authorities, voluntary organisations, local businesses, educational institutions, community and neighbourhood organisations, employment services, and the private sector (Bennett *et al.*, 2004). These have been widely premised on the notion of joint rather than parallel working (Asthana *et al.*, 2002; Bennett *et al.*, 2004) and are assumed to create more inclusive local governance that is better tuned to the needs of communities (Geddes, 2006). Consequently, LSPs have legitimised contemporary political ideology by positioning citizens as democratic agents capable of influencing local agendas (Daly and Davis, 2002; MacLeavy, 2008; Raco and Flint, 2001).

The pragmatic perspective

The second theme concerns governmental decision making processes. Greater efficiency in decision making processes had been a core feature of the Labour administrations (Cabinet Office, 1999; Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999). In order to meet the demands of modern society it was declared that:

> *... government must be willing to constantly re-evaluate what it is doing so as to produce policies that really deal with problems; that are forward-looking and shaped by the evidence rather than a response to short-term pressures; that tackle causes not symptoms; that are measured by results rather than activity; that are flexible and innovative rather than closed and bureaucratic; and that promote compliance rather than avoidance or fraud.*

(Cabinet Office, 1999: page 1).

As such, partnership was envisioned as a useful response to the limited flexibility of outdated government departments that adopted 'silo' mentalities (Newman, 2001: p106). Here, strong vertical hierarchy created a deficit in departmental capacity to address complex and multi-faceted issues such as crime, poverty, and social exclusion (Miller and Ahmad, 2000; Newman, 2000; 2001; Stoker, 2004). In response, collaborative approaches prescribed greater coordination between networks of political and social actors in society (Oels, 2003). This provided a cornerstone of New Labour's modernisation agenda. This involved an experiment which linked minimal state involvement with a strong outcome-orientation that targeted greater efficiency in policy making and community wellbeing (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006c; 2007a; Ling, 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Temple, 2000). This sought to link Government departments in ways that provided greater returns on investments in public services (Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999). Consequently, partnerships in the public sphere have been underpinned by a broad system of performance requirements (Holtom, 2001).

For example, the Best Value performance regime (Local Government Act, 1999) asserts the importance of customer-focused service delivery. This framework seeks to facilitate more efficient policy making and service delivery by providing a mechanism for measuring local authorities' performance (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006a). Consequently, a duty has been placed on all local authorities to deliver services in line with the needs of communities, backed by sanctions and rewards from central government (Stoker, 2004). This balances aspirations for increased efficiency and quality with decisions over control and resources (Cowell and Martin, 2003). This, one might suggest, demonstrates elements of SET in which organisations seek to maximise benefits of an

exchange situation within a system of sanctions and rewards. Here, in return for additional funding, government departments have been compelled to contribute towards whole-scale cross-cutting objectives rather than maintaining inward-looking departmental goals (Cabinet Office, 2000a; Lowndes, 1999; Newman, 2000).

2.3   The problem with partnership

Having briefly explored partnership in the context of contemporary governance attention is now turned to issues which challenge the use of partnership in practice. This highlights the disjointed nature of the theory and practice of partnership.

2.3.1   Language and the collaborative ideal

It is apparent that collaboration is enacted in a variety of ways for a range of purposes. A variety of terms are evident within the literature on collaboration which illustrate the inherent diversity and complexity of collaboration in practice. These terms are often used interchangeably to imply similar working arrangements (El Ansari *et al.*, 2001; Peck and Dickinson, 2008). As such, terms such as partnership, alliance and network are widely employed with little general agreement over their use (Asthana *et al.*, 2002; Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Huxham, 2003). Consequently, it is possible to identify terms that imply similar arrangements across different forms of collaboration. For example, core partnership components may include shared responsibility, shared action, and shared governance structures (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Jobin, 2008). Similarly, coalitions may include internal decision making structures, joint action, pooled resources, and joint agreements (Butterfoss, 2007). What this demonstrates, one might argue, is that the concept of collaboration translates in different ways in different contexts. Thus, whilst different forms of collaboration may share similar terminology, the myriad of terms associated with

collaboration may lead to a range of contrasting expectations concerning the purposes and outcomes of collaboration.

Further compounding these issues is literature that tends to emphasise the virtues of collaboration without providing sufficient evidence to support claims for its use (Glasby, *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, Dowling *et al.* (2004) also suggest that the optimistic tone of official documents implies that the ingredients for success are well understood. However, this optimism fails to appreciate the potentially negative aspects of collaboration, or 'collaborative inertia' where efforts to work collaboratively are slow, painful, and prone to failure (Huxham and Vangen, 2005: p3). A fundamental problem is that partnership commonly invokes a vague ideal (Rouse and Smith, 2002) and lacks overall substance in practice. Policies endorsing collaborative approaches are replete with references to community participation, social exclusion, individual responsibility and community ownership (DCMS, 2002; Department of Health, 2000; 2004a; 2004b), yet little guidance is offered on how these ideals may be realised. In practice, therefore, it is difficult to prescribe specific ways of collaborative working (Dickinson, 2006). This is evident in guidelines for partnerships between the public and private sectors where partnering is defined as:

> *...an umbrella term that covers all of the associated behaviours and techniques, arrangements and agreements that incorporate partnering ethos and can take the form of a partnering arrangement, partnering agreement or a legal partnership'*

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006a: 10).

Despite the mismatch between the ideal of partnership and its use in practice partnership approaches have been widely endorsed as mechanisms for devising and implementing social policy. For example, partnerships have been widely endorsed as a means of joining public, private and voluntary sector organisations in local settings (Department of the

Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2001; Department of Health, 2000c; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003).

Furthermore, one can detect continuing support for partnership approaches within approaches adopted by the recently elected Conservative-Liberal Democrat government. Their vision of a 'Big Society' (Cabinet Office, 2010) focuses on the community level and encourages greater community work and social enterprise. Ostensibly, this programme will be driven by partnerships between enterprising and interested community stakeholders keen to ensure that affairs are run in the interests of local people (Gilchrist *et al.*, 2010). Whilst some are cautious about the potential of partnership approaches to demonstrate genuinely different to policy making (Newman, 2000; Purdue, 2005; Vigoda, 2002), it is also evident that such is the extent of their use, the assumption that partnership is a 'good thing' has allowed discussion concerning their utility to move from questions of whether partnership working is desirable to one which takes this for granted (McLaughlin, 2004: p104). A compounding issue is that it remains unclear how best to assess partnership effectiveness (El Ansari *et al.*, 2001). Hence, it is possible that the aligning of different partners for mutual benefit may at once provide both the greatest incentive and the greatest barrier to success (Dietz, 2004). With this in mind, the investigation of stakeholder experiences is warranted in order understand partnership working and the specific social action it entails (McDonald, 2005).

Given these issues and the continued emphasis on partnership working at the local level it seems important to understand the context in which it takes place. Indeed, it is suggested that the complexity of contexts in which partnership takes place is precisely why it is so difficult to provide unambiguous definitions for terms like partnership (Tomlinson, 2005).

The importance of understanding context, therefore, is that it may shed light on why partnership is needed and what might be reasonably achieved through its use (Jackson and Stainsby, 2000).

2.3.2 Partnership in practice

The considerable weight given to partnership approaches has created a need to demonstrate a capacity for greater efficiency and results (Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Lindsey, 2006). As a result the outcomes of partnership tend to be defined in terms of financial value (Sullivan, 2004). Problematically, targeted efficiency measures for example, Best Value, may encourage institutional change (Le Grand, 2007), but the pressure to perform may consequently frustrate attempts to develop horizontal partnership (Powell *et al.*, 2001). This is because performance indicators tend to be mono-organisational rather than system-wide. This makes collaborative-based contributions to community outcomes difficult to assess (Clarke and Glendinning, 2002; Cole and Fenwick, 2003). Indeed, with the continuing influence of centralised decision making (Geddes, 2006), it is possible to argue that efficiency measures have remained focused on the performance of individual organisations rather than improvements in overall service performance (Ling, 2002; Rouse and Smith, 2002). Consequently, performance criteria may have accentuated vertical lines of authority at the expense of strengthening horizontal lines of accountability to local stakeholders (Cole and Cotterill, 2005). Thus, it is possible that the developmental potential of partnerships has been overlooked in favour of concerns for efficiency (Bennett *et al.*, 2004; Maddock, 2000).

Therefore, the reality of partnership for community involvement may be different to that espoused in policy. The rhetoric of community governance emphasises the collaboration of

service providers, voluntary and community sectors, and business in response to social issues (Osbourne and Osbourne, 2003). Despite this it is apparent that central power remains a key influencing force (Clarke and Glendinning, 2002) and local collaborative mechanisms such as LSPs continue to operate according to centrally-defined criteria (Geddes, 2006; Laffin, 2008). This is not to negate the usefulness of strong national agendas in developing successful locally-based projects. For example, investigating a Health Action Zone, Cole (2003) found that a strong agenda helped to positively influence the impacts of some projects. However, these mechanisms may underscore the unequal nature of power relationships within collaborative arrangements (Coulson, 2005; McQuaid, 2000; Whittington, 2003). Consequently, getting people involved in collaboration is a difficult task as community representatives may perceive that their voices will go largely unheard (Gustafsson and Driver, 2005). Research by Craig and Taylor (2004) suggests that some community representatives, particularly those representing the voluntary sector, tend to feel marginalised and lacking in ability to genuinely influence community agendas. In reality, therefore, partnerships may reflect the further embedding of power inequalities more than any significant increase in local influence over decision making (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2008).

Thus, despite the rhetoric of partnership the position of traditional elites may have changed little (Coaffee, 2005; Peck *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, the dispersal of decision making power may actually reflect an extension of state power (Newman, 2001). It is evident that local partnerships tend to be initiated by statutory organisations and memberships are often predetermined (Shortall, 2004). Thus, whilst it is suggested collaboration may improve the potential to share power by promoting multilateral rather than bilateral interactions between stakeholders (Gray, 1989), this may not be without certain limits.

Consequently, reforms that cede greater responsibility to community organisations may not necessarily contain measures that ensure accountability to service users (Bloomfield *et al.*, 2001). Instead, one might argue that communities are increasingly accountable for centrally-determined priorities (Bennett *et al.*, 2004; Fuller and Geddes, 2008; MacLeavy, 2008; Schofield, 2002).

An additional problem concerns the types of knowledge and skills required to work in partnership. For example, in research investigating the perceptions of management staff within an NHS trust organisation Tailby *et al.* (2004) found that research participants knew relatively little about the concept of partnership. Research elsewhere suggests that those involved in partnership may import skills from existing roles or acquire them only during partnership activities (Halliday *et al.*, 2004). As a consequence, those with experience of partnership working may assume dominant positions within collaborative arrangements (Rummery, 2007). Thus, whilst one should not assume that all partners have equally legitimate claims in partnerships (McQuaid, 2007), it is apparent that certain skills will be needed in order to articulate these claims effectively within collaborative settings. Problematically, even where this is achieved it may be that the issues addressed by partnerships reflect traditional preferences and concerns of powerful local organisations. Evidence also suggests that the legitimacy of less traditional partners in decision making processes remains questioned by those in traditional decision making roles (Diamond, 2002; Gilchrist, 2006; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005; Wilkinson and Craig, 2002). Hence, one might argue that involvement in partnerships is likely to challenge the skills of stakeholders who possess the least experience.

In summarising the issues facing partnership it is apparent that partnerships face a number of theoretical and practical challenges. Partnership working has been co-located alongside traditional markets and hierarchies as a pragmatic response to social issues (Dowling *et al.*, 2004; Hudson, 2007). Consequently, in the broader context of organisational and institutional restructuring initiated by New Labour and more recently the Coalition Government, partnerships may be limited in what they are actually able to achieve (Geddes, 2006). This is because partnerships have been married to a strong performance framework that includes a variety of coercive and prescriptive measures (Bennett *et al.*, 2004; Geddes, 2006). As a result, the capacity of community participation to shape policy and practice from below may, ultimately, be limited (Lindsey, 2006; Newman *et al.*, 2004). It is evident, therefore, that partnership requires the willingness of government to become a meaningful integration of central and local agencies (Foley and Martin, 2000; Laffin, 2008).

In response to these challenges the development of shared meanings at the local level may help to create coherent relationships that improve understanding of what is required from, and what might reasonably be achieved, through public participation (Jackson and Stainsby, 2000; Pratchett, 2004; Tomlinson, 2005). However, tensions are clearly evident between measures that strengthen executive leadership and those which seek to enhance public participation (Newman *et al.*, 2004; Wilson, 2004). Hence, partnership may, at best, represent attempts to 'reconcile the irreconcilable', offering citizens a role in the implementation of predetermined strategies (Byrne, 2001: p256), demonstrating a reluctance by institutions to relinquish control in the political and economic arena (Geddes, 2006).

2.4   Linking rationale with practice

It is clear that partnership is at once culturally, politically and economically significant. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 demonstrate that partnership has many potential functions within contemporary society. All of these, one might suggest, are based on the recognition by stakeholders 'that their desired outcomes are inextricably linked to the actions of the other stakeholders' (Gray, 1989: p58). Thus, partnership can be conceptualised as a response to complex contextual factors in which it is recognised that social concerns cannot be addressed by any single stakeholder alone. This response is explained from a number of different perspectives in sections 2.2 and 2.3. However, whilst these provide a rationale for partnership they do not address the nature of the effects that participation may have on individual stakeholders.

Thus, a fundamental problem with partnership is how the benefits of participation are realised (Zakus and Lysack, 1998). The theory of collaborative advantage devised by Huxham and Vangen (2005) usefully highlights the significance of individuals and organisations in the process of partnership. This focuses on the practical aspects of partnership including aspects of trust, strategy, management, and leadership. Usefully, this helps stakeholders to identify when working in partnership contributes to the attainment of collaborative advantage or leads to 'collaborative inertia' (Huxham and Vangen, 2005: p3). In contrast to the relatively dry perspectives outlined in sections 2.2 and 2.3 this theory presents a much richer account of partnership that encompasses a range of factors which affect stakeholders' every-day lives. This helps those involved to pursue an understanding of partnership which includes a diverse range of constantly interacting factors. For the purposes of this research the theory demonstrates the need to move beyond exploring the

reasons for partnership towards understanding how this takes place in practice and for whose benefit.

2.5   CSNs: collaborating for community sport and physical activity

Having highlighted the significance of collaboration in relation to theory and practice attention is now turned to its use within the specific context with which this research is concerned. As specific forms of local collaboration CSNs are introduced to orientate the reader to their role and function. This establishes the relevance of CSNs as a link between national and local policy for sport and physical activity.

It is recognised that partnership provides a useful strategy with which to tackle numerous local issues including crime, education, and health. As a component part of a wider collaborative agenda CSNs seek to support efforts to increase the number of people taking part in sport and active recreation by 1% year on year, widen access to opportunities for sport and active recreation, and bring together and align partners' priorities and targets within one joined up local action plan (Sport England, 2007a). CSNs commonly develop in response to resource opportunities currently provided by agencies including Sport England and Primary Care Trusts. Here, representatives from diverse community organisations and agencies come together to devise collaborative structures with which to organise collective efforts aimed at shared goals. In this sense, CSNs share similar characteristics to top-down expert-led strategies aimed at creating and sustaining community health identified elsewhere (Painter and Clarence, 2000; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000).

2.5.1   CSNs: linking the national to the local

As a means of modernising sport and physical activity-based services, Game Plan (DCMS 2002) sought to give organisations greater flexibility in the ways in which services were delivered. This document had been created in order to focus strategies for community health, elite, school and youth sport within a single and more effective system (Bloyce and Smith, 2010). It is possible to argue that the approach adopted in Game Plan resonates with the goal of increasing efficiency more than any overt shift towards individuals and communities as resources for change. Indeed, the proposals contained in Game Plan, including a clearer sport and physical activity strategy and greater monitoring and evaluation was, essentially, imposed by central government in order to persuade the sports policy sector to become more cohesive and efficient (Houlihan and Green, 2009). As such, it seems important to recognise that as a key driver of sport and physical activity strategy in England, Game Plan established a strong efficiency-based approach that provided greater flexibility for deliverers of services but also demanded increased targeting and performance management.

Sport England has recently divided the core objectives set out in Game Plan. Consequently, Sport England's role of facilitating sustained improvement within its partners' key strategic areas now runs in parallel with a commitment to maximising all forms of sporting success (Sport England 2008a). This is in contrast to the original approach that included a commitment to sport *and* physical activity as mechanisms with which to address a range of sport and non-sport objectives. The responsibility for the physical activity agenda has passed to the Department of Health and its partners (Sport England, 2008a; 2008b). Consistent with this approach CSN implementation guidance now emphasises the potential of using locally-oriented networks to develop responses to local issues supported by a

diverse range of community actors (Sport England, 2007a). It is important to remember, however, that the performance monitoring frameworks to which sporting objectives are tied have been retained. For example, Sport England has established a clear set of contractual criteria against which the performance of County Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships (CSPAPs) are measured (Sport England, 2009a). This appears to be consistent with the essentially top-down approach adopted in the original Game document but with a more explicit divide between the objectives of increasing local participation in sport and physical activity in England. These changes, one might argue, reflects an ongoing process in which the Government is continually seeking improvements within the structures surrounding sport and physical activity. However, there is a danger, suggest Houlihan and Green (2009), that this oversimplifies the debate concerning the compatibility of sport participation and wider health and physical activity objectives. Equally problematic is that whilst this process might help to create more accountable and simplified structures, it might also make these structures less attuned to the needs of local partners (Houlihan and Green, 2009).

CSPAPs represent a direct response to governmental concerns for efficiency and effectiveness within sport policy. These are a nationwide system of agencies with a mandate to support government aspirations for sport and physical activity participation (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2008; Sport England, 2007a) that were established to address increasing fragmentation in the sporting landscape that had, historically, been hindering efforts to increase participation in sport (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Charlton, 2010). As such, in keeping with the goal of simplification highlighted by Houlihan and Green (2009), CSPAPs were created as a principal mechanism for the coordinated implementation of sport policy in England through which national policy was translated into local plans (McDonald, 2005).

As such, argues Grix (2010), CSPAPs tend to resemble partnerships in name only, instead reflecting collections of agencies reliant on government funding for survival and who are obligated to ensure the delivery of pre-determined policy. Indeed, as part of a broad political system that is underpinned by performance frameworks like Best Value, it is possible to argue that CSPAPs, from the outset, were designed as embedded features of local governance.

This certainly seems to be played out in the case of CSNs. As core components of CSPAPs, the primary role of CSNs is to assist local authorities in identifying local needs and priorities concerning opportunities for sport and physical activity and to develop action plans for their delivery (Sport England, 2007a). As such, CSNs link into a wider set of inter-organisational relationships found within local governance. This is evidenced in the roles outlined by Sport England (2007), which are synonymous with those of LSPs but with a specific emphasis on sport and physical activity (Figure 1, overleaf).

Figure 1: Functional overlap between CSNs and LSPs

CSNs   ⟵——————————⟶   LSPs
Strategic coordination for local area
Provide effective local leadership
Link to established local networks / plans
Identify local needs / priorities
Support achievement of local performance indicators
Contribute towards national performance indicators
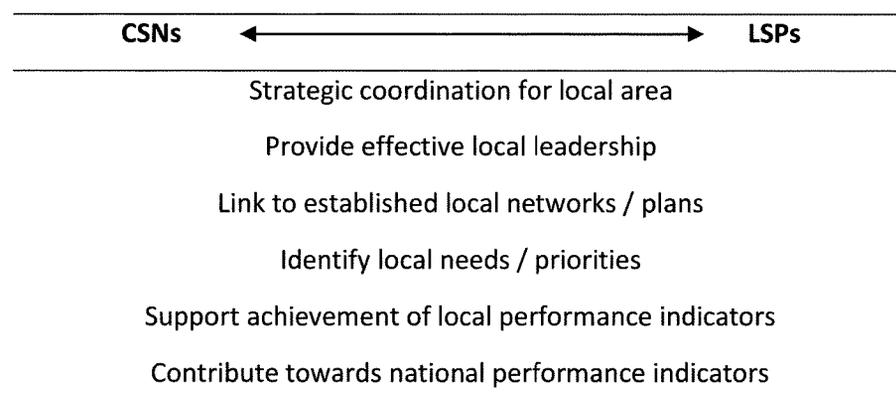
(Derived from: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007a; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2001; Sport England, 2007a).

In performing these roles CSNs are uniquely positioned to support ambitions for sporting success (Sport England, 2008a) and those for wider participation in physical activity outlined by National Indicator 8 (NI8) which measures adult participation in 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise and light intensity sports for example, pilates and croquet, including participants aged 65 years old and over (Audit Commission, 2008; DCMS, 2008). This contributes to the government's overall public service agreements for coordinating sporting and cultural objectives (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008). The multitude of sport and non-sport objectives with which CSNs are concerned certainly seem to indicate that, more than partnership working from the bottom-up, they would seem to resemble 'enforced' partnerships which Grix (2010: p166) suggests are characterised by unequal, and asymmetric, power relations. Consequently, suggest Phillpots *et al.* (2010), a paradox within policy making has arisen whereby decentred approaches, such as partnership working, is generally encouraged as a principal means of governance, yet hierarchical structures characterised by managerialism are evident within the sports sector. Problematically, this might lead to a greater pressure on sports organisations to deliver pre-determined outcomes with resources that are already stretched (Hoye *et al.*, 2010). Crucially, one might suggest, this might encourage agencies to focus on a narrow set of objectives which fails to encourage partnership working and the sharing of information and best practice.

2.5.2 CSNs and the Single for sport

The Single Delivery System for sport is a comprehensive system linking national strategy to local delivery. The System aims to provide a structure for more effective strategies based on integrated management and planning of opportunities for encouraging sporting and physical activity participation (Sport England, 2004). It is within this system that CSNs form

a critical link. Given their location between the strategic functions of CSPAPs and organisations and individuals working at the local level (Figure 2, oveleaf), CSNs are ideally positioned to influence more general strategies for community well being. Inherent within CSNs is a requirement that they contribute to objectives outlined in Local Area Agreements (LAAs). These outline the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners for community health and well being for example, strategies on tackling obesity (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006c). As such, it is possible to identify a continuing theme which essentially ties local stakeholders within CSNs to tightly defined performance criteria.

This, one might suggest, is indicative of the broad system of performance management that has been imposed within the sport and physical activity policy areas in pursuit of greater efficiency. Phillpots *et al*. (2010: p6) note that Regional Sports Boards (RSBs), which had been established to oversee the delivery of strategies to increase participation in sport and physical activity at the regional level, were removed because they were 'a superfluous level of bureaucracy'. Whilst this may appear to be rationale from the perspective that they were impeding efficiency one might also suggest that dismantling the RSBs has, essentially, left CSPAPs in a potentially weakened position. At present it is unclear how the recent changes will impact the Single Delivery System. Indeed, Phillpots *et al*. (2010) usefully point out that the tight control to which CSPAPs are subjected limits their autonomy and thus their ability to influence grass roots sports development.

Figure 2: The Single Delivery System

DCMS / Sport England Other government departments National Governing Bodies Trusts Independent Bodies	$n = 49.$ Tasked with implementing PSA.1 and PSA.3 Measure performance and outcomes Channel for communication Strategic coordination and planning	Development of: Sports coaches Volunteers Officials Staff
National partners	**County Sports and Physical Activity Partnerships**	**People behind the people**
Regional partners	**Community Sports Networks**	**People taking part**
Regional Sports Boards ($n = 9.$ Interpret policy, provide expert advice) Health Sector Education Sector Local Authorities	Identify local priorities Increase participation 1%/year Align partners for action Raise awareness of sport and physical activity	All participants in sport and physical activity

(Crone and Baker, 2009: p121).

Despite the suggestion that CSPAPs, and by association CSNs, may have limited potential for involving local stakeholders in the development of community sport and physical activity it is evident that the perceived symbiotic relationship between participation in sport and physical activity and other outcomes put forward in Game Plan is retained in recent policy. Indeed, Green (2004: p374) highlights a key assumption in the document which, he suggests, focused on the 'symbiotic, and overtly instrumental, relationship between sport (and increased physical activity, in general), education and health policy.' Reflecting on Sport England's recent strategy for sport, it would appear that this still holds true, where it is stated that 'sport can and does play a major role in achieving wider social and economic benefits - notably on the health front' (Sport England, 2008a: p1). Hoye *et al.*

(2010) help us to understand this overly positive association between sport participation and non-sporting outcomes including physical activity participation and urban regeneration remains despite the somewhat tenuous nature of evidence (Coalter, 2007). They identify a number features that appear to demonstrate a symbiotic relationship which can be summarised as follows:

- There is a natural connection between participation in sport and participation in physical activity which can be exploited in strategies and policies.

- The place, role and nature of sport makes sports settings, for example sports clubs, useful places to link sport to wider health promotion campaigns

- The structure and regulation of sport means that it is easier for governments to influence participants effectively than those participating in unstructured physical activity

- The physical and human resource infrastructure within sports organisations enables funding to be channelled easily and spent effectively

- Participation in sport might also lead to greater social and mental health.

- Sports organisations are potentially able to assist novice sport participants into elite performers, thus enhancing other sport-specific objectives

- It is easier to measure participation levels in formalised sport settings that unstructured or informal settings, thus assisting enabling the gathering of accurate data

(Derived from Hoye *et al.*, 2010: pp. 118-119).

The significance of these features, one could argue, is that they provide a compelling platform from which to address numerous policy areas at varying levels. One could suggest,

therefore, that regardless of the present political and economic turmoil certain aspects of the Single Delivery System are likely to be retained in support of wider Governmental policy objectives. However, it is difficult at this stage to see how a modified system will look. Usefully, Brookes and Wiggan (2009: p407), highlight that a fundamental question now being posed by changes in policy is the extent to which the public is prepared to relinquish sport for the 'greater good' in favour of sporting success in the London Olympic Games.

Despite this lack of clarity, considering that the Government's long-term vision for public health in England as laid out in the recent White Paper (Department of Health, 2010) states that 'Government is radically shifting power to local communities, enabling them to improve health throughout people's lives, reduce inequalities and focus on the needs of the local population', it is possible to infer that community partnerships will retain a core role in government strategy for public health and thus policies for sport and physical activity. Evident within the approach presently being endorsed by the Coalition Government is the significance of community and volunteer groups to social action and decision making (Cabinet Office, 2010). At this stage, how this will translate it practice is difficult to assess. However, Hoye *et al.* (2010) make the convincing argument that a greater reliance on community stakeholders, including sports organisations, will place increasing pressure on the capacities and skills of individuals and agencies already struggling to cope with the patchwork of regulation and performance management within local settings. Hence, although one could argue that CSNs will maintain a catalytic function in the development and delivery of community sport and physical activity initiatives, it is possible that certain sacrifices or compromises will have to be made.

2.5.3   Developing the evidence base

Despite the appeal of CSNs in providing a mechanism for coordinating local activity in support of community sport and physical activity opportunities there is little evidence concerning their use. Indeed, sport and recreation have only recently begun to be used as a core setting for the promotion of public health and research in this area remains in its infancy (Casey *et al.*, 2007; Parent and Harvey, 2009). Consequently, little specific evidence exists concerning partnership working in this context and the implications for those involved. Therefore, if the underpinning rationale of CSNs is to provide some form of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005), it is pertinent to investigate stakeholder perceptions concerning how this translates into practice. Indeed, it is recognised that shifts in governance have intensified pressure on those traditionally left out of decision making for example, volunteer groups, to become partners in processes for change (Houlihan, 2008). Consequently, CSNs may be subject to a variety of influences and pressures highlighted in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 that challenge partnerships in practice. At present, little specific evidence concerning these exists. Hence, further research investigating the context of partnership and relationships between stakeholders is warranted (Doherty and Misener, 2008; Lindsey, 2006).

The literature on partnership has employed an extensive range of approaches with which to develop an understanding of partnership working. Numerous frameworks have been developed with which to explore various aspects including network effectiveness (Provan and Milward, 2001), the concept of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005), the core dimensions of joined-up working, for example shared leadership (Ling, 2002), and the implementation, outputs, outcomes and contexts of partnerships (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). In addition, the literature presents several

examples of partnership models which outline differences between strategic and communicative types of collaborative behaviour (McDonald, 2005), the benefits of effective partnership working (Boydell and Rugkåsa, 2007), the importance of partner relationships (Brinkerhoff, 2002), and pathways through which partnership processes lead to effective community involvement in problem solving (Lasker and Weiss, 2003b). Furthermore, in order to unpack partnership processes, contexts and outcomes a variety of tools have been employed which provide researchers with a means of capturing the complexity of partnership structures, functions and processes (El Ansari, 1999; Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Kenney and Sofaer, 2001; Rogers *et al.*, 2003).

However, despite the emphasis placed on partnership working at the community level (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2008; Sport England, 2004; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002), one might argue that the inherent value of the various frameworks, models and tools developed in the literature is yet to be realised in the present context. This is because little attention has been paid specifically to partnership working within the field of sport and physical activity (Frisby *et al.*, 2004). One reason for this suggests Babiak (2009), may be the difficulty in unpacking the diversity of interests associated with partnership in this area. It is also apparent that partnership working has been tethered to a system of strong performance management for example, Best Value. Consequently, partnership working has been approached from a perspective which tends to emphasise effectiveness (Audit Commission, 1998). The problem is that this develops only a narrow perspective of partnership. For example, one might suggest that an effective partnership may not necessarily be successful from the perspective of certain stakeholders. Thus, given the varied and diverse nature of agencies collaborating within CSNs it seems important to explore the complexities, and implications, of how this is enacted in practice (Casey *et al.*, 2009; Thibault *et al.*, 2004).

2.6   Chapter summary

It is evident that partnership working faces a number of challenges. It is politically, socially, and economically charged. It has been endorsed both as a device through which to govern and as a mechanism for joint action. Consequently, a variety of perspectives have been developed with which to understand its relevance and place within society. These demonstrate that partnerships are subject to a range of influences and expectations which impact on the ways in which it is conceived and enacted in practice. Given these pressures and challenges more evidence is needed concerning the use partnership in practice. Furthermore, it is apparent that research focusing specifically on collaboration within the context of sport and physical activity remains in its infancy. As such, Chapter 3 introduces key research in this area and introduces a range of factors which might help to further the evidence base.

Chapter 3

Evidence

3.0   Introduction

Chapter 2 introduced the concept of partnership working and discussed its relevance in the social and cultural contexts of contemporary governance. This established the significance of partnership working and its place as a principal component of contemporary strategies for the development of sport and physical activity opportunities. The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relating to factors that influence participation in community-based partnerships. This establishes the current state of evidence in this area to which this research aims to contribute. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section defines the concept of participation. The second section reviews research with an explicit emphasis on partnerships between sport and physical activity-related agencies. This explores contextual, structural, and operational factors. The third section reviews research relating to participation in partnership in other contexts, for example health promotion. This identifies factors relating to participation in partnerships which this research proposes to explore.

3.1   Participation in partnership

Participation offers a useful criterion with which to explore partnership in the context of sport and physical activity. Following, Metzger *et al.* (2005: p457) participation is defined behaviourally as 'an individual's ongoing involvement in a partnership programme or activities.' Stakeholders are those organisations and individuals with legitimate interests, contractual obligations, and ethical motivations (Jones *et al.*, 2007; Lépineux, 2005; Pesquex and Damak - Ayadi, 2005). As such, this term is logically taken to include

individuals and organisations considered as members or partners with an interest in collaborative arrangements. Participation by community stakeholders is not essential if alternative approaches to community health or social issues exist (Butterfoss, 2006). However, without the participation of stakeholders collaborative approaches will struggle to develop a durable basis for effective action (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Metzger *et al.*, 2005).

Member participation contributes to collaborative capacity; the skills, knowledge, attitudes, relationships and procedures that provide the conditions needed for community change (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Ratna and Rifkin, 2007). This involves the pooling of resources, community values and networks, and a sense of community which determine the ability of communities to identify and address social and public health problems (Butterfoss, 2006). Hence, participation is important to the sustainability of community based initiatives (Norton et al., 2002). Alexander et al. (2003) identify five key attributes of sustainability including outcomes-based advocacy, vision-focus balance, systems orientation, infrastructure development and community linkages. They suggest that these are important to sustainability because, together, they contribute to consequential value i.e. the 'efficiency, security, productiveness, legitimacy, and adaptability of particular collaborative efforts, or even of collaboration in general, especially relative to noncollaborative [sic] efforts' (Alexander et al., 2003: p 134S). The utility of this concept is that it draws attention to collaborative capacity i.e. the skills, knowledge, attitudes, relationships and procedures that provide the conditions needed for community change (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Ratna and Rifkin, 2007). As such, paying attention to these attribute might provide a useful means of creating value within partnerships and, ultimately, improving long term sustainability. As such, it is important to understand

partnership structure and the nature of partner roles, contributions and relationships within and between members and the community (Alexander *et al.*, 2003).

Usefully, the number of active roles assumed by members and the amount of time contributed to collaborative activities may provide indicators of the degree of participation (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). Community partnerships rely on the willingness, capability, and involvement of their members in decision making, leadership, and direction (Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003). In practice, however, the recruitment and retaining of partners may prove difficult where there is little history of cooperation and trust (Lasker *et al.*, 2001). Consequently, mobilising community stakeholders to participate in partnership remains a fundamental challenge (Butterfoss, 2006; Chinman *et al.*, 1996; Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). Hence, more evidence is required concerning the collaborative processes that promote community involvement (Lasker and Weiss, 2003a). Given the diversity of stakeholders in CSNs and the relative infancy of partnership in the context of sport and physical activity this research proposes to investigate stakeholder perceptions of participation. The utility of this approach is that it allows for the investigation of a variety of factors. This provides for a more expansive research strategy that focuses on stakeholder experiences unrestricted by pre-determined criteria for example, the economic cost of collaboration. Before introducing these factors research investigating partnership working specifically for the development of sport and physical activity opportunities is introduced. This highlights key findings which establish the nature of evidence within this field.

3.2 Collaborating for the development of sport and physical activity

A search was conducted using the electronic databases MEDLINE, Zetoc, Science Direct and Google Scholar to locate primary research articles relating specifically to partnership

working between sport and physical activity-related agencies. Key search terms included partnership, network, collaboration, sport, health promotion, physical activity and sports development. Additional descriptors were added to narrow the search for relevant articles including CSN, CSP, CSPAP, sports management, sport and health alliance, governance, management, evaluation, evidenced-based health promotion and inter-organisational. The search yielded 18 core pieces of literature relating specifically to partnership working in the field of sport and physical activity (see Appendix A, page 397). This included primary and secondary research literature, reviews of existing evidence and professional reports investigating CSNs in England. Sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.3 reviews key findings from this research.

3.2.1   Structural dimensions of collaboration

The structural dimensions of partnership provide a fundamental challenge to partnership working. It is evident that the nature of partnership structures is influenced by the type of partners and the range of interests, priorities and expectations which they bring to collaboration (Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Within the U.K., Lindsey (2009) investigates the use of collaboration between agencies involved in developing sport and physical activity for young people within two case studies, Northtown and Metborough. Despite sharing similar objectives relating to the development of sport and physical activity opportunities for young people the study demonstrates a clear distinction between the types of structures adopted in each case study area. Collaboration in Northtown reflected a formalised and policy-focused structure. In contrast, Metborough was a looser structure which focused on specific local issues. It was apparent that the structure adopted in each area had developed in response to local contextual factors. For example, the structure in Northtown represented a component of a much broader system for the strategic development of sport and physical

activity. This had formalised pre-existing relationships through the use of a strategic plan for sport and physical activity. In contrast, the structure in Metborough was issue-based and much less formalised, lacking any specific strategic direction.

Similarly, the report by PMP also identified that that the formalisation of existing relationships helped to enhance links between partners. Consistent with the recommendations in other research on CSNs (Kempster, 2009), these were embodied within a Terms of Reference document detailing the roles and responsibilities of partners. This supported a three-tier structure that had developed to meet the functional demands of the CSN. This included a steering group, a wider membership forum, and a delivery group. The steering group provided direction and a focus for network activity. Feeding into this was a forum through which organisations fed into the network whilst the delivery group focused specifically on attracting funding. However, whilst this helps to illustrate the specific form which CSNs may take it lacks contextual richness. The professional basis of the evaluation report by PMP (2006) meant that it did not investigate in-depth member perceptions or their relationship between structural and operational aspects of the network. In comparison, Babiak and Thibault (2008) found certain nuances of relationships within the Canadian sport system which better illustrate the relationship between member perceptions and partnership structure. These authors found that management arrangements were fairly loose in nature which, ostensibly, allowed norms, values and expectations between partners to form naturally. However, whilst some partners felt this assisted with cooperation others were less satisfied and were concerned that, without formal agreements, it was difficult to develop fully any mutually agreed policies and structures. This left the partnership exposed to uncertainty and the risk that partners could

simply withdraw without warning. Hence, it is likely that, in practice, partnerships must necessarily develop structures that reflect a range of formal and informal dimensions.

Thus, although providing a specific insight into CSNs it is possible to argue that the PMP (2006) report is methodologically weak and ultimately fails to unpack the complexities of partnership working. This is a potential problem given the need to explore a range factors pertinent to partnership working in practice (Babiak, 2007; Frisby et al., 2004). Indeed, in developing a much richer account of factors significant to collaboration, Lindsey (2009) makes a convincing case for the need to understand the context in which collaboration takes place and the use of research methodologies that allow these conditions to be explored. Here it possible to observe the interaction of a range of individual, political and social factors within the partnership setting. Reflecting Babiak's (2007) suggestion that exploring contextual conditions might help us to better understand the determinants of legitimacy, stability, reciprocity and efficiency in partnerships, Lindsey (2009) usefully demonstrates the critical relationship between collaborative structures and local contextual conditions. A distinctive feature of his research is the use of a coding system derived from the two theoretical frameworks across single and cross-case analyses. This provides a much deeper understanding of the structures involved with collaboration in the field of sport and physical activity than is presently available elsewhere.

The core studies also identify the effects of collaborative structure on partnership outcomes although specific evidence is limited. Usefully however, Casey et al. (2009) found that formalised structures were associated with greater short term programme impacts than less formalised structures in community sports and recreation programmes. Although the specific mechanisms behind this relationship are not investigated i.e. cause and effect, the

authors suggest that formalisation helps to outline the full spectrum of responsibilities and commitments of each partner. Echoing the findings of Babiak and Thibault (2008) and Lindsey (2009), they suggest that this may help members to feel comfortable in participating in collaborative activities). This may be particularly important if one considers that partners bring with them contrasting perceptions and expectations and often compete for resources, legitimacy and power (Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Thus, one might suggest that where members are clear about the purpose of the collaboration and the nature of their role they may be more comfortable participating. As such, it is imperative that, regardless of the nature of partnership structures i.e. formal or informal, the collective agreement and understanding of these aspects is fundamental to partnership function.

The research by Frisby *et al.* (2004) and Kempster (2009) support this suggestion, indicating that clearly outlining partner roles, expectations, policies and reporting mechanisms might help to build management capacities that encourage a sense of inclusion within partners. Importantly, the authors also found that a lack of role clarity in partnership management was linked to poor planning. This is particularly noteworthy given that CSPs operate within a set of tight regulatory frameworks based on the management and performance of publicly funded agencies (Lindsey, 2006; Phillpots *et al.*, 2010). This is despite the apparent move toward more innovative solutions to increasing economic, political, and social pressures that, ostensibly, are demanding greater involvement of community actors within the sporting and physical activity contexts (Grix, 2010; Thibault *et al.*, 1999). Hence, it is possible to argue that the nature of processes and overall direction of CSNs is likely to represent a response to a range of external and internal partnership factors. In support of this, research by Lindsey (2010) found that the selection of projects by partnerships involved with National Lottery funding for the provision of sporting opportunities in

England was influenced by national aspirations outlined in guidance documents as well as local preferences. What is particularly important to understand here, one might argue, is that partnerships have a direct influence on the way policies are translated into practice at the local level. Thus, it is possible that the structures and processes unique to local partnerships will, to some extent, ultimately impact the nature of local services.

Problematically, the diversity of representatives common to partnership working between sport and non-sport organisations also increases the complexity of managing contrasting these external and internal demands (Babiak and Thibault, 2008). Consequently, it is essential that partnerships develop systems and processes that encourage participation including communication (Alexander *et al.*, 2008), performance management (Babiak, 2009), and the careful management of competing agendas (Babiak and Thibault, 2008; Shaw and Allen, 2006). Successful outcomes might include trust, which Babiak and Thibault (2008) argue is crucial to overcoming tensions as a result of competing agendas, and programme institutionalisation (Casey *et al.*, 2007). However, lessons from the sport and recreation sector suggest that sufficient time must be allowed for these aspects to develop. Furthermore, both the under-management (Frisby *et al.*, 2004) and over-management of partnerships (Shaw and Allen, 2006), is likely to impede progress. What is apparent here is that the management of partnerships is fraught with challenges that may test even the most seasoned expert. Indeed, as Frisby *et al.*, 2004, there is a strong case for focusing attention on the management of existing partnerships rather than initiating new partnerships. Within the context of this research however, CSNs have already been adopted as local responses to the promotion of sport and physical activity. Hence, section 3.2.2 explores a range factors identified by the core research that might help to throw light on additional factors affecting participation in CSNs.

3.2.2   Stakeholder skills and knowledge

Casey *et al.* (2009) suggest that leadership is an important aspect of capacity building by facilitating the development of collaborative structures. However, a weakness of the study is that leadership is not investigated despite being cited as a core component of the capacity-building framework on which the research was based. As a result, the effects of leadership on collaborative processes are not explored and evidence concerning the effects of leadership is not provided. Indeed, of all the core studies it is only Lindsey (2009) who pays any real attention to the importance of leadership in collaboration. Whilst this is not to suggest the studies are lacking in any respect it demonstrates the difficulty of meaningfully encompassing the range of factors pertinent to partnership working in a single study. What is particularly useful in the research by Lindsey (2009) is the recognition that, in local settings where partnership is enacted, leadership often defaults to those in traditional leadership roles.

This finding would appear to challenge the notion put forward by Parent and Harvey (2009) that leadership should be shared by members in horizontally organised partnerships i.e. those associated with modern approaches to governance. In reality therefore, it might be likely that leaders do not emerge from partnerships but are ascribed leadership positions by virtue of their existing roles and expertise. This is not surprising given that partnerships in this context are operating against a backdrop of tight regulatory control (Lindsey, 2006; Phillpots *et al.*, 2010). As such, it is likely that at least one member will necessarily inherit responsibility for overseeing the fiscal and reporting functions of the partnership. Reflecting on the research by (Lindsey, 2009), who found that leadership essentially represents a contest characterised by inequalities in power and that those in leadership positions may not necessarily be comfortable or possess the requisite skills and confidence

to maximise leadership effectiveness, one might infer that certain members might be better able to dictate certain aspects of partnership (Rummery, 2007). Thus, although failing to elaborate on the specific effects of leadership on members and within partnership more generally, the suggestion by Casey *et al.* (2009) that effective leadership may provide conditions for successful or productive partnership would appear to provide a useful basis for further research in this area. Specifically, it seems prudent to investigate the perceived characteristics of effective leadership. Developing evidence of this kind may help to develop an understanding of leadership within the unique context of collaboration between sport and physical activity-related organisations and agencies which potentially combines sets of incompatible values and interests (Casey *et al.*, 2007; Thibault *et al.*, 2004).

The core studies also highlight the importance of management skills to partnership working. Indeed, Parent and Harvey (2009) urge the development of more critical evidence concerning management in sport and physical activity-based partnerships in order to understand the reality of partnership working in practice. This, they argue, might be useful in providing a management model on which to base partnership evaluations. Consistent with this recommendation Frisby *et al.* (2004), investigating partnerships in leisure service departments in local government found that inadequate management was associated with difficulties in negotiating competing values, a lack of communication and consultation and a lack of supervision. This evidence indicates a compelling need for effective management in collaboration. This is essential if a partnership is to successfully combine the diverse interests of its members (Babiak, 2009) and to overcome challenges posed by competition for resources, multiple and evolving objectives, tension and mistrust (Babiak and Thibault, 2008; 2009).

Hence, exploring organisational compatibility between partners may be an important precursor to partnership success (Alexander *et al.*, 2008). In this regard, it is possible that partnerships with fewer members may be more likely to achieve their objectives that those with multiple partners (Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Problematically, this would potentially exclude stakeholders that might usefully contribute to bottom up approaches that characterise contemporary approaches to sport governance (Grix, 2010).

One might argue, therefore, that developing systems that ensure the participation of a wide range of members would seem to provide a more feasible form of partnership. Hence, it is apparent that partnership success is likely, in part, to rely on individual skills including communication and consultation (Alexander *et al.*, 2008) and processes that help smooth partner interaction (Babiak and Thibault, 2008). Usefully, in feeding back to CSN members in England, Kempster (2009) suggests that monitoring systems should assist partners in charting progress and help to link the partnership's work with partners' activities. This suggestion seems highly relevant in light of the evidence provided by Casey *et al.* (2007) which suggests that aligning partnership-initiated programmes with the broader community environment might offer a useful means of ensuring programme institutionalisation. Such measures might be all the more important given that partnerships are faced with internal and external contextual challenges including the securing of resources (Casey *et al.*, 2007), and wider structural instability (Lindsey, 2009). These challenges mean that managers are increasingly being asked to undertake a range of complex management tasks for which they do not necessarily have the capacity to perform effectively either within their own organisation or within collaborative settings (Frisby *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, training that assists with the development of management plans, communication, consultation skills and evaluation has been advocated (Casey *et al.*, 2009).

Given recent political shifts in the UK policy landscape and continuing economic challenges one might argue that there is a pressing need to better understand management within partnerships. Despite the evidence provided by the core studies it is not generally known what the effects of management or the implications of these are for member participation in collaboration within the context of partnership working for the promotion of sport and physical activity. For example, it is apparent that collaborations need to demonstrate some form of benefit (Lindsey, 2009). Thus, managers not only have to contend with the practical realities of managing collaboration but are also under pressure to do so in a way that delivers results. Such pressures, one could argue, might lead to the prioritisation of the delivery of meaningful outputs in favour of developing the management approaches endorsed by Babiak (2009), Casey *et al.* (2007), Kempster (2009), Frisby *et al.* (2004) and Babiak and Thilbault (2008; 2009), who, collectively, endorse systems that aid communication, decision making, shared risks and mutual understanding. Importantly, CSNs are, relatively speaking, still within their infancy as forms of community partnerships. Consequently, that the capacities and skills needed by individuals and agencies to work effectively in collaboration may need a significant period of time to develop (Lindsey, 2009), it seems prudent to investigate management as a fundamental aspect of CSN function and process. Usefully, therefore, conducting research in the specific context of collaboration for sport and physical activity may help to understand the significance management to member participation.

3.2.3 Partner interaction

Although the core studies identify a range of factors which help to illustrate the processes, for example partnership governance (Phillpots *et al.*, 2010), and the effects of partner interaction, for example, competition for resources (Babiak and Thibault, 2009), there is

little specific evidence with regard to these aspects within CSNs. Usefully, the report by PMP (2006) suggests that the functioning of the CSN structure was facilitated by a positive working climate which was characterised by open communication between members. However, the specific nature of the relationship between structural aspects or the precise quality of partner interaction was not investigated. Consequently, it is hard to decipher the specific characteristics of a positive working relationship and how this may ultimately effect member participation. Furthermore, although Kempster (2009) usefully highlights a range of issues which members raised as important to CSN success, for example communication and a lack of partner engagement, it is difficult to establish how these factors affected partner interaction. These leave questions concerning what processes or mechanisms are in play, how they lead to certain outcomes and the role of contextual factors within these processes.

More usefully, the theoretical framework adopted by Lindsey (2009) establishes empirical evidence concerning the importance of trust in member relationships. Although trust is not explored beyond its significance to the concept of collaborative advantage, the findings support the need to better understand partner interaction and its effects on participation. Theoretically, trust may provide a basis for empowerment and a feeling that communities are being genuinely represented (Gilchrist, 2009). More usefully perhaps, it also highlights that there may be certain conditions which promote stakeholder participation (Babiak and Thibault, 2008; Lindsey, 2006; PMP, 2006). Indeed, that a shared ethos among members is associated with trust in collaboration (Lindsey, 2009) may provide an initial step toward more definitive evidence concerning the precise characteristics of a positive working relationship. Hence, despite identifying a range of factors that help to illustrate the complexities, and outcomes, of partner interaction one might argue that there is a case for

a more involved exploration of these factors. Such investigation might usefully explore a range of internal and external factors. As research by Lindsey (2010) demonstrates, externally imposed procedures such as those used for applying to specific funding pots might impede partner interaction by demanding the use of very specific procedures. Hence, research approaches that reveal the nature of factors influencing partner interaction and might help to better illustrate member and partnership related outcomes.

Overall, the core studies highlight the critical importance of understanding the context in which collaboration takes place. They also demonstrate that research investigating the conditions which may promote stakeholder participation is lacking in this area. The core studies also demonstrate that it is possible to investigate collaboration from a variety of perspectives including policy networks, collaborative advantage, capacity building and management-focused capabilities. These perspectives are useful in conveying the complexities of collaboration and offer critical insight into stakeholder experiences. However, a more general picture of stakeholder participation within the present context remains to be developed. Indeed, it is recognised that the limited research on collaboration in sport leaves room for a range of different methodologies to be employed (Lindsey, 2009). Furthermore, research is yet to explore in-depth the experiences of stakeholders on a wide scale or tap into the range of constructs used in research on collaboration in other fields. Indeed, given the use of largely qualitative methodologies and relatively small samples a further limitation of the core studies is the inability to compare results like-for-like with research in other areas, for example, partnership working in health promotion. Based on this finding, and supported by recommendations in research (Granner and Sharpe, 2004), the current research proposes an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods in order to build upon existing empirical evidence. As such, attention is now

turned to research investigating collaboration in a variety of other contexts. This highlights factors relating to participation in partnership that may be usefully employed in research on collaboration in the context of community sport and physical activity.

3.3   Characteristics of collaborative processes

The core studies indicate that stakeholder participation in collaboration is multifaceted, complex, and subject to a range of influences from internal and external contextual factors. Given the complexity of collaborative working it is important to understand how collaborative processes and outcomes vary across different forms of collaboration (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). Extensive literature has investigated partnership working within the wider sphere of public health including those addressing substance abuse (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Fawcett *et al.*, 1997; Florin *et al.*, 1993; Hays *et al.*, 2000; Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993), tobacco control (Gottlieb *et al.*, 1993; Rogers *et al.*, 1993), education of health professionals (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001), and the prevention of teenage pregnancy (Kramer *et al.*, 2000). In addition, numerous assessment tools have been developed with which to understand the processes of partnership working (Einarsen *et al.*, 2007; Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Lasker *et al.*, 2001; Smith *et al.*, 2006; Schulz *et al.*, 1995; Wallerstein *et al.*, 2002), and the stages of development (Florin *et al.*, 1993; Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Gottlieb *et al.*, 1993).

The wide scope of research on partnership demonstrates not only the variety of perspectives but the also the challenge of understanding and interpreting partnership as a concept. For example, despite the widespread endorsement of collaborative approaches to address community problems, relatively little is known about how effective they are in reaching their goals (Weech-Moldonado *et al.*, 2003). If one recognises that contemporary

partnership working in the sport and physical activity context is, to all intents and purposes, expected to lead to greater efficiency at the local level and increased participation overall (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Charlton, 2010; Grix, 2010), it seems fundamentally important to understand how this is achieved. Ultimate indicators of success suggest Butterfoss *et al.* (1993) reflect the attainment of the collaborative mission, goals, and objectives. Indeed, providing performance feedback has been recommended as a potential means of improving collaborative productivity and effectiveness (Franciso *et al.*, 1993). Problematically however, indicators of collaborative functions that predict success have yet to be developed (Butterfoss, 2006). Importantly, it has also been suggested that there is a lack of operational guidance for those working in partnership (Evans and Killoran, 2000). Hence, it is apparent that although research has much to offer those working in partnership, framing evidence in a way that is meaningful and useful remains a challenge. This might explain the largely qualitatively-driven research identified in section 3.2 which seeks to provide practitioners and those engaged with partnerships with useful feedback and recommendations. The strength of these studies, therefore, is that they explore issues directly affecting partners and are cognizant of contextual factors influencing partnership working. In this respect, it is apparent that qualitative-driven methodologies may provide a means of framing evidence in a way that is meaningful and useful.

Given the lack of evidence concerning collaboration for sport and physical activity the present research proposes investigating stakeholder experiences of participation employing a variety of factors from research based in the wider field of public health. This approach facilitates the development of data collection tools with which to investigate a range of stakeholder experiences from a range of locations. This seeks to ground evidence

within data obtained from those working in partnership in order that this reflects the day-to-day reality of their lives.

Research on partnership has focused largely on internal processes based on the assumption that these are necessary for achieving goals (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002). However, the quality of reporting on measurement tools employed to explore these is often lacking (Granner and Sharpe, 2004) and factors used to investigate partnerships tend to vary between studies (Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). In response, the use of a range of tried and tested measurement tools with which to investigate stakeholder experiences may help to develop a rigorous approach for exploring partnership in the context of community sport and physical activity. Such approaches might also strengthen research employing qualitative methods by providing additional evidence. Thus, using factors employed in previous research on partnership may help to develop consistent research approaches. As such, sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.4 highlight a range of factors which may usefully be employed to develop evidence within the specific context of sport and physical activity. These sections orientate the reader to the range and complexity of factors which influence partnership working in practice.

3.3.1   Management in partnership

The core studies explored in section 3.2 demonstrate that consultation, communication, planning, conflict resolution, decision making and monitoring are important aspects of partnership management (Alexander *et al.*, 2008; Babiak, 2009; Babiak and Thibault, 2008; 2009; Frisby *et al.*, 2004; Shaw and Allen, 2006). Research from outside the field of sport and physical activity shows that management processes are concerned with the execution or implementation of collaborative activities (Mitchell and Shortell, 2000). These include

decisions concerning resources, the coordination of members, and strategy and planning (6 et al., 2006). Management has been described as the 'glue' that enables partnerships to stay together (Lasker and Weiss, 2003a: p131). This provides an essential structural characteristic for the viability of collaborative working arrangements (Rogers et al., 1993). 6 et al. (2006) suggest that the nature of management activities in network settings may be very similar, if not the same, to those found used for managing single organisations. However, the size and diversity inherent in community partnerships create a set of unique challenges including coordination, communication and conflict management (Hasnain-Wynia et al., 2003). This is something reflected on by Babiak and Thibault (2008), who found that in partnerships with multiple members were significantly more complex than partnerships with fewer members due to competition, challenges of building trust and prior experiences. As such, it has been suggested that successful managers may be required to employ guile and manipulation in addition to approaches more in keeping with the spirit of collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; 6 et al., 2006).

In addition, the effective management of partnership processes may increase the level of member participation (Butterfoss et al., 1993; Rogers et al., 1993). Here, managers play a critical role in coordinating relationships with external agencies and aligning stakeholder objectives with the partnership (Mitchell and Shortell, 2000). Consequently, management processes involve a range of important attributes. These may be usefully explored within the context of CSNs in order to establish evidence concerning the processes and effects of management in relation to stakeholder participation.

Decision making

Member participation in decision making is likely to impact performance and determine the relative validity of partnership (Metzger *et al.*, 2005). Where there is a high level of external control over decision making processes partnerships may struggle to implement initiatives successfully (Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003). As identified by Lindsey (2010) in a study of local sport partnerships in England, strong external control potentially frustrates attempts at the local level to promote greater community involvement. Hence, it is important that those controlling collaborative agendas recognise the legitimacy of stakeholders in decision making processes. This is because community stakeholder participation in decision making is important for increasing the cooperation of communities in partnership activities (Jones and Burgess, 2005) and promoting local democracy (Jewkes and Murcott, 1998). Consequently, it is important that decision making is perceived as ethical and that collaborative structures ensure that all members have an opportunity to participate (Butterfoss, 2007).

Internally, decision making may contribute to a climate of inclusiveness (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). It is important to combine the resources and skills of heterogeneous groups and organisations common within partnerships (Lasker *et al.*, 2001). When decision making is perceived as open and valid it is likely to bring partnerships closer to members' agendas (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006; Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003; Metzger *et al.*, 2005). In this respect, it seems essential that members understand each others' objectives, expectations and working practices. As noted by Babiak and Thibault (2009), this might improve decision making and lead to greater partnership effectiveness. Thus, given that member perceptions concerning influence in decision making is associated with collaborative functioning (Weiner *et al.*, 2002), it could be suggested that this represents an important area for

investigation and might help shed light on the relationship between partnership structure and member perceptions (Babiak and Thibault, 2009).

Communication

Communication is a process through which partnerships share information including meeting times and minutes, events, and other business (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006). Leader communication skills are particularly important for guiding stakeholders towards collaborative goals (Alexander *et al.*, 2001; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). Communication behaviour is characterised by the quality e.g. accuracy, the degree of information sharing, and the extent to which members engage in communicative activities i.e. planning and goal setting (Mohr and Spekman, 1994). Forms of communication common between partners include e-mail, telephone calls and face-to-face contact both within and outside of formal meetings (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006). However, it is the quality of communication which is likely to influence the nature of partnership processes. Open communication has been cited as an important factor in complex community programmes which reinforces connections between different stakeholders (Yoo *et al.*, 2004; 2009). Shaw and Allen (2006: p209) found that the widespread use of informal communication i.e. 'non-binding agreement processes, such as conversations or email' may actually increase the potential for conflict when it fails to adequately articulate important changes within partnerships, for example, changes to member philosophies.

It is apparent therefore, that effective communication is a fundamental aspect of collaboration and is likely to demonstrate a range of formal and informal characteristics. Research from outside the field of sport and physical activity indicates that it shares a positive association with internal partnership processes including decision making, problem

solving and conflict resolution (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). These factors may be particularly important in turbulent contexts where there is a strong possibility of conflict (Takahashi and Smutny, 2001). This underpins the criticalness of leader communication skills in partnership contexts (El Ansari *et al.*, 2009; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Huxham, 2003) which may help to inspire trust between members and help partnerships to implement their strategies (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002). Importantly, communication may have a significant influence on member perceptions (Rogers *et al.*, 1993). For example, in a study of health promotion staff involved with a smoking cessation coalition ($N = 238$), Kegler *et al.* (1998) found that communication is significantly associated with satisfaction ($r = .73$, $P < .05$). As such, it is possible to argue that communication provides a core ingredient required for a positive collaborative environment (Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993).

Planning and planning products

Planning represents a significant challenge for partnerships. Key planning considerations include clarity, comprehensiveness, relevance to the community, issues of feasibility, and contingencies in the face of barriers or problems (Lachance *et al.*, 2006). Planning can be conceptualised as a core facilitative aspect of partnership working. Evidence suggests that the mobilisation of resources and the successful implementation of programmes are associated with the quality of action plans (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Kegler *et al.*, 1998). This suggests that action plans are an essential condition for effective and coordinated partnership activities. Research has linked high quality plans with leadership (Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993). Furthermore, leaders who are able to successfully facilitate collaborative planning processes may also help to sustain member participation (Hays *et al.*, 2000). As alluded to by Frisby *et al.* (2004), this might help partners to understand the nature of their roles and establish more realistic expectations concerning partnership working.

Importantly, however, the participation of the membership in planning does not itself necessarily guarantee the successful implementation of partnership programmes. Kegler *et al.* (1998) found that the quality of action plans, resource mobilisation and programme implementation were not related to member satisfaction or participation. This suggests that the relationship between planning and other facets of partnership working is complex. Hence, whilst high quality action plans may contribute to the mobilisation of resources and the successful implementation of programmes it should not be assumed that this will by default lead to effective community programmes. For example, Butterfoss *et al.* (1996) found factors assessing coalition effectiveness e.g. influence in decision making, member cohesion, and types of linkages were not associated with the quality of plans produced by those tasked with overseeing programmes. Although this might point to difficulties in planning processes it is also possible that satisfaction and involvement with planning processes may be viewed as ends in themselves without necessarily producing meaningful outcomes in the community (Kegler *et al.*, 1998).

In terms of partnerships, however, planning products help to maintain the direction, consistency and quality of planning processes. These include strategies and aimed at achieving collaborative goals and systems devised to monitor performance (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). Importantly, data from monitoring and evaluation activities provide a means of documenting partnership development and help partnerships to compete for resources (Francisco *et al.*, 1993). The absence of planning products, therefore, may negatively affect the types of activities undertaken in support of collaborative goals. This is because learning about strategies and processes that work may provide an effective means of building organisational capacity (Crisp *et al.*, 2000). Hence, setting goals and monitoring partnership

processes may represent an important means of enhancing internal partnership functioning (Francisco *et al.*, 1993).

3.3.2 The importance of leadership

Leadership is a process whereby followers are persuaded or encouraged to pursue the objectives held by the leader and other followers (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). This involves negotiation, decision making, project management, and managing change (McKimm *et al.*, 2008; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). Effective leadership requires a range of skills including communication, building networks, running meetings efficiently, and supporting members (Butterfoss, 2007; Kumpfer *et al.* 1993). As such, leadership is an essential requirement for successful partnership working because it contributes both directly and indirectly to a range of factors including member participation, satisfaction, and system impacts (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1996; Butterfoss and Kegler; 2002; Hays *et al.*, 2000; Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993; Prestby *et al.*, 1990; Rogers *et al.*, 1993). Leadership may serve several functions including determining the progress of partnership (Evans and Killoran, 2000), and strengthening partnerships by inspiring others to adopt group values, vision, and goals that serve the objectives of the partnership (Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Hogg, 2007; Metzger *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, leadership has been highlighted as a catalyst for activity that translates the vision and goals of partnership into reality (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008; Huxham, 2003). Although certain leadership skills may be common for example, communication and operational understanding, the relative mix of skills is likely to vary across partnerships (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008).

Given similarities between the functions of leadership and management for example, producing positive and consistent outcomes, the distinction between these two factors is

potentially blurred (Bolden, 2004; Weiss *et al.*, 2002). Usefully, however, Hays *et al.* (2000) found that leadership contributed indirectly to the partnership's ability to impact community outcomes by stimulating member participation. Hence, it is possible to argue that leadership has catalytic qualities in relation to participation processes. One might develop this argument by suggesting that these qualities may help to align members purposefully so that their activities produce tangible effects. This catalytic dimension may help to distinguish leadership from management which, arguably, has more to do with procedural issues and the controlling of problems (Bolden, 2004). As such, leaders who are competent in negotiation, acquiring resources, problem solving and conflict resolution play a vital role in the implementation of collaborative programmes (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993).

Despite the criticalness of leadership skills to partnership working it has been suggested that leadership roles are often given to those without skills to lead effectively (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001). Problematically, it has been suggested that research tends to personify leadership by focusing on individual traits rather than the context or processes in which leadership occurs (Hogg, 2007). Consequently, attention is often focused on narrow conceptions of leadership. These emphasise a variety of leadership styles and the role of personalities, experience and leadership training (Asthana *et al.*, 2002; Butterfoss, 2007). For example, transactional leadership involves a simple exchange between a leader and follower whereby rewards are received by followers in return for compliance (Northouse, 2001). Consequently, there is the danger that this style of leadership may run against the spirit of collaboration if a leader's overriding commitment to partnership goals overrides the reciprocal aspects of partnership working (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). In contrast, transformational leadership addresses higher order concepts such as self esteem and encourages action within the spirit of shared interests (Gill, 2006). Arguably, it is this style

of leadership that is desirable for partnership in that it helps to articulate a shared partnership vision and empowers members to achieve greater potential outcomes (Butterfoss, 2007; Hemphill *et al.*, 2006).

However, it is apparent that leadership provides a significant test to partnership. Lindsey (2009) found that even where skilled leaders i.e. those with significant experience within their domains are present, in practice it may be difficult to reconcile traditional leadership traits within complex community partnership settings which emphasis greater equality. Furthermore, it is unlikely that any single leader is likely to possess skills that are relevant throughout the duration of the partnership (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). As such, it is suggested that a core team of potential leaders is developed who bring with them a variety of skills and talents necessary for effective partnership (Butterfoss and Kegler; 2002; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Peterson *et al.*, 2008; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). Problematically, one might argue that such recommendations may be unfeasible in small-scale partnerships where the range of skills and abilities may be much narrower. Here, there may be severe limitations when assigning leadership roles. Furthermore, it has also been highlighted that expecting all members to develop leadership capacities may be wholly unrealistic (Kramer *et al.*, 2005).

Given the potential restraints on identifying suitable leadership candidates a further approach may involve enacting leadership through rules, agreements and procedures based on lessons from previous partnership experiences. In this scenario leadership may take place through collaborative structures, processes, and groups of members (Alexander *et al.*, 2001; Armistead *et al.*, 2005; Huxham and Vangen, 2000a). As such, it is possible to envision leadership that is shared, transparent, and fully attuned to the needs of the

partnership. This approach may demonstrate the formalised and visible patterns of leadership that have been associated with perceived effectiveness in partnership working (Berkowitz, 2000; Mizrahi and Rosenthal, 2001). However, if leadership is the product of collaborative structures and processes then it might also assume certain characteristics inherent to these contexts. Consequently, leadership may take on a range of guises reflected in open or closed structures, formal and informal processes, and imbalances in power (Vangen and Huxham, 2003). Thus, leadership that is enacted through rules, agreements and procedures brings with it its own set of challenges.

Given this evidence one can argue the importance of understanding the wider context in which collaboration takes place. Within the field of sport and physical activity it is apparent that this includes a range of regulatory and performance-based pressures (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Grix, 2010) and the need to incorporate local preferences (Lindsey, 2010). A detailed exploration of leadership in the present context is yet to be attempted. As such, further investigation is warranted given the important ethical dimensions of leadership and the relationship to member perceptions and the potential usefulness of this evidence to practitioners. For example, Hasnain-Wynia *et al.* (2003) found that perceptions of leader effectiveness were strongly related to member perceptions that leadership was ethical and acting for the good of the partnership. This might be particularly important given that good leadership is not only that which is effective but also ethical (Ciulla, 1995). From a practical point of view, therefore, it is evident that leadership should take place within a democratic environment that is characterised by equality and positive social interaction (Roussos and Fawcett, 2000).

Vision

A vision describes what or where an organisation wants to be (Gill, 2006). A fundamental leadership skill involves the ability to unite stakeholders around a common collaborative vision. Alexander *et al.* (2001: p164) suggest that vision 'is leadership's most powerful medium'. Because of the voluntary nature of participation and potentially limited access to resources vision provides a means of aligning stakeholders. Consequently, a lack of vision is likely to present a barrier to collaborative working (Gottlieb *et al.*, 1993). As highlighted in the report by Kempster (2009), a lack of vision may have a direct impact on the overall direction of partnerships. In this sense, leadership is fundamental to partnership in that it plays a core transformational role (Fairholm, 2004). Alexander *et al.* (2001) also highlight two important uses for partnership vision. Firstly, it can be used to communicate the collaborative vision to stakeholder organisations. In doing so they are able to see how the partnership links to their own organisational goals. Secondly, skilled leaders are able to use vision with which to link wider community aspirations to the work of the collaborative. Without this, suggest the authors, partnership may be viewed with suspicion and distrust.

Thus, developing a shared collaborative vision is essential for stakeholder participation. This provides the basis for effective leadership and the driving force for organisational change (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Gill, 2006). The ability to develop a clear vision also reflects effective leadership skills and is likely to positively influence member participation (Metzger *et al.*, 2005). This is because vision serves a variety of purposes including providing direction and purpose, a sense of identity and meaning, a framework for coordination and integration, and a basis for developing organisational norms (Gill, 2006). One might argue that it translates the ideal of partnership into a clear and identifiable concept. Indeed, it is suggested that successful partnerships are those which establish a

shared vision which enables stakeholders to maintain a focus on collaborative activities over time (Shortell *et al.*, 2002).

This is not to suggest that a lack of vision necessarily hampers stakeholder participation, especially if other factors are present. For example, Alexander *et al.* (2006) found that leadership traits including openness and a willing attitude towards member suggestions compensated for a lack of overall leadership vision. However, whilst leadership styles might temporarily compensate for a lack of vision one might argue this is unlikely to provide a viable long term replacement. Given the often complex realities of partnership working (Parent and Harvey, 2009), and potential difficulties in sustaining a positive group culture (Kempster, 2009) it seems essential that time is spent developing a shared vision. Argubaly, this is because it helps to define what it is that is being pursued through partnership and compels members to participate in partnership activities. As such, it captures the essence of shared goals and provides a reference from which to make plans and decisions, manage change, and maintain motivation (Gill, 2006). Without vision, therefore, it is likely that the potential of partnership will be severely weakened.

Conflict

Conflict is an inherent feature of partnership (Diamond, 2002). Conflict may arise as the result of competing interests, agendas, evolving objectives, functions, and practices which are incompatible at either the individual or organisational level (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003; Butterfoss, 2007; Das and Teng, 2003; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Takahashi and Smutny 2001). Leaders that possess the skills to resolve conflict may help to engender a cohesive collaborative environment (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). Consequently, conflict resolution presents an opportunity for strengthening partnership and fostering a

cohesive collaborative environment (Bracken, 2007; Butterfoss, 1993; Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002). Indeed, the absence of conflict may imply poor quality relationships because it might indicate a lack of mutuality (Brinkerhoff, 2002). In addition, unless conflict is resolved it is likely to re-emerge at a later date (Diamond, 2002). Shortell *et al.* (2002) suggest demonstrating an open approach that involves partners working together to address potential conflict is a characteristic of successful partnerships.

Systems for resolving conflict may be especially important where partners have overlapping agendas or find themselves working alongside those normally considered to be competitors (Das and Teng, 2003). However, the potential lack of formal authority within partnerships that involve a broad range of community stakeholders may pose a unique challenge to managing conflict (Weiner *et al.*, 2002). Consequently, one might argue that establishing suitable conflict resolution strategies is an essential aspect of partnership working. These strategies may include agreements to set differences aside, the seeking of third party assistance, and partnership evaluation (Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003; Butterfoss, 2007; Diamond, 2002).

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to 'the development of understanding and influence over personal, social, economic and political forces impacting life situations' (Schulz *et al.*, 1995). Empowerment takes place at the individual, organisational, and community level and involves a range of individual, social, and political factors (Butterfoss, 2006; Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993). Given the range of factors influencing empowerment it is important to understand the contextual conditions surrounding empowerment processes (Atkinson, 1999; Butterfoss, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000), as it is likely that the aims of empowerment

processes will vary at each level (Smith *et al.*, 2001). For example, Schulz *et al.* (1995) explored community participation in activities to influence community issues at the individual, organisational and community level. They found that members of volunteer organisations reported higher levels of perceived control at the individual and community levels, were likely more likely to have participated in activity to influence community issues, and were more likely to perceive an ability to influence community issues than non-members. Although the study did not investigate other factors associated with empowerment the research underlines the relationship between participation in community organisations and perceived individual and community control (Schulz *et al.*, 1995). More recent research lends support to investigating empowerment alongside a range of partnership factors, specifically communication, which Yoo *et al.* (2009) found is an instrumental aspect of empowerment.

Assessments of psychological and organisational empowerment have been used as frameworks for conceptualising collaborative functioning (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). These help to illustrate the effects of partnership working. Thus, empowerment is useful for understanding bottom-up approaches that encourage greater community participation (Chinman *et al.*, 1996; Lukes, 2005). This may be particularly useful in the context of CSNs which may possess characteristics of collective action which (Zimmerman, 2000) equates with improved quality of life and relationships between community organisations and agencies. Hence, one might suggest that participative forms of collaboration with the purpose of influencing community issues i.e. CSNs, also has implications for perceived individual and community control.

However, critics of empowerment have interpreted it as a tool which powerful actors use to exercise greater control (McDonald, 2004). For example, there is the potential for empowerment processes to be articulated within the predetermined aims of powerful members, skewing community values towards their goals (Schofield, 2002). Thus, empowerment processes may promote certain interests at the expense of others (Zakus and Lysac, 1998). In contrast to its facilitative effects, therefore, it is apparent that empowerment processes are likely to take place within value-laden contexts. This, one could argue, will have implications at the individual and organisational level. To date, empowerment has not been investigated within the context of community sport and physical activity partnerships. This could be considered a potential shortcoming given that empowerment has been identified as a core aspect of community-level partnerships (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001). Thus, further investigation might usefully identify whether empowerment is a principal feature of partnership working in this context and shed light on the potential implications for practice and research.

Trust

A further important leadership skill is developing trust (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008). This has yet to be investigated in any particular depth in the context of sport and physical activity and may offer a means of exploring a further aspect of stakeholder participation. Trust is an aspect of individual and organisational behaviour (Nooteboom, 2003). It can be understood as an 'attitude or strategy of a principal who or which must assess...the reliability of an agent' (6 *et al.*, 2006). Trust arises within groups who share norms of 'regular, honest and cooperative behaviour' (Fukuyama, 1996: p26). This provides a platform on which to coordinate relationships without the requirement to continually seek legitimacy from other parties (6 *et al.*, 2006; Ammeter *et al.*, 2004; Fukuyama, 1996; Hudson and Hardy, 2002).

This provides a potential control mechanism in complex decision making arrangements (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2007). As such, trust can be conceptualised as a bonding agent which provides the foundations for successful partnership (Hudson and Hardy, 2002; Jackson and Stainsby, 2000; Schulz *et al.*, 1995).

Trust concerns the expectations that stakeholders will act with the interests of others in mind whatever the nature of the circumstances (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Cullen *et al.* (2000) suggest that trust represents a core element of the social fabric of inter-organisational relationships that helps to fill gaps in formal agreements. However, it is only likely to assist in coordination so long as members are committed to what the partnership is trying to achieve (6 *et al.*, 2006). Hence, investigating trust without considering other factors may limit understanding of its role within CSNs. Furthermore, it is possible to identify a range of justifications for placing trust in people including previous experience, reputation, and individual and institutional characteristics (Nooteboom, 2003; 6 *et al.*, 2006). A case in point is provided by Babiak and Thibault (2008) who found that historically positive associations between partners outside of the partnership had helped to build trusting relationships within the specific partnership setting. Thus, trust is essentially influenced by a range of factors. It is contingent on the conditions in which the trusting relationship takes place and is impacted by individual and environmental factors and the context of the relationship (Nooteboom, 2003). Trust is also likely to be influenced institutional patterns and beliefs (Walker *et al.*, 2007). A lack of trust is likely to create anxiety (Purdue, 2005), which undermines relationships within partnership (Jackson and Stainsby, 2000). As such, identifying factors which both promote and impede trust-building may assist practitioners in understanding important aspects of partnership working.

However, trust may represent a particularly important challenge to CSNs. Developing stable relationships in partnership takes time (Kramer *et al.*, 2005; McKimm *et al.*, 2008), and it may take considerable effort to manage trust and the risks posed by the range of member interests (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). However, it is only recently that sport and physical activity settings have been used as a setting for health promotion (Casey *et al.*, 2007), and, as such, forms of partnership working such as CSNs are still in their relative infancy. Usefully, 6 *et al.* (2006) suggest that in individualistic networks i.e. where there is an absence of strong institutions and external regulation, trust tends to rely on goodwill. Here trust is established on mutual expectations and commitment and is characteristically short term in nature. Thus, whilst CSNs are not necessarily individualistic in that they are underpinned by a set of core objectives this perspective is useful in drawing attention to the types of trust that may exist between stakeholders early on. Given that some members may have little direct experience of partnership working it might be argued that goodwill provides a core foundation of trust in the present context. Importantly, it seems that trust must be given time and space to develop and is not something that can be forced upon members. Consequently, one might argue that that trust is characteristically more fragile in the early stages of collaboration where formalised and stable relationships are absent. Exploring sport development partnership among non-profit organisations, Shaw and Allen (2006) found that intensive management destabilised trust between partners. Such a finding might be of particular significance within a context which demands results-oriented outcomes (Grix, 2010; Lindsey, 2006).

Thus, it is apparent that those in key positions must promote trust-building processes in order to establish more secure relationships. Actions or behaviour that damages or violates trust must, therefore, be avoided as this is likely to decrease overall trust in management,

organisational effectiveness and cooperative attitudes in general (den Hartog, 2003; Wood and Winston, 2005). Furthermore, it is suggested that people often distrust public organisations tending to trust only frontline staff with which they have had regular contact (Bachmann, 2003; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005). A further challenge concerns tensions between the types of organisation represented in partnerships. For example, it has been suggested that, the public sector has, historically, assumed that the community and voluntary sectors provide a means for achieving State objectives (Somers and Bradford, 2005). Hence, the meeting of these sectors may pose a series of challenges for partnerships. In such situations, the presence of trust may perform a key role in stabilising relationships between members without necessarily relying on central coordinating mechanisms (Powell and Exworthy, 2002). This is not to discount the role of formal regulations. Where low trust exists, rules and regulations may work to safeguard the interests of members (Fukuyama, 1996). These may subsequently facilitate the development of trust between partners through engendering a more cohesive social climate by clarifying roles and responsibilities (Florin *et al.*, 1993). This may prove especially useful in the early stages of collaboration where stakeholders may not traditionally have worked together (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Weiner *et al.*, 2000) or where differences in organisational cultures may be divisive (Marxt and Link, 2002). Thus, in practice it is likely that leaders will need to be sensitive to the effects of formal and less formal working agreements on trust.

It is also likely that some stakeholders may enter partnership with a greater ability to trust than others. Similarly, one might suggest that stakeholders may be aware of reputations of others relating to aspects of trust and expectations of how they will act (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Thus, one might suggest that previous partnership experience is likely to

influence stakeholder perceptions. This might help to develop greater awareness concerning the characteristics of trusting relationships and allow for more realistic expectations of what trust entails (Nooteboom, 2003; Das and Teng, 2001).

3.3.3 Collaborative governance arrangements

Governance in the present context relates specifically to the processes of coordination and administration that help partnerships to operate. This includes selecting members and obtaining financial resources (Mitchell and Shortell, 2000), in addition to establishing financial systems, performance monitoring, and democratic accountability (Brinkerhoff, 2004).

Membership and representation

The partnership's membership can be considered its primary asset in that each member brings with them a different set of resources and skills (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). It is commonly assumed that memberships should include stakeholders representing diverse agencies (Downey *et al.*, 2008; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000). The involvement of a broad range of members may help to build trust, enhance relationships, and advocate for community interests (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001). In addition, it may create the condition whereby partnerships are able to make more of an impact (Hays *et al.*, 2000). Consequently, it should be a concern when it is perceived that memberships have insufficient representation from stakeholders deemed necessary to the partnership (Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Rogers *et al.*, 1993). Hence, it is important that the partnership actively recruits new members in order to continually refresh and expand the membership (Downey *et al.*, 2008).

In practice, membership is complex and potentially ambiguous. For example, Huxham and Vangen (2000a) suggest that a member may only represent an organisation to the extent that they contribute a minimal amount. Conversely, they suggest, a member may be fully involved in collaborative activity and demonstrate a much greater level of representation in terms of fully endorsing the aims of the partnership. Thus, the extent of members' representation may be qualitatively different within the membership. This complexity is compounded by factors that are beyond the control of the partnership. These include changes to personnel within organisations, changes to the roles of stakeholders, and adjustments in policies which impact funding arrangements (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a; Ritchie *et al.*, 2008).

To date, no research has specifically investigated membership within CSNs across England. Such investigation might usefully develop evidence concerning the nature of representation and identify potential implications for partnership working. Importantly, although the level of member activity might represent a more accurate measure of participation than membership itself (Chinman and Wandersman, 1999), perceptions of membership are likely to impact other factors. For example, Hasnain-Wynia *et al.* (2003) were surprised to find perceptions indicating that the membership was sufficient for the partnership to accomplish its objectives had a negative and highly significant relationship to perceived effectiveness. This might indicate that diverse memberships create significant management challenges which slow partnership progress (Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). As such, one might argue that factors that would appear to be congruent with partnership working may be difficult to incorporate in practice. In support of this, Lindsey (2010) identified that the membership of partnerships based around the New Opportunities for PE and Sport (NOPES) did not necessarily reflect recommendations

made in programme guidance. One suggestion for this is that a lack of understanding on behalf of the programme body resulted in a disconnection between guidance and practice. Consequently, factors specific to the local context had impacted the development of the membership (Lindsey, 2010). Thus, partnership membership is likely to reflect a range of internal and external factors which help to illustrate the ways in which practice is affected by context. This lends further support to the case for exploring contextual factors and their relationship to the practice of partnership.

Furthermore, given that stakeholders are likely to participate to varying degrees it is unlikely that all will be fully aware of exactly who is represented in collaboration (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a; 2000b). Thus, whilst a membership with heterogeneous abilities and perspectives may create the potential for collaborative success (Lasker *et al.*, 2001) members might not necessarily be aware of the range and depth of representation in their partnership. In addition, certain stakeholders may have greater capacity to influence the direction of partnerships. Examining partnerships for sustainable development in South Africa, Bäckstrand (2006) suggests that it is those with the greatest resources who tend to dominate partnerships at the expense of those with the greatest needs. It is possible, therefore, that the presence of a broad range of stakeholders does not necessarily negate the potential for powerful and skilled community representatives to exert greater control than less powerful representatives (Laverack and Wallerstein, 2001; Zakus and Lysac, 1998). This is not to say that powerful members necessarily damage partnerships. One could argue that whilst certain members might outwardly appear dominant in that they base their activities around key resources for example, funding, other members will seek to focus on aspects of partnerships that meet their own needs. As such, less powerful members may have just as many opportunities to participate successfully in partnership

activities. Support for such an argument can be found in research by Provan *et al.* (2005). Investigating partnership for the prevention of obesity, these authors found partnership activity based around high intensity links, such as those focused on shared resources and joint programs, was much less than that based around low intensity links, such as shared information. This suggests that, regardless of status or perceived power, members rely on a range of partnership factors in order to participate successfully in partnerships.

Given this argument it is evident that membership is conceptually complex. A broad membership might not necessarily indicate representativeness within partnership, nor a set of high quality or productive relationships. Consequently, one could argue that those working in partnership are faced with the challenges of managing stakeholder relations whilst simultaneously developing a membership that is sufficiently representative and effective for the needs of the partnership. Indeed, given such challenges it has been suggested that partnerships with homogeneous members and shared socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds may prove to be more successful (Berkowitz, 2000). Although this suggestion might appear to be counter-intuitive to the raison d'être for partnership, one might argue that it is reasonable to expect that such perspectives may be evident in practice.

Power in partnerships

Power can be understood in terms of domination over others, the ability to take action, and the potential of groups to exercise collective strength (Glasby, 2007). Power is an inherent characteristic of partnership working (Derkzen *et al.*, 2008) and may take on multiple meanings in multiple contexts (Lukes, 2005). It is exercised in a number of ways including through management functions, the timing and location of meetings, knowledge

of funding arrangements and sources, and access to agencies outside of the partnership (Diamond, 2000; Huxham, 2003). The presence of power in partnerships demonstrates both facilitative and destructive characteristics. It may act as a legitimising force when it is perceived to be equal among members (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001), and may enhance trust between organisations when exercised appropriately (Edelenbos and Klein, 2007). Power in the right hands can be inspirational in helping to establish partnership priorities and allocating valued resources (Weiner *et al.*, 2002; Western, 2008). However, members are rarely equals in terms of the power they exert (Coulson, 2005), and those with the greatest level of power often dominate partnerships (Huxham, 2003; Vickridge and Ayub, 2003). Power, therefore, may act as a destabilising force and hinder long term partnership effectiveness (Blagescu and Young, 2005; Lawson, 2004). Conceptually, therefore, power may provide an important aspect of partnership working that provides a means of unpacking member perceptions of partnership working. Exploring this concept might usefully illustrate aspects at the local level that impact of partnership working in the context of CSNs.

Accountability

Accountability is a process based on the expectation that a party will need to justify its actions to others in a relationship (Ammeter *et al.*, 2004; Mitchell and Shortell, 2000). It assists in coordinating social systems (Ammeter *et al.*, 2004; Frink and Klimoski, 2004) and is a key aspect of governance in ensuring standards of quality and the efficient use of resources (Brinkerhoff, 2004; Le Grand, 2007; South *et al.*, 2005). Given the potential diversity of memberships accountability arrangements may be complicated by the number, types, and the nature of member accountability (Huxham and Vangen, 2000a). Members may, therefore, be accountable in a number of ways including upwards to donor

organisations, downwards to target groups, and inwards to other members (Blagescu and Young, 2005; Cole and Cotterill, 2005; Mitchell and Shortell, 2000). When accountability is internal to individuals they are likely to behave according to a sense of personal obligation rather than to external sanctions and rewards (Erdogan *et al.*, 2004). In contrast, external accountability can be defined by the collaborative structure, may be based on legal regulations and is influenced by professional roles and responsibilities (Page, 2004).

Where performance is linked to member organisations and the wider collaboration there is a danger that accountability measures will be lost in collaborative arrangements (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). This has important implications for member participation. Accountability introduces a requirement to comply with formal and informal regulatory frameworks which constrain member activities (Brinkerhoff, 2004; Erdogan *et al.*, 2004; Frink and Klimoski, 2004; Wood & Winston, 2005). This is evident within CSNs which are required to link action plans with externally driven targets (Kempster, 2009). These frameworks may be particularly important for coordinating emerging systems in which trust is susceptible to opportunistic behaviour (Ryu *et al.*, 2008). It is possible to highlight the importance of this in relation to CSNs which are still emerging as specific forms of local collaboration. Thus, a failure to develop appropriate accountability arrangements may impede early CSN development and lead to long term problems.

3.3.4   Proximal outcomes of collaboration

Sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3 illustrate the breadth and complexity of factors affecting stakeholder participation in collaboration. These add to the findings of the core studies highlighted in section 3.2 which demonstrate that partnership working is subject to a range of individual, structural, and interactional factors. Given the range of factors identified in research on

partnership from other fields it is apparent that much remains unexplored within the context of sport and physical activity. Hence, investigating stakeholder experiences may establish evidence concerning the effects of these factors on participation in the present context. Attention is now turned to factors that have been conceptualised as outcomes of partnership working. Usefully, these provide a means of exploring the effects of factors highlighted thus far and help to unpack the complexities of partnership working.

Community health initiatives are traditionally output-driven and under pressure to demonstrate results (Carr *et al.*, 2008; Rush *et al.*, 2004). However, linking partnership with positive community outcomes has presented major conceptual and methodological challenges (Dowling *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, it is difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of partnership in improving community health (Lasker *et al.*, 2001). It is important, therefore, to establish ways in which collaborative processes unfold and the effects of these processes on members (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Weiss *et al.*, 2002). Such approaches may help to demonstrate whether there is any genuine advantage of engaging in partnership (Huxham, 2003). This section highlights a number of concepts which have been employed to interpret the outcomes of participation for those working in partnership. It is important to note that these may also be theorised as factors that contribute to other outcomes. Thus, they are presented here as examples of factors which may usefully be employed to understand the meaning of stakeholder experiences of participation.

Member commitment and sense of ownership

The bringing together of stakeholders in partnership implies collective ownership and responsibility for collaborative action (Miller and Ahmad, 2000). Commitment can provide a

powerful source of motivation leading to persistent action even when presented with opposing forces (Meyer *et al.*, 2004). Research has demonstrated that positive member perceptions of commitment and ownership are related to participation (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004). This, one might suggest, underlines the importance of exploring member experiences in partnership in order to understand the nature of relationships between these factors.

Ownership is important in fostering the sense that members are not working solely for the benefit of others in the partnership (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001). Thus, increasing the perceived level of influence in collaborative processes for example, decision making, might help foster a sense of joint ownership and responsibility (Weiner *et al.*, 2002). This is an important aspect of collaborative relationships. When stakeholders perceive that they have a legitimate place within the partnership they are more likely to participate and contribute resources (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). This may help to overcome challenges presented by power imbalances which disrupt collaborative processes (Blagescu and Young, 2005). Consequently, it is vital that the rules of partnership, roles, and inputs of members are clarified (Andersen *et al.*, 2010; El Ansari and Phillips, 2001; Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). These factors are yet to be investigated in-depth in the context of partnership working for sport and physical activity.

Given their relationship with wider facets of partnership these present an opportunity to understand how participation effects member perceptions. For example, shared decision making may increase member commitment to the work of the partnership (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993). Organisational commitment can be defined as 'an individual's propensity to remain with an organisational' (Metzger *et al.*, 2005: p457), or in the case of this research,

partnership. Thus, member commitment might help to explain patterns of member participation in CSNs. Research from elsewhere in the literature has shown that commitment appears to be based on factors relating to how well members communicate with one another and whether defined operational policies are in place (Rogers *et al.*, 1993).

It is also possible that the level of commitment may vary between members (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001; Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). One explanation for this may be the nature of the context in which commitment is found. Lindsey (2009), for example, found that instability within the organisational context made it difficult to cultivate commitment to the partnership or to facilitate processes that encouraged its development. A further explanation may lie in the style of leadership within partnership. Transformational leadership which garners respect and loyalty has been shown to be an important factor in securing organisational commitment (Lee, 2005). Consequently, leadership that is unable to appeal to stakeholder affectations may be less likely to engender a sense of commitment. Hence, the relationship between commitment and other aspects of partnership demonstrate that certain factors may have the potential to explain the complexity of partnership working.

Synergy

This provides a further factor that may help to explain the effects of partnership working. Synergy is the product of inter-organisational working that enables individuals and organisations to accomplish more could be achieved independently (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). One might argue that synergy represents a fundamental aspect of collaborative working. This is because it represents a proximal outcome of collaborative

processes which can be defined as 'breakthroughs in thinking and action that are produced when a collaborative process successfully combines the complementary knowledge, skills, and resources of a group of diverse participants' (Lasker and Weiss, 2003b: p21).

Given the methodological and practical difficulties of attributing outcomes to community partnership (Audit Commission, 2005; Crisp *et al.*, 2000; Dowling *et al.*, 2004; Glasby *et al.*, 2006; Lasker *et al.*, 2001; Mitchell and Shortell, 2000; Provan and Milward, 2001; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002), and the need to demonstrate collaborative effectiveness (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007; Newman, 2000; Rouse and Smith, 2002; Stoker, 2004), synergy may provide a useful concept for demonstrating outcomes of community partnerships to practitioners, researchers, and funders (Weiss *et al.*, 2002). It provides a potential indicator of partnership efficiency i.e. the degree to which members' resources are optimally used (Butterfoss, 2006), leadership effectiveness (Weiss *et al.*, 2002), and may demonstrate the presence of collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005).

Non-financial collaborative resources such as skills and expertise, knowledge, connections with other people, member legitimacy and credibility are associated with synergy (Lasker and Weiss, 2003b). This suggests that the effects of partnership working may be demonstrated by aspects other than those associated with tangible benefits. Importantly, Weiss *et al.* (2002) found that high levels of synergy are associated with leadership styles that facilitate productive interactions among partners by bridging diverse cultures, sharing power, and facilitating open discussion. Hence, whilst this highlights the importance of leadership with respect to managing partnerships it also demonstrates that relationships between members may themselves provide a source of synergy. However, the same authors caution against the use of synergy as a sole measure of partnership outcomes.

They found that hypothesised relationships between challenges to involvement for example, lack of member motivation, and community trust in the partnership were not found to have statistically significant effects on synergy. Consequently, the authors recommend the use of additional dimensions with which to explore synergy in order to develop research (Weiss et al., 2002). To date, synergy has yet to be explored within the context of community sport and physical activity partnerships.

Member satisfaction

Satisfaction relates to the work or processes of the partnership, the way people and organisations work together, and the way collaborative plans and strategies are implemented (Butterfoss, 2006). Research has highlighted that satisfaction is related to effective leadership, good communication, effective management and planning, influence in decision making, and low perceived costs of participation (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Butterfoss et al., 1996; El Ansari et al., 2008; Rogers et al., 1993). This underlines the importance of developing clear roles, effective leadership, good communication, effective work plans, and predictable partnership structures (El Ansari et al., 2008; Foster-Fishman et al., 2004; Weiner et al., 2002; Weiss et al., 2002). It is also likely that members will perceive satisfaction differently (Rogers et al., 1993). As such, one could argue that perceptions of satisfaction are unique to each member.

Usefully, satisfaction provides a potential means of understanding which factors are important to partnership members. For example, satisfaction with the processes of partnership working has been shown to be potentially more important than other variables for example, demographic data, in determining the level of participation (Butterfoss et al., 1993). Hence, encouraging members to participate in meetings, to organise activities and

to work on behalf of the partnership outside of meetings may provide an important means of increasing satisfaction (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1996). Furthermore, El Ansari and Phillips (2004) found that member satisfaction is negatively influenced by increases in perceived costs even in the presence of increasing perceived benefits. Given that research has shown that high costs negatively affect the level of participation (Prestby *et al.*, 1990), satisfaction may provide a variable that has considerable explanatory potential in the wider mix of factors associated with partnership working. Here, one might suggest that it provides a means of understanding the effects of a range of factors, for example leadership and perceived costs of participation (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993; Metzger *et al.*, 2005), which impact member perceptions. Consequently, whilst not ignoring the potential contribution of other factors to explaining participation it is evident that members' sense satisfaction is a key factor in partnership working.

To date, research investigating collaboration for sport and physical activity has not attempted to employ these concepts directly to explore stakeholder experiences of participation. As such, the present research proposes the use of these concepts as part of a comprehensive exploratory research strategy in order to establish additional evidence to that provided by the core studies highlighted in section 3.2.

3.4   Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted research relating specifically to collaboration in the context of sport and physical activity. Three principal themes were identified relating to the structural dimensions of collaboration, stakeholder skills and knowledge, and stakeholder interaction. In addition, research from elsewhere in the literature on collaboration was explored in order to highlight a range of other factors which may be pertinent to the present context.

Together, these demonstrate the breadth and complexity of factors associated with participation in collaboration. It is evident that research on CSNs is limited and that there is scope to develop research within this area. As such, this research employs a range of factors using a broad exploratory research design to investigate member experiences and perceptions. This might establish evidence which helps those involved in partnership research and practice to better understand the processes and outcomes of partnership working in the present context. In response to the challenges and complexity of factors outlined in Part 1, Part 2 outlines the research methodology adopted in this research.

PART 2

Part 2 contains four chapters. These outline the key methodological aspects of the research. Chapter 4 explains the mixed methods research design. This includes an explanation of the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach and issues facing researchers using these types of research designs. After discussing a range of theoretical, methodological and practical considerations the key design features of the research are outlined. These include the number of research components, the type of implementation, and sampling considerations. Finally, attention is given to issues of quality in mixed methods research.

Chapter 5 details the methods undertaken in the quantitative component and includes details of the sampling procedure, ethical considerations, and data collection procedures. In addition to quantitative data analysis procedures details of the questionnaire design and item sources are also provided.

Chapter 6 explains the qualitative methods including sampling procedures, ethical considerations, measures taken to safeguard research participants, and data collection. Following this, consideration is given to qualitative data analysis procedures. Processes consistent with the GTM are outlined including the use of CAQDAS, conceptual and theoretical development, and theoretical saturation.

Chapter 7 outlines the processes undertaken to integrate the qualitative and quantitative data. Following a brief explanation of the rationale for mixing methods specific steps are outlined including the analysis of cross-tabulations, the analysis of means, and the analysis of correlation coefficients.

Chapter 4

Mixed Methods Research Design

4.0   Introduction

This chapter introduces the research design. In this research quantitative and qualitative research components were used to investigate the phenomenon of stakeholder participation in CSNs. To guide the reader through the rationale for this approach and the corresponding methodology deployed the chapter is broken down into several parts. Firstly, the philosophical and epistemological foundations of the research are outlined. Secondly, the rationale for the mixed methods approach is introduced. The third section introduces the research methodology after which key issues with mixed methods approaches are outlined which influenced decisions made during the research process. The fifth section outlines key feature of the research design which focus on specific design considerations including the number of components, the type of implementation and data integration. Finally, the key features of the research design are summarised for reference throughout the remaining chapters in the thesis.

4.1   Philosophical and epistemological considerations

The pursuit of knowledge concerning the world about us invariably means that research serves certain interests over others (Devine and Heath, 1999). As such, sociological research is inherently political. The formulation of the research problem in the present research was influenced initially by a need expressed both by CSPAP executives (part-funders of the PhD programme) and community stakeholders to better understand the complexities of partnership working in the context of CSNs. The research problem was further developed after identifying a range of literature relating to partnership working

within, and outside of, the context of participation for the promotion of sport and physical activity. At the core of this problem was the recognition that there was a general lack of understanding concerning CSNs as specific forms of partnership which, if addressed, might usefully inform future research and practice. As such, whilst the role of the researcher was central throughout the research the influence of external organisations and individuals in the formulation of the research problem is irrefutable. Given the centrality of the researcher to the overall research process it is important to outline a number of philosophical and epistemological considerations and their bearing on the research problem.

The researcher's constructivist philosophical orientation i.e. the worldview that underpins and informs methodology and methods (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), understands that people are 'intelligent, reflective and wilful, and that these characteristics matter for how we understand the world' (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: p10). This assumes that a real world may exist independently of human consciousness but its meaning is contingent on the viewer who may view it from multiple standpoints which contrast those of other people (Crotty, 1998; Morse *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, individuals are in almost constant interaction with the external and internal world and generate beliefs as a product of these engagements (Audi, 2003; Heath and Cowley, 2004). Ontologically i.e. what it is that constitutes the nature of reality (Gomm, 2008), constructivism is complex, recognising that the world which surrounds us is only partly determinable and characterised by constantly evolving interactions between the knower and the known (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). As such, constructivist researchers seek to get as close as possible to the research problem and locate the actions and interpretations of individuals within the circumstances relevant to the situation (Morse *et al.*, 2009).

Constructivism is connected to qualitative research (Johnson *et al.*, 2007), which aims to understand phenomena or events as they are viewed or understood in a subjective sense by those who experience them (Flick, 2002). Generally speaking, qualitative research assumes an interpretive approach which is concerned with investigating the lived experiences of the world and how this is made sense of (Bryman, 2004; Gomm, 2008). Here, reality is subjective and represents the product of human interaction and interpretation with the world around them (Crotty, 1998; Engler, 2004; Flick, 2002). Importantly, interpretivist researchers recognise that it is possible to understand this reality from a variety of different theoretical positions but also that researchers play a key role in forming representations of phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002). As such, interpretive researchers employ a diverse range of epistemological tools that seek to make sense of the world including phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology whilst recognising the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge (Gomm, 2008; Goulding, 1998; Moses and Knutsen, 2007).

The research problem in the present research concerned the need to better understand the complexities of partnership working with a view to contributing to research and practice in the context sport and physical activity. Epistemologically, therefore, this research sought an understanding of the social world 'through the exploration of the interpretation of that world by its participants' (Bryman, 2004: p266). In doing so it sought to 'capture and understand the meaning of social action for the agent performing it (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: p11). This can be contrasted with a positivist epistemology which advocates that only phenomena confirmed by the senses can genuinely confirmed as knowledge, that this knowledge can explored in a deductive sense to reveal general laws and that science must be conducted in a way that is value free i.e. objective (Bryman,

2004). Bringing this perspective to bear on the research problem required the selection of a research methodology that facilitated the exploration, and critical assessment, of action within a context-specific framework (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As such, the selection of a grounded theory methodology (GTM) was based on the objective of developing a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of participation in CSNs.

4.2   Rationale for the mixed methods approach

It is recognised that assumptions concerning what it is that can be investigated about the world vary considerably (Gomm. 2008). Consequently, research is non neutral in that it commonly serves certain interests over others (Devine and Heath, 1999). External influences in this research have already been highlighted. Here, the initial conception of research problem involved discussions between the researcher, PhD programme funders and community stakeholders. As the problem definition process progressed further factors became relevant. Principally, input from the supervision team contributed significantly to the development of a research design that simultaneously addressed the research problem and the need for academic rigour and originality. Consequently, it was determined that a mixed method approach would provide a greater understanding of participation in CSNs than the use of a single method.

The rationale for this was twofold, the first being the potential advantage of exploring the experiences of CSN members nationwide, the second being that the collection and analysis of quantitative data in addition to qualitative data would help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of participation in CSNs. This pragmatic approach is reflective of that promoted by Moses and Knutsen (2007), who suggest that constructivists have much to gain from engaging with alternative approaches. With this in

mind it was considered that the mixed methods approach was warranted given the potential to address the research problem more fully. Usefully, it is argued that contrasting philosophical viewpoints do not necessarily preclude the use of data collection and analysis methods associated with qualitative or quantitative research (Johnson *et al.*, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As such, pragmatism emphasises the relative and complementary strengths inherent within each approach whilst acknowledging the existence of contrasting philosophical assumptions (Bryman, 2008; Greene and Caracelli, 1997; Hall and Howard, 2008; Mason, 2006; McEvoy and Richards, 2006; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). It represents an acknowledgement that knowledge yielded by research is not absolute but relative and uncertain (Feilzer, 2010). Hence, pragmatic approaches may provide researchers with a basis on which philosophical divides can be recognised but also located within a much broader discourse on the nature of knowledge (Greene, 2007). Consequently, it is appreciated that inconsistencies within and between research paradigms may not automatically invalidate claims for mixed methods research designs (Denscombe, 2008; Johnson *et al.*, 2007). The utility of bringing such an approach to bear on the research problem was that it allowed the development of a more sophisticated methodology that facilitated the exploration of a broad range of individual experiences and perceptions of participation in CSNs across a of a range of locations. The ensuing research methodology is outlined in section 4.3 below.

4.3   Research methodology

It is understood that research methodology can be defined as 'a way of thinking about and studying social phenomena' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: p1). Consistent with a pragmatic stance a synthesised approach was developed that included methodological steps outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008), Glaser (1994) and Charmaz (2009). These provided a

coherent research methodology that reflected the interpretive stance of the researcher whilst creating the space for the deployment of alternative methods. These approaches are useful for producing clear analytic steps that enhance the logical flow of research (Eaves, 2001).

4.3.1 Constant comparison process

Based within an interpretivist perspective, the core constructivist grounded theory methodology of the research assumes that research is a non-neutral act in which knowledge is socially produced and is influenced by the researcher's perspectives (Charmaz, 2009; Clarke, 2007). Here the existence of multiple realities within specific situations is assumed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Hildenbrand, 2007; Robson 2002). In contrast, proponents of classic grounded theory argue a more naturalistic approach that is not underlined by symbolic interaction or constructed data (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

Despite differences between inductive and deductive grounded theory approaches, common to both is the process of constant comparison in which theories of social phenomena are constructed through the systematic comparison of data (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This process helps the researcher to establish analytic distinctions between codes that define what is happening in the data (Charmaz, 2006) and allows the researcher to follow a logical iterative process (Figure 3, overleaf) whereby data is collected, analysed, compared and refined (Bringer *et al.*, 2006). In constructivist GTM the process of constant comparison is not about describing or verifying the actual comparisons but about assisting with the conceptualisations and categorisation of data (Jeon, 2004). Through this process data is mutually constructed, relativistic, and remains partial (Charmaz, 2009). In contrast, whilst constructivist grounded theorists

recognise the subjective nature of truth and the role of the researcher, classic grounded theorists consider that constant comparison corrects researcher bias by rendering data at an abstract level that is free from the voices of research participants (Glaser, 2002a; 2002b). Here, the goal is to develop a conceptual explanation for phenomena that 'holds significance within the social setting under study' (Holton, 2007: p268). Consequently, it is argued that researchers are able to unearth, and verify, abstract concepts that leave the individual level. However, Clarke (2007) argues that it is a practical impossibility to remove all traces of the researcher. Following recommendations (Cutcliffe, 2000, McGhee *et al.*, 2007), a reflexive stance was adopted which recognised, and maintained, the active role of the researcher in the investigative process.

Figure 3: Basic iterative process of data collection and analysis in grounded theory

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      Initial purposive sample   │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐ ◄─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│       Analysis of transcripts   │                        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘                        │
                │                                           │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│   Data coding and comparison,   │   │  Snowball / theoretical sampling │
│         memo writing            │   └──────────────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────────────┘                 ▲
                │                                    │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐                 │
│   Development of conceptual /   │ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─┘
│      theoretical themes         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
                ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│        Conceptual model         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```
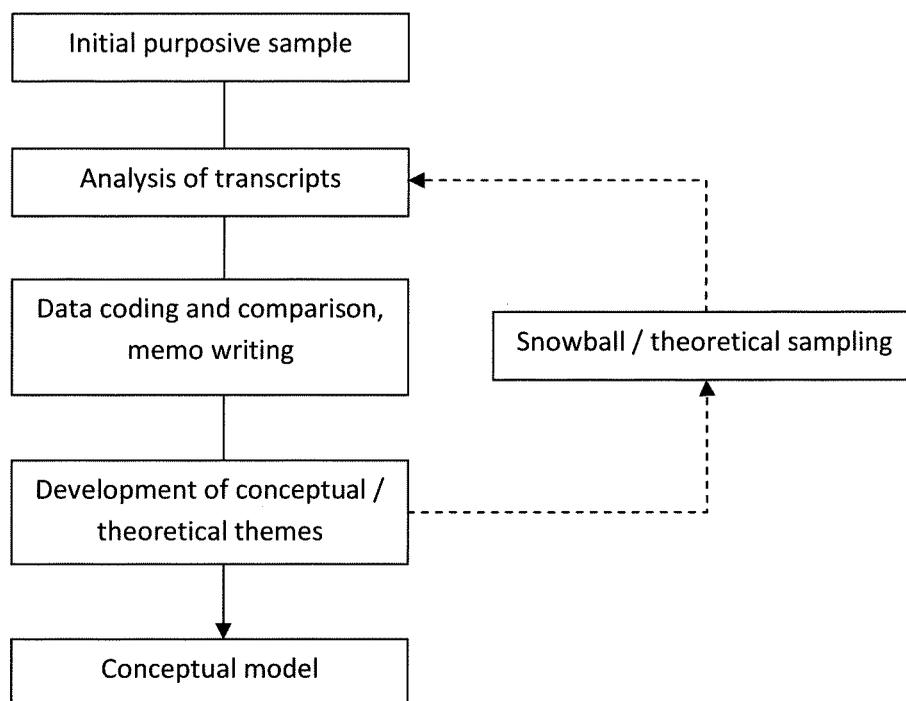
(Based on Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Despite these key differences Charmaz (2009) argues that constant comparison unites constructivist and classic grounded theorists in providing an inductive, comparative and

emergent approach that refines conceptual development. She also highlights that constructivist grounded theory emphasises an abductive logic of inquiry that checks and refines data categories (Charmaz, 2009). Hence, whilst the influence of the researcher is recognised explicitly, so too is the potential to extend the analytic process so that it moves the research beyond existing concepts. It is this that provides the basis for the induction process (Riechertz, 2007). However, the particular methods of each approach have provided an ongoing source of contention within the field of grounded theory research. Historically, GTM developed in response to the dominance of hypotheses-driven deductive research methods and provided an alternative inductive approach to social research (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a; Robson, 2002). Since its inception numerous iterations have emerged (Dey, 2004), and, as its use has expanded and evolved, so too have debates concerning the perspectives from which the core processes of the methodology are viewed. This leaves researchers to make a number of decisions concerning which data analysis techniques are utilised (Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). It is here, one could argue, that the utility of a synthesis approach is most valuable.

4.3.2 Coding data

A particular consideration is the manner in which data is coded. Coding describes the process through which empirical data is derived from observations made in the research (Strauss, 1987). As such, codes help the researcher to establish relationships between research participants and data (Star, 2007). The specific techniques used for coding data have provided an ongoing source of contention (Kelle, 2005). Specifically, debates have focused on axial coding. This is an advanced coding technique used for developing theory through the intensive analysis of single data categories after the data has been opened up which provides a detailed elaboration of relationships between data (Kelle, 2005; Strauss,

1987). The process is facilitated by the use of a coding paradigm which provides a set of questions concerning the conditions surrounding phenomena and the consequences of actions and interactions between individuals or groups (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The concern is that in applying the coding paradigm data is forced rather than being allowed to emerge through analysis (Kelle, 2005; Walker and Myrick, 2006). This, one could argue, is at odds with the underpinning inductive principle of grounded theory that eschews deductive approaches in social research. In practice, therefore, attention is potentially diverted away from the research issue at hand. This is because in seeking to fill the categories in the coding paradigm the researcher becomes blinded to emerging data. As has been demonstrated elsewhere, axial coding is likely to yield a different result to other grounded theory data analysis procedures when used on the same data (Kendall, 1999). However, one might usefully suggest that the instructive approach of the coding paradigm is useful in providing a series of useful analytic steps as the research progresses through early stages as it helps to unpack complex phenomena for the novice grounded theorist.

Thus, the utility of adopting a synthesis approach is that it allows the researcher to use these aspects to strengthen analytic procedures without necessarily forcing preconceived ideas on the data (Figure 4, overleaf). This, it could be suggested, helps to maintain a focus on the process of 'conceptual abstraction' (Holton, 2007: p272) rather than mere description. Consistent with constructivist GTM this process is further reinforced by the use of reflexivity which documents developmental processes throughout the research (Charmaz, 2009; Dey, 2007).

Figure 4: Analytic steps based on synthesis approach

Core steps	**Associated activity / explanation**
Line-by-line coding	Open coding. Paraphrase text, key words.
↓	
Creation of nodes in NVivo 8	Revise and reframe nodes using memos / node trees.
↓	
Creation of loose sets of nodes	Explore relationships within / between sets.
↓	
Development of categories (classifying concepts)	Generalisations about relationships in data.
↓	
Development of subcategories	Identify properties and dimensions (conditions, contexts, processes, outcomes).
↓	
Identify core category	Explore linkages between categories.
↓	
Selective coding	Data collection and coding delimited to that which is relevant to emerging theoretical framework.
↓	
Establish conceptual model	Fill gaps in theoretical framework. Refine substantive theory.

Adapted from Eaves (2001). Synthesis approach based on Corbin and Strauss (2008), Glaser (1994), and Charmaz (2009).

4.3.3   Grounded theory and quantitative data

Although GTM has been widely adopted as a qualitative research approach (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007a; Charmaz, 2009), it can also be used for investigating quantitative data (Glaser, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This research deployed to principal research components that collected qualitative data, via participant interviews, and quantitative data, via the administration of a questionnaire survey. This was with the aim of identifying and collecting data from a wide range of participants in order to obtain a rich source of information concerning the research problem. Consequently, it was possible to retain an element of control over the accuracy of the quantitative data which has been highlighted as a potential problem in grounded theory approaches (Glaser, 1994). This control was achieved using procedures that were consistent with quantitative research. Where applicable, this involved the use of quantitative data analysis techniques including descriptive analyses and assessing data for outliers and internal reliability (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

In order to make the research design operational it was recognised that a compromise was necessary within the execution of the quantitative and qualitative components. The point at which this compromise was made was determined by considerations highlighted through the application of Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009) mixed methods design typology. Specifically, it was recognised that probability sampling techniques were incompatible with the inductive drive of the research and unrealistic in a practical sense given the dispersion of, and limited access to, the sample population. Probability sampling techniques for example, random sampling (Bowling, 2005), are based on the logic of external validity (Kemper *et al.*, 2003). Sampling is a particular preoccupation for researchers deploying quantitative research strategies seeking representativeness (Bryman, 2004). In contrast,

constructivist GTM is based on the logic of respondent knowledge in relation to developing theory (Charmaz, 2009). One might argue that this difference signifies the distinction between positivist and interpretivist epistemologies which represent contrasting world-views. However, consistent with the pragmatic approach, it could be argues that core issue in this research is not representativeness but the purpose of seeking a deeper understanding of social issues based on the recruitment of information-rich cases (Greene, 2007; Kemper *et al*, 2003). With this in mind, sections 4.4 and 4.5 focus on core aspects of the mixed methods design that was deployed to tackle the research problem.

4.4   Unpacking mixing methods research

Having introduced core elements of the research methodology, attention is now focused on the mixing of methods as conducted within the synthesised approach. In doing so a number of key issues are addressed which help to provide a more elaborate rationale for the research design and the decisions made during the research process.

Mixed methods approaches are increasingly common in research (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). These are distinguished from other research approaches by the integration of quantitative and qualitative components (O'Cathain *et al.*, 2008) and have been promoted as useful research responses to increasing complexity in social problems (Greene and Caracelli, 1997). Following Bryman (2006), the principal reason for the research approach was that of completeness i.e. the use of two methods within a single piece of research would provide a more sophisticated response to the research problem and would provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of participation in CSNs. Such an approach suggests Morse (2003) is useful in that it may bring together quantitative and qualitative data to produce a more comprehensive account of the research problem.

From a pragmatic perspective, this rests within the compatibility thesis that embraces the potential of employing multiple methods for the purpose of addressing research questions (Johnson *et al.*, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). As such, deploying quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods facilitated the exploration of a broad range of factors influencing stakeholder participation in CSNs.

It was recognised early on in the conceptualisation of the research problem that community partnerships, such as CSNs with the goal of increasing participation in health-enhancing behaviour i.e. sport and physical activity, have been endorsed by the World Health Organisation (Edwards and Tsouros, 2006) and are central to sport and health policy in the U.K. (DCMS 2002; Department of Health, 2004b). It was also understood that, given the short history of CSNs there was limited understanding of their role in bringing together local partners to address the needs of communities (Sport England, 2007a). A number of existing problems and responses in research on collaborative working were identified. For example, research using quantitative data analysis in the field of community health has employed numerous and diverse constructs with which to investigate the processes and characteristics of partnership working (Bazzoli *et al.*, 2003; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Butterfoss *et al.*, 1996; Chinman *et al.*, 1996; El Ansari *et al.*, 2008; 2009; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Goodman *et al.*, 1996; Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003; Israel *et al.*, 1998; Kegler *et al.*, 1998; Lachance *et al.*, 2006; Prestby *et al.*, 1990; Rogers *et al.*, 1993; Weiner *et al.*, 2002). Quantitative methods commonly allow researchers to identify relationships between variables (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). To date, however, such constructs are yet to be applied specifically in the area sport and physical activity. Hence, applying constructs used in existing literature was considered a useful platform from which to begin to understand specific types of collaboration for example, CSNs.

Qualitative-based research has also investigated collaboration in community sport and physical activity from a number of angles Alexander *et al.*, 2008; Babiak, 2007; 2009; Babiak and Thibault, 2008; 2009; Casey *et al.*, 2007; 2009; Frisby *et al.*, 2004; Kempster, 2009; Lindsey, 2006; 2009; 2010; Phillpots *et al.*, 2010; PMP, 2006; Shaw and Allen, 2006; Thibault *et al.*, 1999). However, given the increasing importance of collaboration and the need to understand a range of structural and agential features it is recognised that more research is needed in this area (Lindsey, 2009). Hence, framing the research problem within the wider political, cultural and social context presents a useful opportunity to investigate participation in CSNs using an alternative perspective to that provided by quantitative research alone.

4.4.1 Key issues in mixed methods research

Mixing methods potentially provides the most complete and useful results (Johnson *et al.*, 2007) and is increasingly common in a wide range of research fields including education, social psychology, and organisational behaviour to help researchers engage with complex social environments (Bryman, 2006; O'Cathain, 2009). However, such is the extent of mixed methods strategies in social science research that questions of whether mixing quantitative and qualitative methods is viable have shifted to questions of what mixing methods actually means (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). Mixed methods research often lacks adequate justification for the approach adopted (Bryman, 2007; O'Cathain *et al.*, 2008), and the ability to implement mixed methods research strategies in practice does not necessarily make them appropriate (Sale *et al.*, 2002).

Denzin (2009) usefully highlights that the mixed methods debate is also characterised by questions of power and legitimacy concerning the nature and use of evidence. He

acknowledges that issues persist between those in science who endorse quantitative data as the principle measure of evidence and those who encourage research incorporating context, meaning and process. It has also been noted that issues concerning terminology in mixed methods research and the ways in which quality is determined continue to provide challenges to researchers (Sandelowski *et al.*, 2006). Hence, addressing questions concerning what interests the research serves may increase transparency and clarity concerning the research purpose (Greene, 2007; O'Cathain *et al.*, 2008). To achieve this it has been suggested that researchers should provide a rationale for the research approach (Bryman, 2006, 2007), clarify the purpose of the mixed methods design (Creswell, 2009; Greene, 2007; Greene *et al.*, 2001), and address validity or legitimation issues when contrasting theoretical frameworks and methods converge (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006).

It is important, therefore, to remain clear on the rationale for mixed method approaches. Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of fields in which research has developed considerable variability exists within mixed methods approaches (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2008). Consequently, the manner in which mixing takes place has provided a source of contention both for the proponents and critics of mixed methods approaches (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Johnson *et al.*, 2007). However, the danger with using a pragmatic approach is that researchers may use expediency as a means of conveniently avoiding questions concerning how the research design is enacted (Denscombe, 2008). Hence, there is the danger that the flexibility afforded by pragmatism may lead to poorly designed or inconsistent approaches (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Morse, 2005). Indeed, it has been suggested that applying several methods in the hope that they will address research questions alone provides insufficient grounds for using mixed methods approaches (Barbour, 2008). Further, research has not

necessarily been successful at linking rationales for mixing methods with the actual methods used in practice (Bryman, 2006).

Consequently, the potential of mixed methods research may be limited given the lack of attention to underpinning theoretical traditions in favour of boundless creativity (Greene and Caracelli, 2003). It seems essential, therefore, that mixed methods research strategies make explicit the intended purpose of the research and how this is linked to the methodological decisions throughout the research process. A number of design typologies have been developed to assist in designing mixed methods research strategies (*cf:* Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). These incorporate a variety of factors relating to the structure and sequencing of mixed methods designs to assist researchers facing the practical challenges of mixed methods research. For example, researchers must decide the timing at which quantitative and qualitative research strands (or components) run as it is possible to run these concurrently or sequentially (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). Researchers must also make decisions concerning the relationship between samples, whether these are identical (the same sample for both components), parallel, (different samples drawn from the same underlying population), nested (sample selected for one component represent a subset of those chosen for the other), or multilevel (sample involves the use of two or more sets of samples obtained from different levels of the investigation) (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006; Teddlie and Yu, 2007). In addition, researchers need to be aware of other considerations including sampling logic, data analysis options and criteria for assessing the quality of inferences (Bryman, 2008; Greene, 2008).

However, just as one might look to literature for a neat solution to mixed methods design considerations it is unlikely that any single typology will include all possible iterations (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). Furthermore, it is unlikely that researchers can predict all research outcomes despite a commitment to one specific design type (Bryman, 2006). Hence, the approach adopted in this research follows Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) who recommend four generic design features in favour of more instructive typologies. These include the number of methodological approaches used, the number of research components, the type of implementation and the stage at which integration takes place (Table 2).

Table 2: Key mixed methods design considerations in this research

Criterion	Design factor
Methodological approach	Grounded Theory Methodology
Number of components	2 (one quantitative, one qualitative)
Type of implementation	Concurrent (or parallel)
Stage of integration	Data analysis

These four design considerations provided the basis on which decisions concerning the research were based. These are explored further in the following sections.

4.5   Research design

The aim of the research was to develop a substantive theory through which to better understand and interpret the experiences of people participating in CSNs. The purpose of the design was to develop a research strategy that would adequately address the research questions developed to respond to the research problem and facilitate the generation of theory. Given the lack of specific research in CSNs the decision was made to develop a

sample that included a wide range of locations and individuals in order to develop data that was as comprehensive as possible. To meet this objective a cross-sectional concurrent mixed methods design was selected using a quantitative and qualitative component. This allows research questions to be simultaneously addressed by quantitative and qualitative data (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Having established the research questions and study rationale in Chapter 1, the following sections outline specific design aspects of the research process.

4.5.1   Number of components

Two research components were used in the research. Methods within the quantitative component were used to develop a data collection tool based on research relating to partnership in the wider field of health promotion. This helped to address issues of validity and reliability which pose challenges to the quality of mixed methods approaches (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Methods within the qualitative component guided decisions concerning sample selection, qualitative data collection, and data analysis. This was consistent with the overall inductive drive of the research and the objective of addressing the research questions. Dividing the research components into distinct stages facilitates the linking of different methodological approaches (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). In this research each component contained four phases. These included specific steps to operationalise the research design.

4.5.2   Type of implementation

A number of typologies are available to assist researchers using mixed methods designs. In other mixed methods research designs it has been suggested that priority is assigned to one component at some point during the research process (Ivanoka and Creswell, 2006).

However, the typology employed to assist with the design process in this research recognises that whilst the relative priority of quantitative and qualitative research components is important it is not a feature that can be determined prior to the research beginning (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). This is because methodological changes may be required as the research progresses. Thus, it is difficult to fully determine the relative significance of the quantitative and qualitative components prior to initiating the research process (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). Following an approach adopted by Hall and Howard (2008) the research design made an equal commitment to the use of qualitative and quantitative components rather than delimiting beforehand the specific role that each component would play in the research.

This research employed a cross-sectional concurrent design which established simultaneous data collection methods. In concurrent mixed methods research designs the quantitative and qualitative components run parallel to each other (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006). Concurrent designs typically use two sets of data collection and data analysis techniques to answer related questions within a broad research objective (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). In contrast this research was guided by methods prescribed by the GTM (Charmaz., 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This established the overall nature of sampling, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Without the quantitative component it would have been impossible to explore issues affecting a range of CSN members from a wide variety of locations. Thus, given the objective of developing a survey questionnaire based on existing research (Appendix B, page 401) it was necessary to adhere to procedures consistent with quantitative approaches. Numerous concepts relating to partnership working including leadership and

satisfaction were identified as the development of the network survey questionnaire progressed. However, this did not necessarily preclude the generation of theory during the data analysis stage. It has been suggested that if the researcher maintains a high degree of theoretical sensitivity the identification of concepts prior to analysis may in fact provide useful empirical indicators of phenomenon in exploratory research (Kelle, 2007). Such an approach is consistent with a research stance that bases inquiry decisions on substantive issues (Greene and Caracelli, 2003). Here, it is emerging theory that guides the research decisions (Greene, 2008).

As employed in unrelated research (Gordon, 2002), a parallel relationship between the quantitative and qualitative samples was established which used the same underlying population from which to draw samples for each research component. This purpose of this was to create a sampling frame that was wide in scope in terms of location and organisational representation. In contrast, sequential designs use data obtained from the sample in one component to inform sampling procedures in another (Ivanoka *et al.*, 2006; Thøgersen-Ntoumani and Fox, 2005; Way *et al.*, 1994). Such an approach was rejected on the basis that it was inconsistent with the exploratory nature of the GTM and would have created unduly restrictive limits on sampling and the proposed data analysis procedures. In this research the implementation of quantitative and qualitative components was based on the rationale that the sample should provide as much data as possible for the purposes of theoretical saturation (Collins *et al.*, 2007). Consistent with experiences from mixed methods research (Johnson *et al.*, 2007) it transpired that as the quantitative component developed a number of potential research participants for the qualitative component were identified. Consequently, there was the potential for participants to take part in both research components. Strictly speaking, this approach is consistent with triangulation

designs whereby results from one method are verified with another (Bryman, 2008; Jick, 2008; Greene, 2007). However, data triangulation was not a core objective of the research and it was coincidental if a research participant took part in both research components. A limited number of participants took part in both components ($N = 3$).

A plan of action reduced the research into four specific phases. This facilitated the management of the research process and ensured that research activity during each phase was given maximum attention. The four phases included:

1. problem conceptualisation

2. sampling and data collection

3. data analysis, integration and interpretation

4. inference

Figure 5 (page 123) highlights the procedures adopted in each research component and the relative phases in which these took place. Included are numbers (highlighted in circles) which highlight specific activities. These included the following:

1. Familiarisation with local systems and relationships by establishing dialogue with local CSN members. This involved attending CSN meetings ($N = 21$) and learning about issues faced by stakeholders representing a variety of organisations.

2. Establishing a broad sampling frame including local CSN members and those representing CSNs across the rest of England. Develop data collection tools including questionnaire based on existing research and interview schedule to guide

qualitative data collection. Collect demographic, administrative and experiential data.

3. Using the iterative process of GTM to collect and analyse data. Interview transcripts transcribed verbatim. Questionnaire data analysed using SPSS v.16 and NVivo 8. Qualitative data coded and assessed for interrelationships using NVivo 8 and paper-based analysis. Quantitative data analysed for descriptive data and for consistency and size of effects. Qualitative and quantitative data integrated through conceptual and theoretical development.

4. Developing inferences based on analysed data. Focus on forming credible inferences based on accurate portrayal of CSN members' experiences.

Figure 5: Relationship of quantitative and qualitative research components
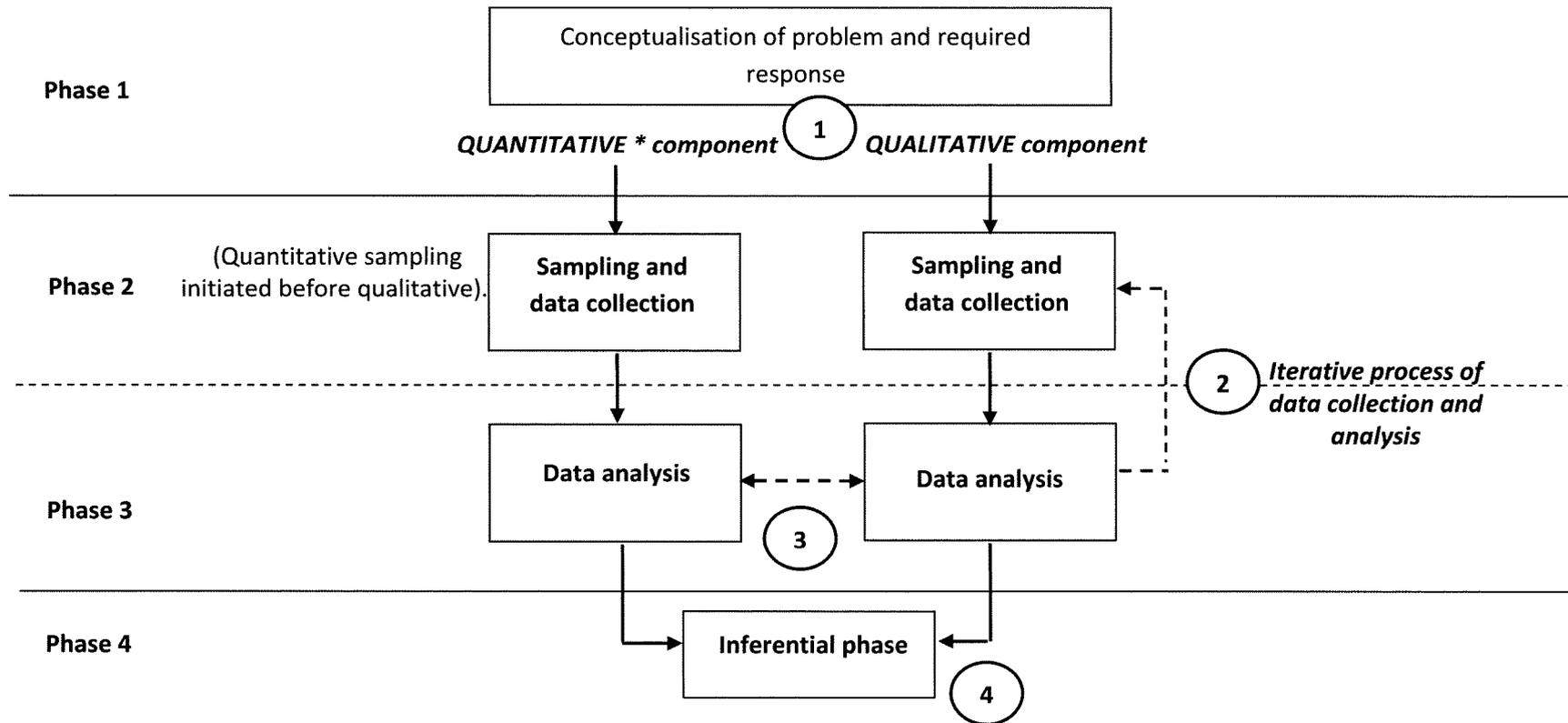
Adapted from Luzzo (1995), and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006). Note: * Capital letters denote a commitment to equal priority in the research process.

In order to manage the workload the research activities undertaken in each phase was staggered. Pressures of time necessitated that the quantitative research component was initiated before the qualitative component (during Phase 2). The lack of research on CSNs, the dispersed nature of the intended sample, and the complexity of partnership factors required a lengthy participant recruitment and questionnaire development process in order to maximise the number of respondents and quality of data. Consequently, the interview schedule guiding the preliminary participant interviews was not developed until after administration of the questionnaire survey had begun.

4.5.3 Sampling strategy

Sampling strategies or schemes refer to specific strategies used to select units for analysis (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Sampling schemes based on concurrent designs typically use two research components to focus on a single unit of analysis (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). Based on the methods provided for in the GTM it was identified that the sample needed to fulfil two important functions. The first related to respondent knowledge. Implied in GTM is the belief that there are no simple explanations for complex social phenomena (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Hence, it was necessary to develop a sample that included individuals who could relate to experiences of partnership working within the context of sport and physical activity (Phase 2, figure 5: p123). Consequently, the selection of participants was based on the criterion of respondent knowledge in order that the sample selected would best address the research questions (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). To achieve this, the study sample was selected using a non-probabilistic, or purposive, sampling scheme (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). This approach is consistent with GTM which is more concerned with the scope of the sample population than representativeness (Glaser, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

The second function concerned the ability to recruit participants that were best able to provide information concerning emerging theoretical concepts. To make this possible it was necessary that the sample not only provided information rich cases but also that it identified further relevant cases as the research progressed. To achieve this aim opportunistic and snowball sampling techniques were employed to ensure that only information-rich subjects relevant to the research phenomenon were selected (Kemper *et al.*, 2003; Robson, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005). This allowed the sample to develop of its own accord as cases were identified according to their theoretical relevance (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Teddlie and Yu, 2007).

4.5.4   Integrating quantitative and qualitative data

It is the integration of data that distinguishes mixed methods from mono-method research (O'Cathain *et al.*, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2006). Researchers using mixed methods are presented with a number of options regarding how integration takes place. Broadly speaking, these are based on the purpose of the research, the degree of difficulty i.e. whether during data collection or analysis, and the research goal (Creswell *et al.*, 2003). A fundamental issue with data integration is that there is considerable variability in the way it is defined. This is attributable to the diversity of research traditions and disciplines inherent in mixed methods research (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2008). For example, triangulation is a methodological approach used to increase the validity of research findings through the use of multiple methods, researchers, or theories (Caracelli and Greene, 1993; Farmer *et al.*, 2006; Moran-Ellis *et al.*, 2006). Triangulation requires that the underpinning methods of data analysis and interpretation remain separate and distinct (Caracelli and Greene, 1993). Ostensibly, this assists in reducing the effects of weaknesses within each method when

combined in a single study (Thurmond, 2001). In this approach data integration can occur only after data analysis is complete.

However, Bryman (2006) also identifies that triangulation is commonly used as a strategy with which to determine the degree of convergence between data. The problem here is that assessments concerning the extent to which results agree may be largely down to the philosophical standpoint of the researcher (Brannen, 2005; Sale *et al.*, 2002). In light of this it seems possible to make the distinction between the integration of methods and the integration of data. As a way of verifying methodological practices triangulation would appear better suited to the former. In contrast, other mixed methods research designs offer greater potential to integrate data. These are commonly justified within a pragmatist perspective which seeks to combine the logic of a variety of research traditions in order to find answers to problems under investigation (Johnson, *et al.*, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). This is achieved by bringing together multiple methods, and thus types of data, with which to develop more comprehensive accounts of phenomena (Dunning *et al.*, 2008).

Following this, however, are a variety of practical, philosophical and political challenges (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Gilbert, 2007). Given that the explanatory potential of mixed methods research is dependent on the integration of data (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), it is essential to explicate the integration approach adopted (Bryman, 2006). In this research the point of data integration (Phase 3, Figure 5: p123) marked a departure from integration strategies employed in other concurrent designs. In concurrent mixed methods research designs data stemming from one component do not commonly inform data stemming from the other until the interpretation stage (Collins *et al.*, 2007; Creswell *et al.*, 2003; Mason,

2006; Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). During interpretation data can be used in two ways. Firstly, data can remain untransformed. Here, the narrative of descriptive analyses is used to compare quantitative and qualitative results (Creswell, 2009). The issue here, one might suggest, is that concurrent designs may reflect a bias toward methodological triangulation rather than attempts to integrate data in a more fundamental sense. For example, Gordon (2002) validated research findings by comparing the themes identified through qualitative interviews with statistical analysis of respondent surveys. As such, the opportunity was not taken to integrate the two types of data. Elsewhere, Mactavish and Schleien (2004) used methodological and researcher triangulation as a means of validating research results. Such examples give credence to Bryman's (2006) suggestion that triangulation is common in research practice even when it is not necessarily provided as a rationale.

Secondly, data can be transformed and re-analysed using different methods. Morse and Niehaus (2009) identify only one condition in which the integration of transformed data can take place. This is restricted to studies using quantitative research as the dominant component whereby qualitative data is transformed to conform to quantitative data analysis techniques. This endorses the application of quantitative techniques to qualitative data whereby the frequencies of qualitative codes are used to interpret data (Morse, 2005). One might suggest that this defeats the point of qualitative data. Furthermore, qualitative methods may help to understand concepts and relationships that standardised quantitative measures may fail to detect (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). Hence, counting the frequency of data codes reduces qualitative data into a purely statistical format and strips the data of the meaning and context in which it is based.

It is apparent, therefore, that researchers are faced with problems whether using untransformed or transformed data. Bryman (2007) suggests that developing a negotiated account of research findings rather than using quantitative and qualitative data to test methods and data might provide a more useful approach. Consistent with this suggestion and the rationale of completeness integration of quantitative and qualitative data took place during data analysis (Phase 3, Figure 5: p123). This approach sought to capture the potential of mixed methods research by using data to develop a combined response to the research questions (Sandelowski *et al.*, 2006). The utility of GTM is that it involves the ongoing identification and integration of conceptual categories (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). As a process, it guides decisions concerning emergent concepts, data categories, and relationships between these categories (Willig, 2001). Thus, in this research it provided the methodological flexibility to identify concepts derived from data from two contrasting traditions and aided the deployment of the mixed methods design. This approach was consistent with the underpinning substantive stance on mixing methods that guides inquiry decisions according to emerging concepts and theory (Greene, 2008; Greene and Caracelli, 2003).

4.5.5   Quality in mixed methods research

Assessing the quality of mixed methods research is challenging. Not only is it possible to judge the quality of inference but also the quality of the processes that allowed such conclusions to be made (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Paying attention to issues of quality is especially important given that little is understood about how combining or transforming quantitative and qualitative data can produce new explanations of phenomena (Miller and Fredericks, 2006; O'Cathain *et al.*, 2008). Importantly, the GTM facilitated data analysis in applying a rigorous and standardised approach across both research components. This

helped to fulfil the condition of methodological consistency which is considered a fundamental criterion for quality in research employing GTM (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This provided methodological space in which to analyse both types of data simultaneously for the purposes of theory generation without the need for data transformation.

In mixed methods research it is also understood that methodologically distinct research components import specific data analysis techniques relative to each approach (Yin, 2006). Consequently, there is the danger that research designs may combine the relative weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods as much as they combine their relative strengths (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). This may potentially confuse rather than clarify research findings (Lieberman, 2005). The strength of the GTM used in this research, therefore, was the ability to produce a conceptually integrated research output using a variety of data inputs generated using methods consistent with quantitative and qualitative traditions.

4.5.6   Establishing trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is established using an ethical framework that provides credibility and dependability (Erlandson *et al.*, 1993; Flick, 2002). Table 3 (overleaf) outlines steps taken to address these issues in this research. In addition, the set of methods provided in GTM established a framework for systematically collecting, processing and analysing data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This helps the researcher to retain a focus on the emergent theory.

Table 3: Key aspects of trustworthiness

Factor	Explanation	Steps taken in this research
Credibility	Providing broader and more inclusive understanding that acknowledges complexity and contingency of human phenomenon.	Prolonged engagement in the research setting (N = 36 months). Attendance at CSN meetings (N = 21) within numerous networks (N = 5), communication with CSN members (N = 30). Design and implementation of detailed questionnaire. Information-rich accounts of participant experiences Thorough description of data and a fit between data and the emerging analysis. Use of different types of data and data analysis. Reflexive exercise to acknowledge researcher's role and influence. Regular peer review and feedback.
Dependability	The way in which a study is conducted i.e. the consistency of processes through which findings are derived.	Explicit research design tailored to address the research questions. A detailed outline of research activities and processes. Record of data analysis including emerging themes, categories, or models and analytic memos. Member checking of interview transcripts.
Transferability	The extent to which the reader is able to generalise the findings i.e. claims as to the general application of the research.	Reflexive exercise to acknowledge researcher's role and influence. Presentation and outline of research context, participants, concepts, processes, and limitations.

(Based on: Erlandson *et al.*, 1993; Flick, 2002; Morrow, 2005; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

In grounded theory approaches a number of key elements have been outlined on which to base assessments of quality including the process of iteration, the use of theoretical sampling, maintaining theoretical sensitivity, the coding and description process, constant conceptual comparison, theoretical saturation and the relative fit and nature i.e. substantive, of the grounded theory (Weed, 2008).

However, it was recognised that the systematic processes of GTM potentially result in a mechanistic approach to the coding of data without sufficient regard to interpretation (Suddaby, 2006). In response, the keeping of a reflexive research journal and regular peer debriefings ensured that the researcher remained sensitive to the data and ways of viewing emerging themes. This approach helped to explore the relationship between the researcher and the research process, 'thus acknowledging the important role of the researcher in creating the data via fieldwork relationships, the process of interpretation, and the particular personal and professional insights that he or she brings...' (Barbour, 2003: p1024). A further aspect of trustworthiness in qualitative research includes the use of negative cases analysis (Flick, 2002; Patton, 2002). This involves the use of cases that do not fit with the overall pattern of emerging results (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). However, this approach was avoided over concerns that it would interrupt the iterative process of the GTM. A distinctive feature of grounded theory is the focus on generating theory (Strübing, 2007). Consequently, intentionally seeking variation in the form of negative cases may force rather than provide a means of discovering data (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

All items relating to the main components used in the quantitative research component (N = 20) were assessed for internal reliability. This measures the degree to which items which make up a scale are consistently measuring the same idea (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). All

scales exceeded the minimum *alpha* score ($\alpha \geq .70$) deemed sufficient for inclusion in further statistical analyses (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). Questions of external validity and reliability were addressed in terms of transferability and dependability (Erlandson *et al.*, 1993) (see Table 3, page 130). Inclusion criteria were employed during the research process (see Appendix B, page 401) and all respondents were able to offer insights concerning the phenomenon of participation in CSNs. Referential adequacy was achieved via the use of in-depth interviews lasting approximately one hour. Transcripts were returned to participants to demonstrate an ethical research approach and to ensure the accuracy of the data.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the philosophical and epistemological foundations of the research. In outlining the research methodology and the core debates, aspects, and features of the mixed methods approach it has been demonstrated that mixing methods is complex but ultimately useful in the context of understanding participation in CSNs. Consistent with recommendations made within the mixed methods literature the specific design factors highlighted offer a response to fundamental philosophical and practical issues. This does not aim to resolve these issues. However, it frames the research in a way that is transparent and provides a consistent and logical thread between the rationale and methods used to address the research questions. The following two chapters outline the specific quantitative and qualitative methods employed in the research. Table 4 (overleaf) provides an overview of the design features discussed thus far. This provides a point of reference for the rest of Part 2.

Table 4: Key design features of the concurrent mixed methods design

Criterion	Details
Rationale	Completeness
Philosophical framework	Pragmatist
Methodological approach	Grounded theory methodology
Number of components	2 (one quantitative, one qualitative)
Type of implementation	Concurrent (or parallel)
Sampling strategy	Purposive
Sampling techniques	Snowball, opportunistic, and theoretical
Data collection	Semi-structured interview (qualitative), survey questionnaire (quantitative)
Data analysis	Grounded theory method based on Charmaz (2009), Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Glaser (1994)
Stage of integration	Data analysis

5.0   Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods employed in the quantitative component of the research. It provides details concerning the type and design of procedures undertaken and issues of validity. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides details concerning sampling procedures and the design and administration of the questionnaire. The second section focuses on data analysis procedures. This section provides details regarding descriptive and comparative analyses conducted on the data in order to provide an overall picture of the nature of participation in CSNs. This establishes data on which more detailed analysis is conducted as part of the iterative process of GTM.

5.1   Participants

Participants in this research consisted of a sample of CSN members located across England (N = 171). Participants represented people who had attended CSN meetings as representatives of local organisations or agencies with a broad interest in improving the health and well being of their respective local communities. These included health services, schools, further and higher education institutions, school sports development agencies, local authority services, statutory agencies, sports clubs and sports organisations.

5.2   Sampling procedure

The design of the sampling was driven by the research questions. A non-probability purposive sampling technique (Sarantakos, 2005) was employed based on the logic of identifying information-rich cases. This was consistent with the GTM and provided a means

of intentionally selecting cases that would best address the research questions. A potential issue with non-probability sampling is that it is hard to control for bias (Sarantakos, 2005). Further, sample size is a typical concern for quantitative research because the greater the sample size the more likely the data will have predictive power when analysis is conducted (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). These issues of validity are countered via the ongoing process of constant comparison provided in the GTM (Charmaz, 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) which provides a means of verifying the relevance of emerging concepts in data. The inductive underpinning of the abstraction process which helped to move conceptions of data to more complex conceptual iterations meant that it was not possible to negate the influence of the researcher (Charmaz, 2009; Clarke, 2007). This was in contrast to the Glaserian perspective of grounded theory in which it is considered that data may be rendered objective through the constant comparison of cases thus correcting bias inherent in the data over timeC(Glaser, 2002a). Furthermore, the utility of recruiting a large sample for the quantitative component was premised on the understanding that including a range of locations, actors, and networks would contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of participation in partnerships.

5.2.1   Recruitment strategy

A four-phase participant recruitment strategy was developed in order to maximise the number of responses to the questionnaire (Table 5, overleaf). The principal aim was to identify potential respondents from CSNs across England. It was identified early on that no central database of CSNs existed. Consequently, a long term strategy (18 months) was devised in order to maximise the number of responses to the questionnaire. Given the difficulty in locating individual CSN members it was deemed practical to access email addresses through contacts made at County Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships

(CSPAPs). CSPAPs are commonly linked to CSNs in providing ongoing technical support and assistance. When contact with CSPAPs was unsuccessful local authority officers with responsibility for community sports and physical activity development were contacted in order to raise awareness of the research and identify potential CSN members. It was possible to establish positive communication with the majority of CSPAPs (81%, $N = 40$) in order to develop a list of potential research participants from CSNs across England. After the initial sampling frame had been developed snowball sampling was used to identify further participants. This is a sampling strategy that identifies potential research participants through the recommendations of existing participants (Robson, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005). In total, 350 CSN members were invited to take part in the study.

Table 5: Key phases of participant recruitment process

Phase	Procedure	Output / activity
1	Attempted contact with all CSPAP officers ($N = 49$) to communicate purpose of the research Contact made with Sport England regional staff to raise awareness of research	Initial contact list for individual CSN members Questionnaire emailed to CSPAP officers for distribution to networks
2	CSN members invite to participate directly if email address obtained Further leads identified and acted upon	Questionnaire emailed to invitees Questionnaire forwarded to invitees' colleagues
3	Local authorities in England contacted to identify officers responsible for community sport / physical activity	Questionnaire emailed to invitees Questionnaire forwarded to invitees' colleagues
4	CSPAP executive network contacted to raise awareness of research	Questionnaire emailed to potential respondents identified by executive officers

Internet-based research does not alter the need to address key issues such as representativeness of the sample. However, it demands a number of different considerations (Zimitat and Crebert, 2002). A particular concern is the potential for multiple and potentially malicious responses from the same respondent (Eysenbach, 2004; Stanton

and Rogelburg, 2001). This was a concern because the selected software (Questback, 1999-2008) was set up to facilitate data collection in two ways. The first approach invited CSN members to participate directly using their email address as a principal means of communication. Usefully, Questback allows the researcher to store email addresses and send reminders at any given point. In order to establish trust initial contact with invitees was made by telephone where possible. Thus, when the questionnaire was received members were aware of its role and intended use. The second involved the creation of a unique internet address (URL) which any potential respondent could use to access the questionnaure. This provided a flexible recruitment process because it allowed CSN members to exchange the internet address with colleagues. Problematically, it also meant that the questionnaire could be accessed multiple times by a single respondent. As a safeguard participants were, therefore, asked to complete the survey only once.

5.3   Inclusion criteria

Invitees were asked only to participate in the research if they met the standardised inclusion criterion. For the quantitative component of the research this was located at the start of the questionnaire which was accessed online.

5.4   Ethical considerations

Concerns for the privacy and protection of participants remained a key concern throughout the research. The questionnaire explained the purpose of the research and made clear that participation was entirely voluntary (see Appendix B, page 401). Instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided at the start. These were designed to ensure that respondents felt safe in completing the questionnaire as candidly as possible. Consistent with recommendations for internet-based research (Hewson *et al.*, 2003) it was made clear

to participants that they could withdraw from the questionnaire at any point by simply closing the internet browser. A 'next' button located at the bottom of the first page of the questionnaire allowed participants to proceed with the questionnaire only if they felt comfortable doing so. In addition, the questionnaire was configured to allow respondents to review their responses on previous pages.

5.4.1 Data protection

It is recognised that standard email surveys do not have high levels of security (Evans and Mathur, 2005). However, the use of the Questback software program allowed a number of security issues to be addressed. For instance, it was impossible for responses to be sent anywhere but to the secure server provided as part of the Questback service. This meant that respondents could not erroneously send the completed questionnaire to the wrong location or recipient. In addition, once received by the server respondent data could only be accessed via a secure user account which required a password known only to the researcher and the nominated site administrator. To protect confidentiality and minimise the risk from potential harm all responses remained completely anonymous. No personal details relating to invitees were collected or retained. This meant that even when data was downloaded from the server it was impossible to identify the source from which it came. In addition to the provisions made in the questionnaire further information for respondents regarding anonymity was provided via a linked internet page on the first page of the online questionnaire.

A further concern with internet-based research is that it is harder to debrief respondents where, typically, they are made aware of the next steps of the research process (Hewson *et al.*, 2003). To demonstrate ethical responsibility the final page explained how the data

would be used in addition information supplied in the preface at the start of the questionnaire. Respondents were also invited to supply an email address to which results of the data analysis could be sent. It was stated clearly that the email address would only be used for correspondence relating to the research and that at no time would this be made available to or passed on to third parties. In total 15 respondents requested follow-up emails relating to the research findings.

5.5   Data collection procedure

A survey of CSN members was conducted for the quantitative component via the use of a standardised questionnaire. Surveys provide a useful means of collecting information concerning the behaviour, opinions and characteristics of a population (Sapsford, 2007). Questionnaires are a particular data collection strategy that are commonly used in combination with other data collection strategies in mixed methods research (Morse and Niehaus, 2009; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The survey was administered using the Questback survey software which facilitated the sending of questionnaires directly to CSN members.

It is recognised that internet coverage bias and issues of accessibility pose problems to validity for researchers using internet-based methods (Salomon, 2001; Sarantakos, 2005). To counter the effect of these issues CSN members were identified via the development of connections with CSPAP leads and local authority contacts across England to maximise the potential number of invitations. In addition, a URL (address of a web page on the world-wide-web) was supplied to key contacts which allowed individuals to provide members with a direct means of participating in the survey. A key advantage of the Questback software is that it allowed the research to download respondent data files directly from the secure

server. Hence, the potential for researcher input error was minimised. A paper-based version of the questionnaire was also made available which CSN members were able to download and print out for completion by hand. This was also sent to CSPAP officers upon request so that copies could be kept for their records or distributed to local CSN members.

5.5.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire contained 193 items relating to the nature of member involvement, demographic information and administrative data. A mix of dichotomous (e.g. gender), multiple choice (e.g. level of contributions) and open-ended (e.g. duration of network membership) questions were employed to collect data. The main components ($N = 20$) covered functional and process characteristics of networks. These components were measured on a range of Likert-type scales. The number of items for each component ranged from 3 to 22. Items for all main components were developed using existing research and measurement tools (Table 6, overleaf). Two principal sources were identified that provided a broad range of components pertinent to partnership research. El Ansari (1999) used items adapted from previously published research in addition to a partnership evaluation tool from the Kellogg Foundation. In addition, Kenney and Sofaer (2001) developed an extensive partnership assessment survey over a 3 year period focusing on partnership programs addressing tobacco use in the USA.

Table 6: Sources of all main components

Component*	Source	Items (N)	Measurement scale
Network management	El Ansari (1999)	22	7-point
Leadership	Kenney and Sofaer (2001), Hasnain – Wynia et al. (2003)	15	5-point
Network functions	Kenney and Sofaer (2001), Butterfoss et al (2006), Health Development Agency (2003)	11	4-point
Communication	El Ansari (1999), Health Development Agency (2003)	9	5-point
Decision making	El Ansari (1999)	6	7-point
Contributions	El Ansari (1999)	4	7-point
Participation	Kenney and Sofaer (2001)	5	4-point
Barriers to participation	El Ansari (1999)	13	4-point
Participation benefits	El Ansari (1999), Butterfoss et al (1993), Francisco et al (1993), Robson (2001)	13	7-point
Participation costs	El Ansari (1999), Butterfoss and Kegler (2002)	8	7-point
Trust	Kenney and Sofaer (2001)	7	5-point
Network strategy	Kenney and Sofaer (2001)	5	5-point
Perceived outcomes	Kenney and Sofaer (2001), researcher**	3	5-point
Network sustainability	El Ansari (1999), Kenney and Sofaer (2001)	3	7-point
Synergy	Centre for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health (2003)	9	5-point
Sense of satisfaction	El Ansari (1999)	6	7-point
Sense of ownership	El Ansari (1999)	4	7-point
Commitment	El Ansari (1999), Kenney and Sofaer (2001)	6	7-point
Empowerment	Ogden et al (2006)	7	5-point
Perceived effectiveness	El Ansari (1999), Kenney and Sofaer (2001), researcher	9	4-point

Notes: * Some items amended so that the language reflected the present context. ** Additional items devised to increase scale sensitivity.

Other sources included Ogden *et al.* (2006) who investigated the attitudes of managers toward empowerment in industry, and an evaluation tool developed by the Centre for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health (2003) to assess how well partnerships operate. Further minor adjustments were made using literature which used similar scale items in partnership research.

All question items were reviewed by the researcher in conjunction with the supervisory team to ensure that they were appropriate to the research. Partnership-based literature was reviewed in order to refine the items and a number of small amendments were made to questions in order to make them more sensitive to the sample population. For example, terms such as 'community health' were replaced with 'sport' and 'physical activity' and references to partnership were replaced with network. After the initial template was assembled the questionnaire was pilot tested on a small sample of CSN members ($N = 4$). Given the difficulty in recruiting participants it was recognised early on that only a small number of CSN members could contribute to the initial development of the questionnaire. However, the pilot sample was able to provide feedback concerning the structure of the questions, the format of the questionnaire and issues relating to intelligibility. Given that the pilot questionnaires were largely incomplete they were not included in the final data analysis process.

Given the lack of evidence in the field of community sport and physical activity it was considered necessary to design a questionnaire with a broad range of questions in order to capture a variety of network characteristics. Consequently, it was recognised that the length of the questionnaire would potentially deter some respondents. Hence, consideration was given to the layout of the questionnaire which was designed as much as

possible to provide a seamless and logical transition. Three main areas were developed. Firstly, the introductory section included dichotomous variables (N = 10) that allowed respondents to relate background information concerning the nature of their involvement such as who they represented in the networks and how involved they perceived themselves to be. Secondly, the main components were assessed using the following Likert-type scales:

1.   7 point scale; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *somewhat disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 5 = *somewhat agree*, 6 = *agree*, 7 = *strongly agree*.

Network management

Items asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of management capabilities at meetings. Items explored practical issues, such as time keeping and psycho-social issues such as whether members perceived there to be a friendly and cooperative environment.

Decision making

Members were asked the extent to which they agreed with statements relating to decision making processes for example, the perceived extent of involvement by others and whether they felt there were sufficient opportunities to participate in decision making. 1 item, 'decisions perceived influence are made only by a small number of leaders', was reverse scored because data screening showed a negative corrected item-total correlation value (α = -.204). Reversing the item scores improved the scale *alpha* score from .556 to .713. Two further questions asked members to rate their perceived influence in decision making processes and how comfortable they were overall with these processes.

Network sustainability

These items asked members the extent to which they agreed with statements concerning the long term survival of the network. Initial data screening revealed a scale *alpha* score of .120. Subsequent reversal of one item 'one or a small number of people or organisations could make significant progress without the network's involvement' (α = -.254) failed to improve the scale reliability statistic beyond α = .602. Removal of the item increased the scale reliability statistic (α = .70).

Sense of ownership

This assessed the degree to which network members felt connected with the network. Items included the degree to which members felt a sense of pride and how much they cared about the network.

Sense of satisfaction

Satisfaction related to the function and outputs of the network. Items included questions about the accomplishments of the network and the degree to which these were perceived as worthwhile.

2.   5-point scale; 1 = *don't know*, 2 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

Leadership

Leadership items focused on both the effectiveness of leadership skills (e.g. in resolving conflict) and perceptions of the leadership beyond the network (e.g. whether the network

was respected in the community). One item also asked members to rate the degree to which they perceived the leadership was ethical.

Communication

Members were asked to rate both the level and quality of communication in the network. Items included whether communication was felt to be sufficient and the degree to which members felt comfortable with communication processes.

Network strategy

These items related to the overall mission of the network and strategies employed to achieve success. Items asked members to rate the effectiveness of network action plans and the degree to which a common strategy had been decided upon.

Trust

This component asked members to rate the extent to which they felt comfortable and were respected in the network. This included items concerning relationships with other members i.e. the extent to which they were comfortable in asking for assistance and whether they felt comfortable in making suggestions or bringing new ideas to the network.

Perceived outcomes

Outcomes measured the perceived quality of network outputs and focused on impacts in the community. Items included whether benefits had been accrued through network activity and whether the network had created benefits that would not have occurred without its activities.

Empowerment

Members were asked to rate the extent to which they felt the network had created a climate in which opportunities to learn and act had been created. Items assessed the degree to which members had felt comfortable implementing new ways of doing things in their work.

3.   4-point scale; 1 = *don't know,* 2 = *not a function,* 3 = *a minor function,* 4 = *a major function.*

Network function

This scale asked members to assess the role and purpose of the network. Items included issues concerning capacity, fund raising and planning, and how members perceived the network's role in local decision making processes.

4.   5-point scale; 1 = *never,* 2 = *rarely* (1-2 times), 3 = *sometimes* (3-4 times), 4= *often* (5 or more times), 5 = *not applicable.*

Participation

Participation asked members to assess the relative degree of activity they had undertaken in the network. Items included the types of roles adopted (e.g. spokesperson) and whether members had actively sought to support the network through identifying resources.

5.   3-point scale; 1 = *a major problem,* 2 = *a minor problem,* 3 = *not a problem.*

Barriers to participation

Members were asked to rate potential issues that influenced their involvement in the network and the activities it undertook. Items included individual factors, such as competing philosophies, and organisational factors, such as contrasting fiscal years and service areas.

6.   7-point scale; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *quite a lot*.

Contributions

Contributions assessed the quality of member input. Items included the degree to which resources, such as staff time, had been committed to the network in addition to in-kind resources, such as publicity and equipment.

Sense of commitment

Members were asked to rate the degree to which members felt a degree of responsibility or duty towards the network. Items included whether members had endorsed or adopted the network's mission in addition to whether it was perceived that the network was a valuable resource for community sport and physical activity. 1 item, 'I go to network meetings only because it is part of my job' was reverse-scored to improve scale reliability from α = .69 to α = .77.

Participation benefits

This assessed the relative advantages that members felt had arisen as a consequence of participating in the network. Items included social benefits, such as recognition and respect, and material benefits, such as access to funding and planning processes.

Participation costs or disadvantages

In contrast to the benefits network members were asked to assess the extent of costs or disadvantages that arose as a consequence of participation. Items included the extent to which members did not feel their efforts were being recognised, a lack of fit between network and organisational agendas, and financial difficulties associated with network activities, such as attending meetings. In addition to the two scales assessing benefits and costs, a single-response item addressed the overall degree of balance between benefits and costs. For consistency, all items were revered scored because of the negative phrasing used in the scale. This improved the scale reliability score marginally by $\alpha = .003$.

7.   5-point scale; 1 = *not at all well*, 2 = *not so well*, 3 = *somewhat well*, 4 = *very well*, 5 = *extremely well*.

Synergy

This assessed how well members were able to achieve successes through working together. Items included whether networks were able to create innovative responses to issues and how well members worked together in devising effective community strategies.

8.   4-point scale; 1 = *extremely effective*, 2 = *effective*, 3 = *ineffective*, 4 = *extremely ineffective*.

Perceived effectiveness

Scale items related to the perceived effectiveness of the network in areas including communication, decision making, and devising effective community initiatives. Included

were items relating to specific functions of the networks including advocating for special population groups and coordinating efforts between members.

Open ended (e.g. perceived level of influence in decision making processes) and dichotomous variables (e.g. the perceived level of conflict in networks) were introduced to reduce the potential monotony of responding to scale questions. Items in the final section (N = 13) addressed demographic variables in addition to administration and performance management variables. The addition of a free-text response option at the end of the questionnaire was designed to elicit further information and allow respondents to reflect on their network experiences highlighted during the questionnaire. Although the use of this option was low (18.1%, N = 31), responses ranged from single-line answers to more in-depth paragraphs. These were included in subsequent coding procedures as part of the GTM.

5.6   Data analysis procedure

Prior to data analysis all variables were examined using SPSS v.16 to assess for data entry accuracy, missing values, data distribution, normality (Appendix C, page 426), and description of values. Questback allows the researcher to download data files directly into SPSS which facilitated the labelling and organisation of data. In conjunction with this raw data was assessed using Excel (Microsoft, 2007) to identify data anomalies and formatting issues. After amendments and corrections had been made data was stored as a single SPSS file for further data analysis procedures.

5.6.1 Missing data

Missing data can cause problems when using multivariate statistics, particularly when making generalisations from analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Given the length of the questionnaire it was expected that a number of variables would have missing data. To determine the extent of missing data a missing value analysis (MVA) was conducted using SPSS. This confirmed a minimal degree of missing data with all variables, excluding sense of ownership (6.4%) and satisfaction (6.4%), had less than 5% of values missing. A number of strategies can be used to handle threats to analysis procedures posed by missing data including case deletion and value estimation (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). However, no deletions or compromises were made in this respect because of the methodology used in data analysis. As such, the data was not amended in any way to account for missing data.

5.6.2 Outliers

Box plots were used to check for outliers using standardised scores. An outlier is a case that seems unattached to the rest of the data distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). These have important and potentially negative effects in statistical models that seek to make predictions about real-world phenomenon (Field, 2005). However, not all outliers are wrong numbers and may provide important information about the phenomena being investigated (Johnson and Wichern, 2007). Thus, after assessing box plots cases were investigated individually to confirm that they were truly part of the sample population. This ensured that they were not anomalous responses (i.e. completed by respondents other than CSN members) and that they were not attributable to data entry errors by the researcher.

Strategies for dealing with outliers include removing cases, transforming data or changing scores (Field, 2005). Deletion of such cases is possible in order to reduce the distorting effects on the data (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). However, consistent with a purposive sampling strategy that intentionally selects cases based on the logic that they are the most information-rich (Kemper *et al.*, 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), outliers provided an additional source of information concerning member experiences of participation in CSNs. To facilitate the integration of quantitative data in the data analysis process outlier cases were assessed to determine the component in which the scores were located. Subsequently, cases were classified according to whether they were above or below the normal distribution of scores in the sample. This yielded the conceptual categories of 'high' and 'low'. Further exploration of the data was then used to reveal useful differences and similarities within the data. The purpose of this was to generate ideas from the data that would contribute to the emerging concepts during data analysis.

5.6.3 Contextual and demographic variables

Descriptive statistics for all variables relating to the nature of involvement (e.g. length and intensity of member involvement), demographic (e.g. age, gender, race) and administrative data (e.g. capacity for evaluations) were calculated. Continuous variables for the number of hours spent on network activities and the perceived degree of influence over decision making processes were screened for outliers. Where appropriate, cases were grouped in order to facilitate further investigation of variables. For example, there was a wide range of scores for the number of hours spent on network activities during the previous 4 weeks (0-148 hours). Further investigation revealed 9 cases that spent 60 hours or more on network activities. Thus, using involvement data it was possible to group these cases into a group

representing 'core staff' which spent a significant amount of time on network activities compared to other network members.

5.6.4   Main components

Prior to analysis all main components (measured on ordinal scales, N = 20) were assessed for the range of values, outliers and missing data in order to develop a broad picture of what was happening in the data. Subsequent comparative analyses were run using a variety of non-parametric tests including Chi-square (χ^2) tests for independence, Mann-Whitney U tests, and Kruskal-Wallis tests. Although non-parametric tests may have less power than equivalent parametric tests (Field, 2009), non-parametric tests do not rely on precise assumptions about the distribution of the sample (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). Following Lösch (2008), emphasis was placed on the consistency and size of effects rather than statistical significance. Further details of the data analysis process are provided in Chapter 7 which describes the process of data integration. Whilst not discounting the relevance of statistical significance, using data in this way allows the researcher to assess the practical relevance of data during conceptual development. This was particularly useful for investigating the consistency of relationships i.e. whether positive or negative between groups of data. In addition to the consistency of results data were explored for effects. An effect is an objective and standardised measure that allows for comparisons between different variables (Field, 2005). An effect size reflects the amount of variance in an outcome variable that is associated with levels within a predictor variable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Effect sizes are can be interpreted in the following ways:

- $\tau = 0.10$ (small association); 1% of the total variance explained

- $\tau = 0.30$ (medium association); 9% of the total variance explained

- $\tau = 0.50$ (large association); 25% of the total variance explained

(Field, 2005: p32).

5.6.5 Internal reliability

Internal reliability measures the degree to which items which make up a scale are consistently measuring the same idea (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). Cronbach's α is a common measure of the overall reliability of a scale (Field, 2009). Alpha scores exceeding .70 are usually considered acceptable for further statistical analysis (Granner and Sharpe, 2004). In this research SPSS v.16 was used to assess the contribution of each item to the overall reliability of the respective scales. Consistent with recommendations items were reverse-scored or deleted to improve *alpha* scores (Field, 2005). The cross-sectional design of the study meant that test-retest reliability or inter-rater reliability were not relevant considerations.

5.6.6 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to a situation where there is a strong linear relationship between two variables. When multicollinearity arises correlation matrices can be deceptive because variables contain redundant information that essentially fills data columns unnecessarily (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This makes it difficult to assess the importance of a variable. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest that two variables with a bivariate correlation of .70 or more should give cause for concern. Given the potentially significant problems posed to the quality of inference by multicollinearity in the data a two-stranded approach was adopted. The first strand involved creating a bivariate correlation matrix (Kendall's Tau (τ)) to assess

the relationship between pairs of variables. Secondly, SPSS v.16 was used to generate multicollinearity statistics using the linear regression function. This produces a variance inflation factor (VIF) which predicts whether a variable has a strong linear relationship with another variable. A VIF of 10 or more indicates that multicollinearity is likely to be a problem (Field, 2009).

5.6.7 Inferential statistical analyses

After the conceptual model had been finalised four regression models were developed. Binary logistic regression was selected because it allows the researcher to test models to predict categorical outcomes with two or more categories and to use both categorical and continuous variables (Pallant, 2007). This provided the flexibility to use a range of variables from the data set. In addition to the main components ($N = 20$), additional dichotomous variables relating to primary roles and member experience were included. Results from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data suggested these were important factors which could potentially explain variances in member perceptions. Variables were created using SPSS v.16 to recode the data into categorical responses i.e. 'yes' I am a Chair or core group member and 'no' I am not a Chair or core group member.

Peduzzi *et al.* (1996) recommend a minimum of 10 events per variable i.e. 10 cases per predictor variable. Preliminary analyses revealed that this was exceeded, the minimum number being 11.4 cases per predictor variable. Models were examined for the direction of the relationship between variables as explained by the β value i.e. which factors increase the likelihood of a positive answer and which factors decrease it (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Odds Ratio (OR) statistics were used to explore the models. The OR represents the change in the odds of being in one outcome category when the value of a predictor

increases by one unit. The further from 1 this is the more influential the predictor variable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). If an OR is less than 1 it suggests that for each measure of unit in the predictor variable the odds of reporting the predicted category in the outcome variable e.g. 'yes I am highly committed' decrease. The further from 1 the OR is, the more influential the predictor.

5.7   Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the methods employed in the quantitative component of the research. These demonstrate the type and design of procedures undertaken throughout the research to unpack the quantitative data and provide the basis for detailed analyses. Attention is now turned to the methods employed in the qualitative component of the research.

Chapter 6

Qualitative methods

6.0   Introduction

This chapter details the methods employed in the qualitative component of the research. The chapter is broken down into four sections. The first section provides details concerning the research participants, the sampling procedure and inclusion criteria used during the participant recruitment process. Secondly, ethical considerations including confidentiality and data protection issues are addressed. The chapter then focuses on the process of data collection and provides details regarding the development of interview schedules. The final section outlines the processes used to facilitate data analysis provides specific examples of NVivo 8 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 1999-2008) functions during this process. This section seeks to convey the highly iterative and complex nature of the grounded theory approach.

6.1   Participants

Research participants consisted of a sample of CSN members ($N = 23$) located in a single county in the South West of England. These participants represented people who had attended CSN meetings as representatives of local organisations or agencies with a broad interest in improving the health and well being of their respective local communities through increasing opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity. These included public health services, schools, further and higher education institutions, school sports development agencies, local authority services, statutory agencies, sports clubs and sports organisations and agencies.

6.1.1   Sampling procedure

Sampling issues in mixed methods research are inherently practical (Kemper *et al.*, 2003). Hence, the sampling procedure for the qualitative component was based on the criterion of respondent knowledge in order that the sample selected would best address the research questions (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). The logic here is that intentionally focusing on information-rich cases is likely to provide the most relevant data (Kemper *et al.*, 2003). The choice of purposive sampling (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was largely determined by the lack of extant research concerning participation in CSNs. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to discover individuals on the basis that they may potentially illustrate features, processes, patterns and problems relating to the research (Erlansdson *et al.*, 1993; Silverman, 2005). An initial sampling frame containing 4 research participants was created. These participants represented two voluntary and community organisations, a local authority, and a statutory agency. Purposive sampling was used in conjunction with snowball sampling (Robson, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005) which facilitated the development of a wider sampling frame based on recruited participants' recommendations. This was useful during the early stages of the research as it was possible to elaborate emerging concepts through discussions with a broad range of research participants

This approach increased the potential to identify information-rich individuals who could develop the emerging theoretical framework (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In the later stages of the research cases were selected according to specific criteria. Although drawn from the same sampling frame ($N = 75$), these were based on theoretical relationships which had been posited in the parallel process of data analysis. For example, 'reconciling values and objectives' provided a seemingly important factor in network members' participation in CSN activity. This was theoretically associated with members' aspirations, organisational

objectives and values. In addition, to begin to understand participants' perceptions initial investigations of qualitative data were based on the criterion of whether members considered themselves to have a high or low level of involvement. Although parsimonious, this provided a means of unpacking a broad range of responses as emerging theoretical relationships in the data emerged. In support of this, a useful function of NVivo 8 is the casebook function which allows researchers to store specific data concerning the sample (Figure 6). This provided a useful point of reference and assisted with the management of the ongoing research process.

Figure 6: Screenshot of the casebook function in NVivo 8

	A :...	B : Ge...	C : Loca...	D : Sector	E : Type...	F : Lev...	G : Approxima...	H : Questi...	I : A...	J : Sche...
1 : Cases\Alison	57	Female	Hogdon	Voluntary and community	Member	Low	34 months	No	Yes	1.1
2 : Cases\Amanda	24	Female	Casbridge	Sports club	Non memb	Not Applic	Not Applicable	No	No	3.0
3 : Cases\Amy	58	Female	Grindsham	Local government	Chair	High	26 months	No	Yes	1.1
4 : Cases\Andrea	43	Female	Milton	Voluntary and community	Member	Low	24 months	No	Yes	2.0
5 : Cases\Andrew	62	Male	Shinstone	Voluntary and community	Chair	Intermedi	9 months	No	Yes	1.3
6 : Cases\Angela	64	Female	Grindsham	Sports club	Non memb	Not Applic	Not Applicable	No	No	3.0
7 : Cases\Anita	30	Female	Grindsham	Local government	Member	Low	8 months	No	Yes	1.4
8 : Cases\Dennis	35	Male	Casbridge	Local government	Chair	High	24 months	No	Yes	1.1
9 : Cases\Elizabeth	42	Female	Shinstone	Local government	Core / exec	Intermedi	14 months	No	Yes	1.3
10 : Cases\Grace	46	Female	Milton	Public Health	Member	Low	24 months	No	Yes	1.2
11 : Cases\Graham	60	Male	Shinstone	Sports club	Member	Intermedi	24 months	No	Yes	2.1
12 : Cases\Ian	34	Male	Shinstone	Local government	Core / exec	Low	20 months	No	Yes	1.3
13 : Cases\Jason	32	Male	Casbridge &	Sports development	Member	Low	12 months	Yes	Yes	2.0
14 : Cases\June	28	Female	Casbridge	Public services	Member	Low	12 months	No	Yes	1.3
15 : Cases\Lisa	39	Female	Casbridge	Local government	Member	Low	24 months	No	No	2.1
16 : Cases\Lydia	46	Female	Hogdon	Local government	Chair	High	18 months	No	Yes	1.4
17 : Cases\Nathan	41	Male	Grindsham	Sports development	Member	High	24 months	No	Yes	2.0
18 : Cases\Nicola	43	Female	Milton	Local government	Chair	High	25 months	Yes	Yes	1.4
19 : Cases\Patrick	49	Male	Milton	Sports development	Core / exec	Intermedi	24 months	No	Yes	2.1
20 : Cases\Penelope	56	Female	Hogdon	Voluntary and community	Member	Low	18 months	No	Yes	1.2
21 : Cases\Terry	42	Male	Shinstone	Voluntary and community	Member	Intermedi	10 months	No	Yes	1.1
22 : Cases\Zoe	51	Female	Hogdon	Public Health	Member	Low	8 months	Yes	Yes	1.4

6.1.2 Inclusion criteria

A standardised inclusion criterion was established across both research components. The criterion specified that only those individuals who were CSN members that had attended at least one local network meeting in the past 12 months were deemed eligible for inclusion in the data analysis. The aim was to establish a sampling frame that included a broad range of

potential research participants. Hence, a broad inclusion criterion enabled a greater potential for participant inclusion in that it was sensitive to contextual factors, for example, a network may only meet once or twice a year which stricter inclusion criteria may fail to accommodate. In total, the sampling procedure identified 75 local CSN members of which 20 were recruited as key informants. 3 further research participants were recruited on the basis that they were able to provide further insight into CSNs. In total, the research participants represented a total of five CSNs based in different districts of the same county in South West England.

6.2   Ethical considerations

All research participants were asked to complete and sign a voluntary informed consent form prior to being interviewed (Appendix D, page 427). In accordance with criteria detailed in University of Gloucestershire (2008) and British Sociological Association (2002) research guidelines, this outlined the purpose of the research, the roles and responsibilities of the researcher, and the rights of the research participant.

Consideration was given to issues concerning the right to privacy and risk from harm (Fontana and Frey, 2005). In addition to the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants coded matrix which facilitated the renaming of participants and their locations was established. A coded matrix reduces the possibility of individuals being linked by inference through the disclosure of demographic data or details relating to participants' professional situation (Morse and Richards, 2002). The codes included a name, the type of organisation and the members' location for example; 'Alexander, VCS/C'. VCS stands for voluntary and community sector and the following letter denotes Casbridge, the area in which the members' CSN was located. A full explanation of the coding matrix is presented

in Table 14 (page 196). Where participant quotes are used the text is presented in italics with these codes followed by numbers which refer to the location of the text within the participant's transcript, for example; 'Alexander, VCS/C: 125-130.' Free text responses are identified using the acronym 'FT', followed by the type of organisation represented for example, 'FT/VCS'.

6.2.1   Confidentiality

Christians (2005) considers confidentiality to be the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. Given that participants were acting as representatives of larger organisations and agencies this was a critical factor for consideration given the area of research was linked to fundamental aspects of the participants' roles. Hence, the purpose of the research and all procedures were explained in full prior to interview and where requested interview schedules were sent in advance to demonstrate openness, researcher integrity and compliance with University research guidelines.

6.2.2   Data protection

All data relating to participants including names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers were maintained in one central paper-based file stored within a secured filing cabinet. Criticisms concerning the effectiveness of data storage methods (Lüders, 2004) were recognised. Consequently, all electronic-based media including audio files and emails to and from participants were removed from desktop or networked systems and stored on compact discs as write-protected files. This minimised risks from unsecured networks, computer viruses, data leaching and accidental wiping. These disks were placed in a secure filing cabinet in order to prevent interference and the possibility of misplacement or theft.

6.3   Data collection procedure

Consistent with a qualitative method of inquiry that explores the multiple and complex dimensions of a problem or issue (Creswell, 1998), semi-structured or 'loosely structured' (Gomm, 2004: p174) interviews were conducted in the field in order to elicit data concerning the experiences of CSN members. These formed the primary data source of the qualitative component.

Prior to embarking on field-based research three pilot interviews were conducted in order to ensure sensitivity to the research area and to develop and refine prompts. These were not included in the final data analysis. In addition, the initial interview transcript was reviewed by CSN members who were not part of the sampling frame (i.e. they were not members local to the area). This provided useful information regarding the construction of the schedule, the wording of questions and potential prompts. Verbal and non-verbal prompts provide a useful means of clarifying questions and eliciting further information during the interview process (Creswell, 1998; Taylor, 2005). After each interview had been completed a verbatim transcript (see Appendix E, page 430 for an example) was written by the researcher along with field notes containing the researcher's initial reflections of the interview process. These were used to guide the initial exploration of the data and provided a useful resource for the development of further questions and prompts.

In addition to participant interviews, notes taken from CSN meetings attended by the researcher (N = 21), copies of official CSN documentation, for example programme action plans, extant academic literature and other literature relating to the governance of local services provided additional secondary data sources.

6.3.1 Interview schedules

Suddaby (2006) argues that GTM was never intended to encourage research that ignored existing empirical knowledge. Indeed, it is acknowledged that engaging with ideas and evidence from a variety of unrelated fields can hone researchers' theoretical sensitivity and provide a stimulus for sampling and data comparison (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Dey, 2007). Further, researchers are likely to refer to some literature at an early stage to provide a rationale for the research and the subsequent methods employed (Barbour, 2003; Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). This, it is argued, can provide a means of staying 'open minded' rather than 'empty headed' (McGhee *et al.*, 2007: p336). Consistent with this approach, existing literature relating to collaborative working was explored in order to generate an initial exploratory interview schedule. Subsequent interview schedules were informed by data analysis performed on research participant transcripts and field notes detailing issues concerning the style and ordering of interview questions. As such, the interview schedule developed over the course of the research (see Appendix F, page 432 for examples).

The initial interview schedule comprised basic semi-structured questions ($N = 26$) regarding where the CSN was based, who the participant represented in the network, participant experiences and general network activity. However, the purpose of an exploratory interview is to collect ideas rather than simply collecting data (Oppenheim, 1992). Thus, concurrent with a GTM (Strauss, 1987) the initial interview schedule was refined to include more informed and analytic questions as data analysis revealed relationships between data categories. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Table 7 (overleaf) highlights the various iterations of the interview schedule and to whom they were administered.

Table 7: Administration of interview schedules

Interview schedule	Interviews (N)	Participants
1.1	4	Alison, Amy, Terry, Dennis
1.2	2	Grace, Penelope
1.3	4	Andrew, Elizabeth, June, Ian
1.4	4	Anita, Lydia, Nicola, Zoe
1.6	3	Andrea, Jason, Nathan
1.7	4	Lisa, Patrick, Graham, George
2.0	2	Amanda, Angela

6.4   Data analysis procedure

GTM involves an iterative process in which the researcher collects and analyses data, and then returns to data collection to refine the emerging theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss, 1987). Raw data was explored, analysed, and coded using NVivo 8 which allowed participant transcripts to be separated into distinct text units that facilitated line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2008). More than managing data CAQDAS facilitates the interdependent relationship between data collection and analysis processes by providing tools for the systematic processes of data coding, memo writing, and data organisation (Bringer *et al.*, 2006). These functions were particularly useful for storing data and keeping track of emerging ideas as the research progressed. Prior to transcripts being entered into NVivo 8 all references to names and places were removed and participant identities were coded in order to hide their identity. NVivo 8 includes a variety of functions that allows for critical examination of data entered into the software programme consistent with the GTM. This included memos, a variety of search tools with which to explore relationships between data i.e. coding queries and matrix searches, node structures (organised sets of data codes), modelling tools to develop graphical data displays, and coding stripes which highlight points at which coding for specific concepts occur.

Lempert (2007: p245) suggests that memos represent the 'distillation' process in which data is transformed into theory. Memos are written records containing the products of analysis and provide a means of keeping track of substantive and theoretical codes and reflections on what data might mean (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Holton, 2007; Stern, 2007). Managing the grounded theory process represents a significant organisational challenge (Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). Thus, a memo structure was developed to keep track of all memos within the research. This included memos concerning the initial coding process, methodological memos concerning the processes involved in data analysis and interrogation, and theoretical memos that explored relationships within the data (Table 8, overleaf). An associated memo was generated for each new node to serve as a store for comments, ideas and continuing conceptual development. In addition, a research diary was created in NVivo 8 which detailed ongoing thoughts, exploration of issues and concerns, and the recording of potential ideas for development in the research process. This provided a detailed record of research activity undertaken during the data collection and data analysis phases and encouraged elaboration (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) of incomplete or ambiguous concepts.

Table 8: Memos used in the research process

Name	Description
Node memo	Attached to data nodes which organise data codes. Contain information related to emerging concepts and provide space in which to store initial thoughts and more detailed explanation / conceptual development as data analysis progresses. Facilitate further conceptual development and the linking of data categories.
Methodological memo	Provides information concerning the types of procedures undertaken during the research process and any technical issues that arise. Encourages transparency in the research process and enables researcher to reflect on the research experience.
Theoretical memo	Highlight specific 'higher order' theoretical concepts. Establishes a link between data categories and theoretical abstractions from which theory is developed. Used to encourage the development of theory rather than mere description.
Emergent questions	Useful in recording questions that arise as a consequence of data analysis. Guide future sampling procedures, provide basis for further data analysis and exploration of new relationships in data.
CSN memo	Record reflections on CSN meetings attended during research process ($N = 21$) and detail the nature of location and discussions. Provide essential secondary data relating to member participation in CSNs.
Literature-based memo	Used to highlight data relevant to the research from existing academic sources. Useful for asking appropriate questions of the data.

(Adapted from Hutchison *et al.*, 2009).

6.4.1 Conceptual development

Coding is concerned with deriving and developing concepts from data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and allows the researcher to mark text using clearly defined features (Sivesind, 1999). NVivo 8 allows the researcher to enter free node 'properties' which provide an overview of the type of data contained therein. This serves as useful reminder of the origin of concepts as they develop into more complex data categories. Codes are discretionary, applied by the researcher or '*in-vivo*' whereby the actual words of participants are used as code names (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: p65). Adopting the coding hierarchy proposed by Bryant and Charmaz (2007b), individual codes were created to provide specific pieces of data which could be grouped using 'categories'

representing common themes and patterns in the data. Subsequently, concepts were generated using data categories as a springboard for conceptualising higher order abstractions. Initial open codes representing blocks of raw data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) were identified from the first interview transcript which were refined and added to as the data analysis proceeded.

NVivo 8 facilitated the increasing complexity of theoretical development through the use of extensive search or query functions. Consistent with a constructivist revision of GTM (Charmaz, 2009), a process of constant comparison was employed that systematically searched for similarities and differences between different pieces of data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). As data collection progressed coding stripes (see Figure 7, page 169) for an example) were used to explore instances in the text at which codes were attached. This function allows the researcher to quickly review transcripts and to identify instances where multiple coding exits at the same section of data. This prompts questions concerning the relationship between the codes and encourages the researcher to ask further questions of the data. Consequently, as data collection and analysis progressed some data developed into more refined and complete concepts whilst other data were assimilated into developing concepts or used for descriptive purposes. For example, 'collaborative capacity' (Vangen and Huxham, 2005) was a concept often related to by participants. This provided a good source of information concerning the potential benefits of participation in CSNs although it did not necessarily provide much explanatory power. However, when explored in terms of other concepts including 'sense of support' and 'network output' it emerged that the concept reflected an output of an important process. This process, 'network synergy', related to the nature of interaction between members. Thus, the comparison of

concepts led to the emergence of a concept that was much better at explaining why members participated in network activities, even if the returns were not necessarily great.

NVivo 8 functionality also allows researchers to code data automatically using a specific function within the software which is particularly useful when standardised questions have been administered. However, the frequency of codes is not necessarily an indication of relevance (Bringer *et al.*, 2006). Indeed, it is possible that if a concept is significant to the emerging theory then it may be sufficient to form a category itself (Allan, 2003). Thus, the use of this function was avoided as it had the potential to damage the process of line-by-line coding that takes place as the range and dimensions of data were explored (Charmaz, 2008; Charmaz, 2009). CAQDAS tools such as NVivo 8 also help researchers to explore coding incidences and relationships using relationship structures, models and queries to explore subtle differences in data (Bringer *et al.*, 2006). Specific coding queries help the researcher to scrutinise segments of data deemed relevant to particular inquiries (Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). For example, some stakeholders reported concerns over the purpose of CSNs. A node 'uncertainty' was used to identify instances of this being reported in transcripts. Nodes provide a way of organising data and store references to text data within participant transcripts (Bazeley, 2007). As data analysis progressed coding stripes (Figure 7, page 169) proved useful for exploring other nodes that appeared at the same sections of text. For example, it was possible to identify that free nodes of 'power', 'control', and 'communication' were also associated with uncertainty. This helped raise questions concerning the relationships between data and instigated further searches using NVivo 8 query functions.

For example, matrix searches were used which allow the researcher to apply a discriminatory approach that included only specified terms. Matrix searches also facilitated the exploration of concepts by identifying potential sub-categories for further detailed analysis. This was particularly useful in the early stages of research as data was accumulating and slowly being arranged into broad conceptual themes stored in sets within NVivo 8. Sets allow the researcher to group data that may be related in some way without altering the integrity of the codes which have been applied (Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). This is important in grounded theory research because it is the detail of basic-level concepts which provides the basis on which higher level concepts are developed (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). For example, in the early stages of the research two broad categories of entitled 'advantages of involvement' and 'disadvantages of involvement' were created to store nodes relating to respondents perceptions. Using the matrix query (Figure 8, page 170) enabled comparisons to be drawn between the two sets in relation to which nodes appeared frequently in the data that warranted further investigation.

Figure 7: Screenshot of multiple coding stripes at the 'uncertainty' node

Figure 8: Matrix coding query result

Advantages and di		A : Advantage...	B : Disadvanta...
1 : Leadership		0	1
2 : Collaborative capacity		1	1
3 : Objectives		1	5
4 : Collaborative potential		0	0
5 : Division of labour		0	1
6 : Time pressure		0	3
7 : Influence of external structures & processes		0	2
8 : Frustration and disappointment		0	
9 : Uncertainty		0	2
10 : Support structure		0	1
11 : Antecedents		0	0
12 : Communication		0	1
13 : Roles		0	1
14 : Funding		2	1
15 : Organisational capacity		0	0
16 : Awareness of others		1	0
17 : Network function		1	0
18 : Ability to react		1	0

The matrix search results indicated the total number of references to the nodes selected for comparison. Using this as a guide it was then possible to investigate cells which indicated a potential association with the higher order themes of advantages and disadvantages of involvement. For example, a more detailed analysis of 'frustration' revealed a number of new nodes including 'communication' and 'network management' which provided further data to include in data analysis.

6.4.2   Theoretical development

The purpose of GTM is to generate theory (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007b). As such, the principal aim of making of comparisons is to assist conceptualization and categorization in the course of data collection and analysis (Jeon, 2004). This is with a view to establishing codes that have strong theoretical relevance to the research phenomenon (Stern, 2007). As discussed in Chapter 4 (pp. 101 - 133), the coding paradigm (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was used to facilitate the systematic interrogation of data. This provided a dynamic analytic approach that encouraged the exploration of the relationship between structure and process. For clarity, the outcomes of this process are presented separately. Chapter 8 (pp. 192 - 217) presents results from the qualitative data which,

highlights the context or conditions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) which are theoretically relevant to the conceptual model presented in Chapter 10 (pp. 255 - 276). Whilst it is recognised that conditions and concepts interact in overlapping and complex ways (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), presenting the findings in this way helps to explicate the data more clearly than when combined within a single monologue.

Following Glaser and Holton (2004) who are wary of emphasising participant stories during grounded theory analysis (as this might constrain theoretical development), theoretical development was driven by the selective coding of data which focused on the core and related data categories (Holton, 2007). This approach maintained the relevance of context whilst enabling the coding process to move beyond description to theoretical coding that helped conceptualise how the substantive codes may relate to each other within an integrated theory (Jeon, 2004).

However, it was recognised that constructivist GTM assumes knowledge is socially produced, that there are multiple perspectives of phenomena, and that both data and analysis reflect the process of their production (Charmaz, 2006; 2009). As such, care was taken not to use the coding paradigm prescriptively by referring back to memos and conducting analysis away from the NVivo 8 software package. This encouraged greater interpretive and conceptual thinking without necessarily 'fitting' data into the computer-based node schemes and models. Consistent with the classic grounded theory perspective (Glaser, 2002a) the relevance of coding was constantly scrutinised and, where appropriate, data were re-coded or reviewed to reflect emerging concepts. This was facilitated by the inherent flexibility of NVivo 8 which allowed multiple sets of data to be established in which data relating to context and theory could be stored. Subsequently, the coding

paradigm was used as a tool to enrich data analysis that stimulated the exploration of conditions and consequences in which events occurred but in a way that was not encumbered by a strict system of coding and data reduction. This approach is consistent with revised perspectives of grounded theory that encourage researchers to capture some of the complexity of phenomena without forcing data to fit into a coding framework (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) and can be contrasted with the use of axial coding in which the researcher is encouraged to intensively analyse single codes at a time (Strauss, 1987). This approach helped to illustrate some of the complexities associated with participation in CSNs, such as constraints on resources, which influenced member perceptions.

To facilitate the process of theoretical development NVivo 8 was used in conjunction with paper-based analysis and conceptualisation. This was in recognition that CAQDAS should be used to facilitate the research process rather than providing a template into which a project is shoe-horned (Richards, 2002). Indeed, as data analysis progressed it became apparent that NVivo 8 provided a useful but potentially didactic and automated way of analysing data. This was time consuming and tended to break the flow of analytic and creative thought processes particularly during attempts to make sense of theoretical relationships in the data. To avoid this problem tree nodes and data sets to store ideas concerning potential relationships between data were used extensively. This increased the effectiveness of the analysis process and facilitated data exploration (Bazeley, 2007). Using computer and paper-based approaches in this way provided a basis on which to progress data analysis to a more theoretical level. This was particularly useful when employing the flip-flop technique which consists of turning a concept 'inside out' or 'upside down' to look at opposites or extremes in data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: p79). For example, during the data analysis process the concept 'representation' had been developed from a node

describing membership within networks. Initially the relationship of this node was characterised as a potential moderator of member involvement causing some members to question the efficacy of the networks. Applying the flip-flop technique asked questions regarding what representation meant to CSN members, why this was so and the ways in which this affected their perceptions. Consequently, representation became a more complex concept as relationships developed with other concepts in the data including network management, perceived network effectiveness and sharing. The use of models in NVivo 8 helped to capture these thought processes and maintained a record of conceptual development (Figure 9, page 175).

6.4.3   Theoretical saturation

More than a case of a lack of new data emerging saturation involves the development of data categories and the delineation of relationships between concepts (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To achieve saturation Charmaz (2006: p103) makes a number of recommendations regarding the use of theoretical sampling including:

- Keeping memos to highlight incomplete data categories and gaps in data analysis
- Following hunches about where data may be found to elaborate data categories
- Writing increasingly abstract and conceptual memos as new comparisons are made

Dey (2007) suggests that the quest for saturation should not distract the researcher from the goal of refining data so that it is coherent and precise. As such, the use of negative cases has been identified as a potential stimulus for a more critical investigation of a concept's dimensions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). However, actively seeking negative cases to refine concepts is problematic. Glaser and Holton (2004) contend that seeking variation

through negative cases is akin to forcing whereby preconceived ideas are introduced into analysis i.e. that there should be data that is contradictory.

Further, there is the danger that the researcher imports cases that do not fit the emerging theory into the analysis without critically evaluating their contribution (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, negative cases may fall completely outside of the analysis, representing nothing more than a case that does not fit. Thus, in this research the purposeful identification of negative cases was not used as a part of the data collection and analysis strategy. However, negative cases did arise 'naturally' in the sense that some participants (N = 3) were unable to provide specific information concerning participatory experiences in CSNs. During the recruitment phase these individuals had been identified by colleagues and associates as people who could potentially provide a source of information concerning CSNs. After discussing the inclusion criteria it was revealed that these individuals were not necessarily suitable for inclusion. However, upon discussing CSNs with them it was possible to identify that they were able to provide evidence which enriched understanding of local systems arranged around sport and physical activity which related to CSNs. NVivo 8 provided an invaluable tool at this point as it was possible to rapidly retrieve a variety of contextual data to which this evidence could be added.

Figure 9: Example of a basic exploratory model in NVivo 8
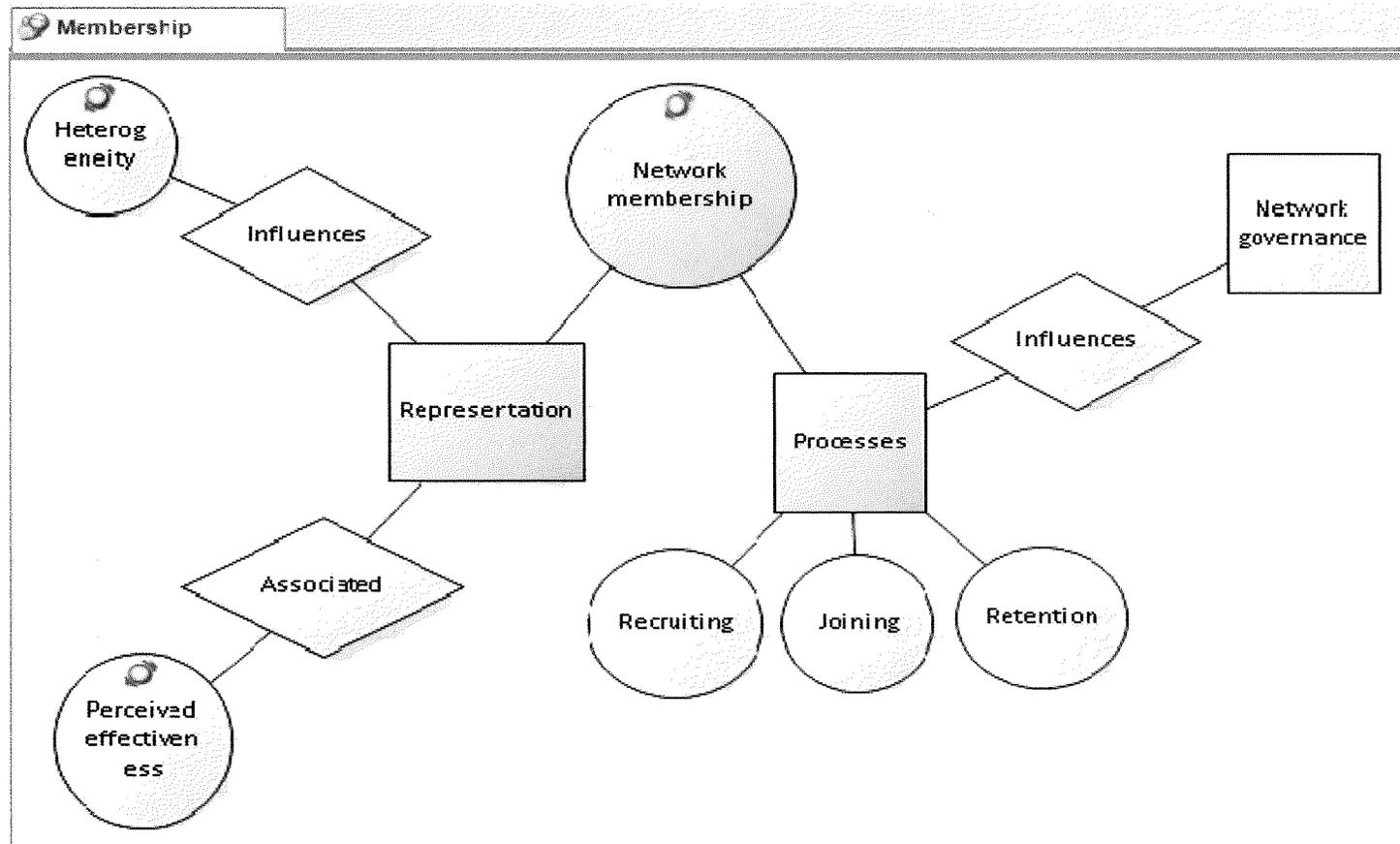
6.4.4   Integration

Identifying a core category provides a means of conveying what the research is about and ties together the data categories in a coherent explanation (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This provides an important integrative link between concepts that explains changes and dimensions of patterns in data (Jeon, 2004). It is the integration of categories makes relationships intelligible (Charmaz, 2006). Multiple models were assembled during the integration procedure as relationships between data were examined at increasingly theoretical levels. Using annotations the models provided a useful means of integrating concepts in the quantitative and qualitative data and for creating detailed monographs to explore the finer detail of the emerging framework (Figure 10, overleaf). This process was crucial for instilling confidence in the ability to think analytically about the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) and forced the researcher to address issues where the emerging theoretical framework did not make sense. This formed a critical part of the data analysis procedure in encouraging the constant exploration of relationships in data in order to establish a plausible theoretical interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2009). As this process evolved models became increasingly concise and abstract until an overarching theoretical framework emerged.

Figure 10: Example of model used during data integration process
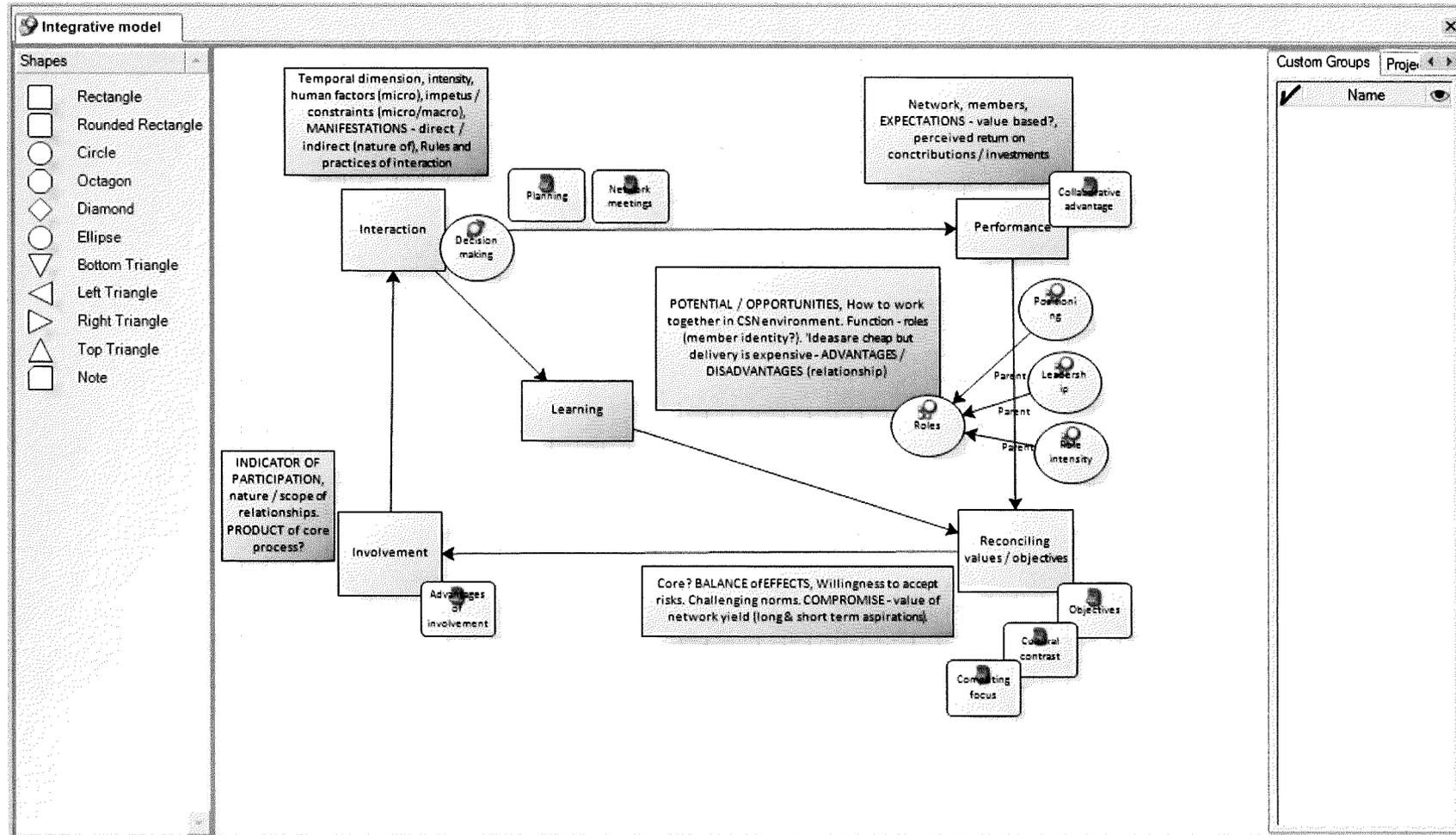
6.5   Chapter summary

The demonstration of steps taken during a grounded theory study is problematic. In reaching for clarity and comprehension of the methods involved it is possible to assume that the procedures adopted are straightforward and sequential. This is something of a fallacy. The iterative nature of GTM and concomitant parallel data collection and analysis procedures dictated that, rather than following in a linear fashion from one to the other, the stages were overlapping, inter-related, and ongoing.

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the nature of procedures used during data collection and analysis in the qualitative component. These highlight how qualitative data was used within the process of conceptual and theoretical development. As such, references to the use of quantitative data for the purposes of conceptual and theoretical development have been omitted in order to facilitate the introduction and elaboration of data using GTM. To address this omission, Chapter 7 outlines the specific methods used to integrate quantitative data. These methods were employed in conjunction with the procedures highlighted within this chapter during the overall process of conceptual and theoretical development.

Chapter 7

Data integration

7.0   Introduction

This chapter guides the reader through the processes undertaken during data analysis for the purposes of generating theory. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data is a fundamental aspect of mixed methods research. As such, this chapter builds on chapters 5 and 6 which outlined data analysis procedures for the quantitative and qualitative research components. A brief rationale for mixing methods orientates the reader to the purpose of the research design. Following this, consideration is given to the specific methods used to analyse the quantitative data using grounded theory as the underpinning methodology. This establishes the procedures through which quantitative and qualitative were integrated during data analysis.

7.1   Rationale for data integration

The rationale for mixing methods was that of completeness. Two research components were established to collect a variety of data from a number of locations and respondents. The qualitative sample was based on a small number of cases (*N* = 23) within a single county in the South West of England. The quantitative data was obtained from a larger sample (*N* = 171) based on questionnaire responses from CSN members across England. The objective was to analyse the data simultaneously using GTM in order to provide a more complete and plausible explanation of member participation in CSNs.

7.2   Analysing data for concepts

In constructivist grounded theory data collection methods flow from the research question (Charmaz, 2009). This allows for a variety of data sources to be examined for the purposes of generating theory. In this research, quantitative data collected through the use of a standardised questionnaire was analysed simultaneously with the qualitative data. This involved the analysis of interview transcripts and questionnaires administered online. In grounded theory statistical tests and quantitative methods can be used as a means of revealing differences and relationships between variables (Glaser, 1994). As noted in Chapter 5, whilst not discounting the relevance of statistical significance, the consistency i.e. direction of associations between data were used to assess the practical relevance of data. Following Glaser (1994) and Lösch (2006), three quantitative data analysis procedures were employed to during the data analysis phase (Table 9). These are highlighted in sections 7.2.1 to 7.2.3.

Table 9: Quantitative methods used in the research

Method	Purpose
Analysis of cross tabulations	Assess the consistency of differences in frequencies between groups within the data
Analysis of means	Assess the consistency and size of differences in mean values on core variables between groups
Analysis of correlation coefficients	Assess associations between variables using correlation coefficient Kendall's Tau (τ)

(Adapted from Lösch, 2006).

7.2.1   Analysis of cross-tabulations

A series of two-dimensional contingency tables containing frequencies by category were run using SPSS v.16. Level of involvement (LoI) was employed as a principal concept with which to explore the characteristics of groups within the data. This concept emerged early

on during data analysis and provided a theoretically appealing concept with which to explore differences within the data. In order to develop two level of involvement groups the five dichotomous responses from the questionnaire were compacted to form two groups representing high (HI) and low (LI) dimensions. The responses 'not very involved', 'somewhat involved', and 'moderately involved' were compacted to form 'high level of involvement' (N = 94). The responses 'very involved' and 'extremely involved' were compacted to form 'high level of involvement' (N = 77). These groups were used to investigate the quantitative data and provided a way of comparing emergent concepts in the analysis of qualitative data.

Median splits were also used to divide the components into high and low dimensions. Comparing high and low dimensions of components helped to tease out relationships in the data for example, between communication and other aspects of CSN participation including decision making, leadership, satisfaction, and commitment. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data were combined on the specific variables of gender, ethnicity/race, type of organisation represented and primary role. Here, the quantitative data was amended with additional qualitative cases (N = 23) to provide a more complete picture of participation in CSNs.

GTM encourages researchers to remain sensitive to the theoretical relevance of data rather than relying on tests of statistical significance as an indication that a data is theoretically relevant (Glaser, 1998). Therefore, during the data analysis process it was recognised that tests of statistical significance could potentially force preconceived ideas on the data and divert attention away from theoretically relevant relationships (Glaser, 1994; 1998). Thus, whilst recognising the value of statistically significant relationships the consistencies of

frequencies between groups i.e. whether group scores were higher or lower when compared on the same components, these statistics were taken into consideration as part of the broader iterative process of data analysis. As a result, the relevance of quantitative data was not immediately discounted on the basis that their relationship with the level of involvement was not statistically significant.

7.2.2   Analysis of means

Analyses of means were conducted on the main components to investigate the consistency of the differences in values between groups. Level of involvement was used as a key concept with which to explore the data. Here, analysis focused on the mean value for component scores for the high involvement group minus the mean achieved in the low involvement group i.e. $Mean_{high} - Mean_{low}$. Using scales in this way allows researchers to investigate general relationships between concepts in data (Glaser, 1994). This provided a useful way of unpacking the data at an early stage of data analysis. Exploring the consistency and size of differences between means scores within groups stimulated further inquiries concerning the processes of participation. These included those which appealed to common sense which Kelle (2005), suggests provide a useful heuristic device to explore themes within data. For example, exploring member perceptions concerning the benefits of participation was theoretically appealing in that high perceived benefits tended to be associated with a high level of involvement.

The flexibility of data analysis techniques afforded by the GTM meant that it was possible to identify and explore multiple concepts. Although LoI provided a useful concept with which to initially explore the data it was evident that some member perceptions on other components for example, perceived benefits and sense of satisfaction, were high even

though they were not highly involved in the network. Hence, more advanced theoretical relationships were explored to unpack the data. Four comparative groups (Table 10) based on the high and low dimensions of level of involvement and sense of satisfaction were created including; high involvement and high satisfaction (HIHS), high involvement and low satisfaction (HILS), low involvement and high satisfaction (LIHS), and low involvement and low satisfaction (LILS).

Table 10: Key conceptual groups by level of involvement and level of satisfaction

Dimension	Low satisfaction	High satisfaction
Low involvement	LILS	LIHS
High involvement	HILS	HIHS

The rationale for this approach was that these groups might be more sensitive to the effects of participation on member perceptions. Although the HI and LI groups were useful in exploring the data early on there was the danger that they were overly simplistic. For example, members with a high level of involvement might not necessarily have perceived correspondingly high scores on other components, and vice versa. Adding sense of satisfaction to the inquiry facilitated a more advanced investigation which helped to identify where members participated because of, and in spite of, other factors. The selection of this component was based on data that emerged in the qualitative component.

Perceived benefits and costs

The four conceptual groups were used to explore the perceived benefits and costs of participation. As concepts developed these components were theorised as being potentially important for explaining participation in CSNs. Two groups representing high and low dimensions were created in perceived benefits and costs using median splits. This provided a means of revealing further insight into the nature of participation in CSNs. The

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perceived benefits and costs were then explored solely in relation to sense of satisfaction. By isolating the relationship between these components it was possible to identify factors which contributed to member satisfaction. However, although this helped to explain factors which were relatively more important to member satisfaction the differences between groups were, ostensibly, small. For a more detailed investigation member perceptions regarding perceived benefits and costs were checked against the variable which represented the ratio between these components i.e. whether the benefits outweighed the costs. This approach has been usefully employed in previous research (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004).

This comparative strategy was consistent with the inductive-abductive logic of the GTM in which ideas and data are constantly assessed to check and refine the development of categories (Charmaz, 2009). This facilitated the exploration of particular partnership situations and the conditions and consequences surrounding action and interaction within these situations (Charmaz, 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Dey, 2004). In addition, the use of memos to store ideas concerning concepts provided a useful space in which emergent ideas could be explored and developed (Hutchison, *et al.*, 2009).

7.2.3   Analysis of correlation coefficients

Following Glaser (1994), emphasis was placed on the consistency and size of associations rather than the level of statistical significance. Effect sizes can be interpreted in the following ways:

- $\tau = 0.10$ (small association); 1% of the total variance explained.

- $\tau = 0.30$ (medium association); 9% of the total variance explained.

- $\tau = 0.50$ (large association); 25% of the total variance explained.

(Based on Field (2005: p32) and Lösch (2006)).

Associations, or effects, provide an objective and standardised measure that allows for comparisons between different variables (Field, 2005) which help to express a relationship between two variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Kendall's tau (τ) statistic was used to investigate the strength of the relationship between variables. Whilst similar to the Spearman R statistic Kendall's tau (τ) may be less affected by the presence of outliers (Newson, 2002). This was useful given the relatively small sample from which data for the main components was drawn ($N = 171$) and the known presence of outlier cases ($N = 40$).

Although non-parametric tests such as Kendall's tau (τ) statistic may have less power than equivalent parametric tests (Field, 2005), non-parametric tests do not rely on precise assumptions about the distribution of the sample (Bryman and Cramer, 1994). Hence, although correlation coefficients cannot be used to infer conclusions about causality a high correlation may provide support for a degree of causality in some situations (Onwuegbuzie and Daniel, 2002). Medium to strong associations (i.e. $\tau \geq 0.30$) were taken to mean that the variables were positively associated. One could suggest that the use of non-parametric tests to explore the consistencies and size of associations in this way is consistent with the requirement to relax the rules of quantitative evidence for the purposes of generating theory (Glaser, 1994). Here, it is conceptual development rather than issues of external validity that guides research.

Subsequent data analysis process revealed six distinct themes. These encompassed a range of components employed in the quantitative data and emergent concepts within the

qualitative data. Themes, or categories, represent higher-level concepts in the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). These themes were used to merge sets of theoretically associated concepts (Table 11, overleaf). This involved the merging of qualitative themes and clusters of components from the quantitative data. Correlation coefficients were explored to reveal the nature of associations within the data. This contributed to the overall development of the conceptual model. Correlation coefficients were used to explore the primary and associated components. These were mapped in order to visualise the strength of associations. This approach is consistent with the methods employed during the iterative process of grounded theory in which researchers make use of memos and diagrams in order to facilitate conceptual and theoretical development (*cf*: Hutchison *et al.*, 2009). This contributed to the overall development of the conceptual model as data categories, properties and dimensions were refined using quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 11: Key theoretical themes and related quantitative components

Theoretical process	Main qualitative theme	Primary quantitative component(s)*	Associated quantitative components**
Searching for value	Notionally endorsing	Synergy	Management Leadership Decision making Strategy Function Outcomes
	Speculating	Participation Contributions	Perceived benefits Perceived costs Perceived effectiveness Outcomes Synergy
	Scrutinising	Sense of satisfaction	Perceived benefits Perceived costs Perceived effectiveness Outcomes Synergy Trust
	Embedding	Sense of ownership	Synergy Empowerment Trust Leadership
	Integration	Sense of ownership	Commitment Sense of satisfaction Synergy Sustainability
	Dropping out	Sense of ownership Commitment	Sense of satisfaction Perceived benefits Perceived costs Outcomes Perceived effectiveness

* These represented quantitative components that could be clearly aligned with emergent qualitative concepts. ** These represented quantitative components that helped to elaborate emergent qualitative concepts and relationships.

Components from the quantitative data that corresponded with the emergent qualitative themes were selected for their theoretical relevance to the conceptual model. This provided a set of primary components which, ostensibly, had greater overall explanatory potential than other quantitative components. Further components from the quantitative data were selected for their relevance to the emergent themes. Consequently, some themes were characterised by the same quantitative components. This reflected the overlapping and complex nature of the conceptual model.

7.2.4 Analysis of outliers

The presence of outliers can be addressed in numerous ways. For example, outliers can help to maximise variation across predictor and outcome variables (Levy, 2008). Conversely, outliers can have negative effects in statistical models developed through quantitative analysis. Here, they are commonly deleted or transformed (Field, 2005; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). However, if outlying values are not the result of a mistake i.e. a data entry error, and the value is plausible it should be left unchanged (Altman, 1991).

After careful investigation all outlier cases were retained without modification as a potential source of information for data analysis. In qualitative research outlier cases may provide additional data to reveal further insights into phenomena (Caracelli and Greene, 1993; Creswell, 2009). Hence, box plots were used to locate outlier cases according to whether they fell above or below the sample distribution. These dimensions represented member perceptions that were more or less in agreement with the main components. The cases provided useful heuristic devices with which to explore extreme responses in the data and assisted in elaborating the dimensions (i.e. negative and positive) of emerging concepts. Principally, this involved the comparison of high and low groups on the main components. This provided a flavour of certain member experiences and helped to identify the surrounding contexts in which the responses were made. This was consistent with the aim of the GTM that sought to explore general patterns in data and to reveal emerging concepts.

7.2.5 Analysis of free-text responses

A further procedure employed during data integration process involved extracting textual data from the quantitative survey. Part of the questionnaire contained a free-text response

cell in which respondents were invited to leave comments that they felt to be of value or interest to the research. This provided a useful way of obtaining qualitative data acquired via a quantitative data collection tool. The data was entered as text directly into NVivo 8 for analysis. In total 31 free-text responses were retrieved from the quantitative data. This data ranged from single sentences to full paragraphs explaining certain aspects of involvement (See Appendix G, page 434 for examples). These respondents represented a range of statutory organisations (45.2%, N = 14) and non-statutory organisations (54.8%, N = 17). Male (45.2%, N = 14) and female (54.8%, N = 17) respondents were fairly evenly split, the majority working as network members (67.7%, N = 21). There was no obvious pattern to respondents' locations with a variety of areas being represented including Cornwall and Scilly Isles, Central London, and Tyne and Wear.

7.3   Regression analyses

Multivariate statistics provide a useful way of analysing complicated data sets where there are many variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Considering the size and complexity of the data set it was determined that further statistical analyses would provide an additional useful perspective. This was consistent with the underpinning rationale of completeness and demonstrated an equal commitment to the use of methods consistent with qualitative and quantitative methods. Subsequent to the completion of the theoretical model explaining the process of member participation in CSNs a series of regression analyses were performed. Using SPSS v.16 logistic regression analyses were run on selected main components. Logistic regression uses a combination of the values from a set of predictor variables to predict the value of a binary outcome variable (Altman, 1991). This provided a further opportunity to explore relationships within the data without violating the inductive-abductive logic of constructivist grounded theory. All predictor (independent) variables

were entered using the forced entry method. In contrast to stepwise and hierarchical methods predictor variables are selected by the researcher on theoretical grounds (Field, 2005). Four models were created exploring the contribution of the main components in addition to two researcher-defined variables of member role and experience. Specifically, these models related to member involvement, sense of satisfaction, commitment, and sense of ownership.

7.4   Chapter summary

This chapter has provided details concerning the specific procedures used in the process of integrating quantitative and quantitative data. Although the steps are presented sequentially, in practice data analysis followed the iterative processes common to grounded theory approaches. Consequently, procedures were not applied in a linear fashion. Instead, decisions concerning data analysis techniques were made in response to issues and demands presented as the research progressed. Having introduced the methods employed in this research, Part 3 presents the research findings.

PART 3

Part 3 contains three chapters. Chapter 8 presents the results from the qualitative component. This provides descriptive data relating to macro and micro scale factors that provide the conditions in which partnership takes place. These highlight a range of factors that influenced participation and which underpinned the conceptual model.

Chapter 9 presents the results from the quantitative component. This is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides results from the descriptive analyses including a profile of the respondents and key CSN features. Part 2 provides results from the comparative analysis. Consistent with the GTM this outlines concepts that emerged through the iterative process of data collection and analysis. Part 3 provides results from multivariate statistical analysis. Four regression models are presented exploring the relative contribution of variables to the components of level of involvement, sense of satisfaction, commitment, and sense of ownership.

Chapter 10 presents the conceptual model. This represents the main finding of the research and draws together quantitative and qualitative data. A diagram highlighting the process of participation in CSNs is provided.

Chapter 8

Results - Qualitative Data

8.0   Introduction

This chapter presents background data for the qualitative sample. It is broken down into two sections. The first provides descriptive data for the qualitative sample. The second section outlines the context in which the conceptual framework is located. This section provides details of specific macro and micro scale contextual factors that emerged through the processes of data analysis as being theoretically relevant to the conceptual model. These factors link the conceptual framework to the wider context in which participation in CSNs takes place. For clarity, macro and micro scale contextual factors are addressed individually. In addition, quotations from respondent transcripts are used to reinforce the link between data and emergent concepts.

8.1   Network profile

This part of the chapter introduces background data from qualitative data analysis. The qualitative sample (N = 23) were community stakeholders representing a range of community agencies and organisations (Table 12, overleaf). All research participants were recruited using the strategy outlined in Chapter 6. In total, 39.1% were male (N = 8) and 60.9% (N = 14) were female. The mean age of research participants was 45.3 years old, the youngest participant being 24 years old and the oldest participant 64 years old. Local government or statutory services representatives accounted for 39.1% (N = 9), those representing voluntary and community organisations accounted for 21.7% (N = 5), leisure facilities and sports clubs representatives accounted for 17.4% (N = 4).

Table 12: Qualitative sample profile

N	Pseudonym	Location	Gender	Age	Race / ethnicity	Sector/organisation represented	Approximate length of membership (months)	Network role
1	Alison	Hingley	Female	57	Caucasian	Voluntary & community sector	34	Member
2	Amanda	Casbridge	Female	24	Caucasian	Leisure facilities and sports clubs	Not applicable	Non-member
3	Amy	Grindsham	Female	58	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	26	Chair
4	Andrea	Milton	Female	43	Caucasian	Voluntary & community sector	24	Member
5	Andrew	Shinstone	Male	62	Caucasian	Voluntary & community sector	9	Chair
6	Angela	Grindsham	Female	64	Caucasian	Leisure facilities and sports clubs	Not applicable	Non-member
7	Anita	Grindsham	Female	30	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	Not applicable	Non-member
8	Dennis	Casbridge	Male	35	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	24	Chair
9	Elizabeth	Shinstone	Female	42	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	14	Core / executive
10	George	Grindsham	Male	61	Caucasian	Leisure facilities and sports clubs	1	Member
11	Grace	Milton	Female	46	Caucasian	Hospital / NHS / Health services	24	Member
12	Graham	Shinstone	Male	60	Caucasian	Leisure facilities and sports clubs	24	Member
13	Ian	Shinstone	Male	34	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	20	Core / executive
14	Jason[†]	Grindsham	Male	32	Caucasian	Sports development	12	Member
15	June	Casbridge	Female	28	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	12	Member
16	Lisa	Casbridge	Female	39	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	24	Member
17	Lydia	Hingley	Female	46	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	18	Chair
18	Nathan	Grindsham	Male	41	Caucasian	Sports development	24	Member
19	Nicola[†]	Milton	Female	43	Caucasian	Local government / statutory services	25	Chair
20	Patrick	Milton	Male	49	Caucasian	Sports development	24	Core / executive
21	Penelope	Hingley	Female	56	Caucasian	Voluntary & community sector	18	Member
22	Terry	Shinstone	Male	42	Caucasian	Voluntary & community sector	10	Member
23	Zoe[†]	Hingley	Female	51	Caucasian	Hospital / NHS / Health services	8	Member

Note: † Participants also completed the online CSN questionnaire

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Representatives of agencies and organisations with a focus on sports development accounted for 13.0% (*N* = 3), and those representing hospital, NHS and health services accounted for 8.7% (*N* = 2) of the sample population. Excluding stakeholders who had not been active in CSNs (*N* = 3), the mean length of membership was 18.7 months. The majority (60%, *N* = 12) were network members, 25% (*N* = 5) acted as network Chairs, and 15% (*N* = 3) acted as members of a core group. All participants were white. In total the participants represented 5 districts within a single county in the South West of England.

All CSNs had been established in response to funding opportunities that arose in the summer of 2007. Local stakeholders had been invited to take part in discussions as part of the implementation process. Local authority officers with responsibilities for sport and physical activity had assumed key roles in all CSN although organisational changes had led to changes in personnel in some cases. Here, responsibility for the CSN was passed to other officers with sport and physical activity-related roles. One CSN had engaged in a lengthy negotiation process (circa 18 months) with local stakeholders to install a non-statutory organisational representative as Chair. The frequency of meetings ranged from bi-annual to quarterly schedules. All CSNs had adopted terms of reference (ToR) documents.

8.2   Macro and micro scale contextual factors

This part of the chapter introduces macro and micro scale contextual factors that emerged through the processes of data analysis as being theoretically relevant to the conceptual model. Locating data in this way helps to demonstrate connections between the subjective world of participants and wider social factors with which they interact (Charmaz, 2009). Consistent with the coding techniques employed as part of the GTM (Corbin and Strauss,

2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) data categories are highlighted together with their respective properties and dimensions. Definitions of these are provided in Table 13.

Table 13: Definition of factors relating to the ordering of data

Factor	Definition
Core category	The main theme of the research. Allows for maximum variation in the theory
Categories	Higher-level concepts (or themes) which represent phenomena relevant to the grounded theory
Properties	Characteristics or components that define an object, event, or action
Dimensions	Variations of a property along a range

(Derived from Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss, 1987).

Although contextual factors do not determine experiences they do provide a set of structural conditions that shape the nature of situations to which individuals respond (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Hence, examining context may bolster understanding of social issues (Mason, 2006). The distinction between macro and micro-scale context is essentially artificial because of the complex interplay between the two (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This relationship is depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Interrelatedness of the macro and micro contextual factors
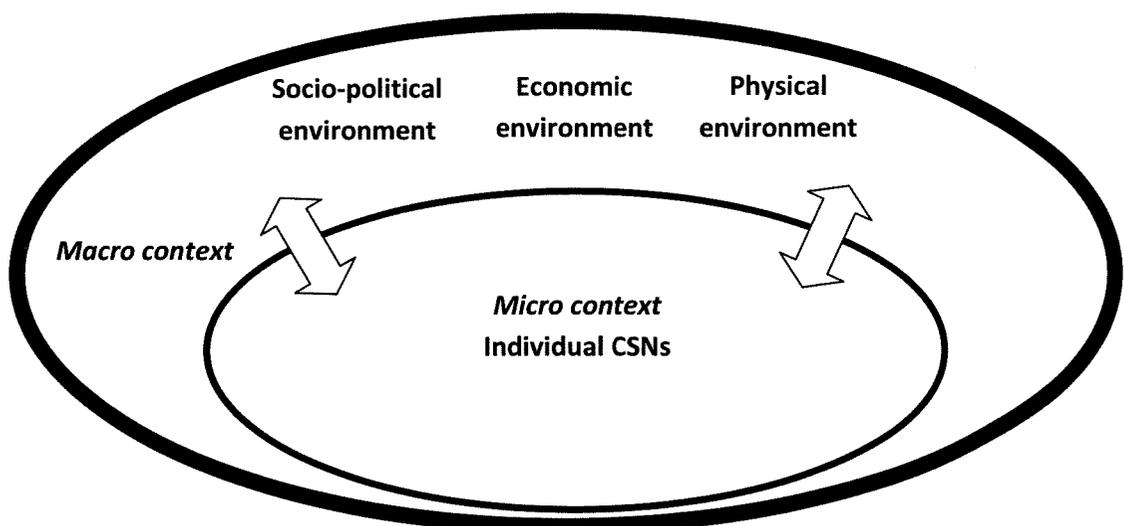
For clarity, the macro and micro-scale contextual factors are presented individually. In reality the ways in which factors inherent to each context interact may be complex, opaque, and unpredictable (as demonstrated by the arrows in Figure 11, page 195). To maintain the voice of research participants quotations from respondent transcripts are used to reinforce the data. These quotations are provided in italics with a code for example, 'George, LS/G: 150-155.' This includes the pseudonym given to each research participant to maintain anonymity, the type of organisation represented, the area in which the research participant was based, and the corresponding line numbers of the transcripts from which the quotation is taken. Full details of these codes are provided in the coding matrix (Table 14).

Table 14: Research participant coding matrix

Factor	Code
Type of representation:	
Local government and statutory services	LGSS
Voluntary and community sector	VCS
Leisure facilities and sports clubs	LS
Sports development	SD
Hospital, NHS and health services	HS
Location:	
Casbridge	C
Milton	M
Grindsham	G
Shinborough	S
Hingley	H

8.3 Macro scale contextual factors

These are broad in scope and possible impact (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Analysis revealed three properties of the macro context (Table 15, overleaf)

Table 15: Macro scale contextual factors

Category	Properties	Dimensions
8.3 Macro context	8.3.1 Socio-political environment	Performance targets
		Statutory obligations
		Non statutory obligations
	8.3.2 Economic environment	Funding
		Wider economy
	8.3.3 Physical environment	Geographic challenges
		Geo-political challenges

This property refers to social and political factors that influence members during their activities, the dimensions of which include commitments to national level strategies, targets, standards or protocols.

8.3.1   Socio-political environment

This property refers to social and political factors that influence stakeholder action and interaction. These establish sets of conditions which stakeholders respond to. Dimensions include performance targets, statutory and non statutory obligations.

Performance targets

Performance targets are non-negotiable and compel members to achieve predetermined performance criteria; *'we all have, whether it's in sport or physical activity, to get people more active one percent year on year. So there is a lot of interest in achieving those targets'* [Lydia, LGSS/H: 45-46]. Collaborative approaches were recognised as principal approaches for meeting these targets; *'...there's obviously a network in each district and they should oversee the county as well, so they should be saying, we've gathered all these partners, here's what's going on, they can act as a safeguard against duplication or guide us in the right direction, help us work together'* [Anita, LGSS/G: 54-56]. This reflected the emphasis

on partnership approaches in the wider policy environment that encouraged a shared local agenda to reduce duplication in services. Here, it was expected that organisations and agencies from both public and private sectors would work together in order to maximise the effectiveness of services. Consequently, there was a pressure to meet certain targets which led to concerns regarding the approach taken by CSNs; *'The difficult areas are easily brushed under the carpet unless the one person who represents disability sport / services constantly brings it up. People still try to hit the easy targets'* [FT/SD].

Statutory obligations

This dimension refers to extant regulations that govern members' practices and routines both in their roles as citizens and as professionals or representative agents. Statutory obligations provided a set of priorities with which members were concerned during their day-to-day activities; *'...it's about balancing where local areas, local authorities have some autonomy over how they approach things and I don't think people would want to give that up. There's always parameters, there's always things that have to be done'* [Lisa, LGSS/C: 95-97]. Given the nature of activities undertaken by interview participants child protection was recognised as a core obligation; *'...if you want to work with young people you've got to have some sort of protection in place'* [Nathan, SD/G: 119-120].

Non-statutory obligations

These refer to commitments and obligations that influence member behaviour. These were facilitative by providing an impetus for participation. For example, striving to meet Clubmark, a set of operating standards to promote the adoption of consistent standards in sports clubs (Sport England, 2009b), compelled some members to explore opportunities that enabled them to raise the quality of operating standards; *'We've Sport England*

Clubmark, we're a three star club and I'm looking to see how we can take it to four-star' [George, LS/G: 16-17]. Conversely, non-regulatory commitments and obligations also hindered participation in CSNs; *'I haven't attended that many meetings because they changed the day of them to one of the days I don't work so I'm not able to do those'* [Grace, HS/M: 17-18].

8.3.2 Economic environment

This property refers to economic factors that influence stakeholder action and interaction. These establish conditions to which stakeholders must respond. These responses represent steps to ensure the longevity and productivity of stakeholder activities.

Funding

The pressure to seek opportunities for funding was consistently referred to by members; *'...the college don't put any money towards my role, so anything I want to put on, any money I need, I've got to know that I'm going to get some funding..'* [Jason, SD/G: 29-31]. As such, the potential to access funding provided a stimulus for participation in CSNs; *'I've always been on the fringe of what the* [CSPAP] *and its predecessor have been doing and some of these things I will get involved in. The reason I'm going next week is because I'm looking at getting some funding, or might get some funding for* [our] *projects'* [George, LS/G: 13-15]. Problematically, this demanded that members invest time and resources to ensure that CSNs were in a position to bid for funding; *'CSN's take up an incredible amount of time if they are going to engage and work effectively with members and the community. CSN's require a part-time officer to drive work forward particularly if they are to be sustained in the future'* [FT/LASS]. This placed a set of additional demands on members.

However, CSNs also provided a means of demonstrating to external bodies that local systems were in place to ensure that funding was targeted at priority areas; '...*some of the projects on our network action plan we would have run in connection with local authority delivery or school sports partnership local...but yes, it does need to be there for us to access Sport England funding to add to those projects...Right now if you want to get funding from Sport England you need to have a network in place or a form of network*' [Nicola, LGSS/M: 69-75].

To meet criteria set out by external funding bodies members had to fulfil specific tasks; '*often the money is tied up anyway and you have to fill all the criteria, so many forms to get it, so many forms after you get it, it becomes such a huge paper exercise that actually, it almost makes the money worth less*' [Elizabeth, LGSS/S: 362-364]. This placed pressure on CSNs to bring together stakeholders and define community projects within relatively short time frames; '*I don't think funding is the be-all and end-all. I started my job with no funding and have been able to achieve a lot with volunteers and working with partners but sometimes I think with this plan that, maybe, it was the result of a rush to get funding...I think funding can blinker what you actually need, not want, but need*' [Lydia, LGSS/H: 213-220]. Consequently, consultation prior to CSN launches was perceived as minimal which negatively impacted member perceptions; '*...bless her, she thought she had her little directory of events but the council are focused on their services which I suppose is natural, but they could have had a lot better response and input if maybe they had put a lot more effort in finding where the community groups were*' [Alison, VCS/H: 73-75].

Wider economy

The second dimension refers to factors in the wider economy i.e. economic decisions regarding government agencies and fiscal systems. Members felt the impact of these factors within the course of their normal routines; *'One of things with the credit crunch is that cost is now a barrier, which hadn't been so much of a problem before'* [Terry, VCS/S: 306-307]. Whilst members experienced the effects of factors in the wider economy first-hand they understood that they were powerless to influence them. As such, changes were often unexpected and required constant adaptations; *'...there are things that change quite dramatically...the way the funding went into the* [Sports Partnership] *to support those people going out to work with clubs and supporting different sports, all of a sudden that money's been absorbed back up to the governing bodies'* [Graham, LS/S: 258-262].

8.3.3 Physical environment

The final property refers to the physical environment in which CSNs operate. The two dimensions highlight the ways in which member actions are influenced by the physical environment.

Geographic challenges

These challenges were related to the expansive geographic areas in which some members operated; *'Because we're out in the hills, lots of things are run in* [the towns]... *and for a group or a club to access courses, not only have you got to pay for the courses you have to pay to access them, the getting there and back, the time that takes...if the clubs could club together and buy in all the training it would make it far more accessible for the clubs to attend'* [Elizabeth. LGSS/S: 312-316]. Data analysis did not reveal geographic challenges posed by other factors for example, large conurbations. This might be attributable to the

dispersed nature of towns and the predominantly rural nature of the county in which the interviews took place.

Geo-political challenges

Geo-political challenges refer to political issues which arise as a consequence of local geography; '...*people who live in the North have no interest with the South, and vice versa. It would have been better to create one around the town rather than across the district...*' [Andrew, VCS/S: 218-220]. These challenges made it hard to link organisations from dispersed areas; '...*they do not see why they have to be part of a bigger network because they have their own. And this is the unwritten element. Politically our district is very divided between north and south so they being south do not really want to be part of a network that covers the whole district*' [Nicola, LGSS/M: 467-469].

8.4   Micro scale contextual factors

Micro scale contextual factors (Table 16, overleaf) are narrow in scope and possible impact and relate to conditions that are close to the individual (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Micro scale contextual factors are conceptualised as the conditions that occur at the CSN level and encompass those affecting individual members and the CSN as an organisational whole.

8.4.1   Knowledge and attitudes

Knowledge and attitudes refer to inherent traits that individual stakeholders bring to the CSN. These vary between stakeholders and may be modified over time. Qualitative data analysis revealed five dimensions.

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Table 16: Micro scale contextual factors

Category	Properties	Dimensions
8.4 Micro context	8.4.1 Knowledge and attitudes	Individual skills Strategic awareness Trust Sense of satisfaction Ownership and commitment
	8.4.2 Organisational characteristics	Structural flexibility Membership
	8.4.3 Management	Formal agreements Roles Core processes

Individual skills

These relate to perceptions about specific skills that are important to participation in CSNs. Communication was perceived as crucial for the successful functioning of CSNs; '*I would put myself down as quite a good communicator and I would say that constant communication* [is needed] *between everyone to keep them involved*' [Lydia, LGSS/H: 291-292]. Communication was important for sending information concerning CSN activities, without which stakeholders struggled to form a coherent picture of the purpose of CSNs; '*...it took me several months to work out what the hell was going on, from a background with an independent company I wasn't, yeah, I wasn't aux fais with all the network and everything. So gradually I kind of learned it existed and what it was but no-one sort of said: "we're the network"'* [Anita, LASS/G: 16-19].

Consistent approaches to communication were important for keeping members up to date and clear on CSN developments; '*Often it would be one way, often it would be two way, but it's the ambiguity of that, what we're told one minute and what we're told the next...this would be one project of many more, for most people in my position, you haven't got six months to be ambiguous. You need to know what you need, when you need it by, let me*

have enough time to prepare [the details]' [Nicola, LASS/M: 217-219]. Whilst it was recognised that communication was important it also needed to suit the needs of CSNs; '*I haven't a clue what that school sports partnership people are doing, but again it's time, you know. If everybody got up and talked for five minutes about what they were doing the meetings sort of done really, so I think the media thing will help because everyone will know what other people are doing…*' [Terry, VCS/S: 318-320].

In addition, leadership was perceived as an important aspect of CSNs; '*You need to have people skills…experience of handling different people and leadership skills in trying to get different people all on the same page and the same paragraph*' [Nicola, LGSS/M: 349-351]. An important function of leadership was to provide orientation concerning the purpose and direction of CSNs. '*…everybody is so busy and everybody has their own priorities…you have to, somebody has to, I was going to say keep banging on about it but, erm, somebody has to keep that motivation going, somebody has to keep sending the emails saying come we need a meeting*' [Elizabeth, LASS/S: 56-59].

Whilst leadership was perceived at the organisational level for example, the CSPAP; '*I feel they should be overseeing everything that's going on in the county, erm, not coordinating as such but they should know what's going on, guiding us in the right direction, helping us share best practice and you know, identifying any duplication*' [Anita, LASS/G: 209-211], attention was generally focused on specific individuals; '*…he has made it a priority, he's led on it, pushed it out, groups of people he knows, they say he's pushing it out, we're gonna get money from him, support*' [Nathan, SD/G: 10-11]. Without these leaders CSN activity would be negatively affected; '*…it all sort of dwindled away because still nobody was taking a lead on it and I was wary about taking a lead on it*' [Elizabeth, LGSS/S: 157-159]. Hence,

concerns were raised concerning what would happen if key individuals with leadership roles left CSNs; '*I think she is very key to how things move forwards but I think even more clear leadership from within the council...will put it even more on the map and give her that support to keep the momentum going...wherever you've got groups with terrific leadership and doing terrific work you do have to step back and say, gosh, what would happen if they went away somewhere else? These groups have to be self sustaining, it has to keep moving forward, it has to have good driver*' [Zoe, HS/M: 284-289].

Effective leadership skills facilitated CSN activity by fostering sense of ownership and purpose; '*I didn't see where it fit in and where it was going and I didn't have any time to put towards it. So I was like, this is a bit frustrating for me. I wonna help with it but I don't where it's going, I don't know how it fits in. I don't know what I can possibly do. Now the fact that we've got Andrew as the Chair... it's not that people are being pushed into it but they're being encouraged to pick up the mantle for certain things, it seems to be happening*' [Ian, LASS/S: 301-306]. Previous leadership experience provided a valuable source from which to inform leadership approaches to CSNs; '*...if you're gonna deliver a project, I've delivered, multi million ones, you've got to be very focused, very, very organised. Yet the word about the network is it's got to be a sort of loose and amorphous network and I think there's a, you know, a cultural break point in there in that if you want to be a loose friendly network, yeah, that's cool, and it will work and it can do some things, you know. But if you really want to make things happen you need far more structure*' [Andrew, VCS/S: 41-43].

Effective leaders were also able to understand how CSNs fitted into the local strategic landscape and demonstrate this to the wider membership; '*...our involvement with sport is fairly broad, whether it's about facility provision, working with clubs and volunteers,*

working with schools, there's a role that the council has in the wellbeing of the community and its population' [Dennis, LGSS/CT: 96-98]. In contrast, some leaders felt that CSNs represented an unnecessary incursion into their domains; *'…why would the district council do anything? We already run programmes and clubs, you know, because of the age range, you know, if it's a football club, they already run training sessions, they already run weekend programmes'* [Amy, LGSS/G: 285-287]. Consequently, the validity of CSNs was questioned; *'…unless you've got a system, a clear set up, a focus, someone to drive that focus, it should then, it could become really important. And if it's not going to become really important then why have it?'* [Jason, SD/G: 112-114]. Furthermore, leaders did not necessarily behave in ways which were consistent with member perspectives; *'I've sat in some groups where the person chairing is driving forward the agenda, not the agenda as in what's written down but his or her agenda of what they want. "I'm the Chair therefore I get what I want." That's not what it's about. It's about facilitating conversation with everybody around the table and making sure everybody gets an input'* [Elizabeth, LASS/S: 285-288].

Strategic awareness

This dimension represented the ability to recognise and understand the role of collaboration in local strategies for addressing issues around and sport, physical activity and the wider health agenda: *'…we already had those links with the partners but we tended to link with them on a one-to-one basis, we'd never really pulled them together to have a bigger discussion. It always tended to be a discussion with an individual partner whereas now we've joined up those partners, they're working together, we can identify where we can support each other with different things'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 38-41]. Stakeholders with high strategic awareness were able to see the potential links; *'I am conscious as well in terms of the health side of things, I think that's something that I've got to be aware of, we*

need to maintain a connection very locally as well, that's probably something that I need to address where we're looking to reach those harder to reach, their health issues. So I think the CSPAN can help to do that, certainly' [Patrick, SD/M: 107-109]. However, this was in potential conflict with existing strategies; *'...what is it that I need to be telling people that come to a network that I don't already tell them?'* [Amy, LASS/G: 184-185]. This resulted in a sense of confusion and uncertainty.

Trust

Developing trust provided a means of increasing the legitimacy of CSNs. This was essential when attempting to recruit members without knowing the precise nature of benefits possible through participation; *'The only incentive for them is that they trust what you say so you've got to build that trust as quickly as possible. The way I do it is by being absolutely frank and to the point, no frills, if we can't do it I'm not going to say we can, because the minute you can't do it you lose their trust in you'* [Nicola, LASS/S: 366-368]. Building trust helped to ensure that activities were consistent with the goals of CSN members; *'You need to spend time to develop personal links, to spend time building a level of trust and some kind of mutual recognition that you're working towards the same goals or stated goal that you can both focus on'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 598-601]. Hence, the importance of trust to the network was implied. It was perceived as an essential aspect of collaboration which provided a basis for stable relationships.

Negative or low trust was identified around perceptions concerning organisations. This was evident in relationships that were in the early stages of development or where the needs of members had not been tended to. Thus, despite a good level of rapport between members there remained a level of suspicion concerning the intentions of their organisations; *'I think*

that she is responsible for making networks happen, and I've got no issues with her, I actually think she's an impressive lady. But she almost seems to want to wash her hands of it, she wants to hand it over to the community. But handing something over to the community is easier said than done' [Andrew, VCS/S: 29-32]. This was also apparent where previous experience of partnership between organisations had been problematic; *'...nothing's changed. The idea, the concept of a county sports partnership came on board and I was really excited because I thought "at last!" we're gonna have this one-stop shop where we know we can go for coach education, we know we can go for this that and the other. And it's just not happening...everything they do is for themselves as a business'* [Amy, LASS/G: 314-331].

Sense of satisfaction

Members were satisfied with different aspects of CSNs. For some members factors relating to CSN processes were important for example, leadership; *'I think the main thing is his organisation of the meeting and of the notes, just keeping them pushed, not letting people forget they've put their hand up to something. So, let's just keep this ball rolling, he's very good at keeping it rolling. Now, which is fantastic, and our network hasn't had that at all, it's only just sort of started'* [Ian, LASS/S: 290-293]. For others, satisfaction was related to the outcomes of participation for example, acquiring resources; *'...it's enabled us to do what we would like or need to do for the community...It makes my job easier...you can't run what we're trying to do on thin air, there has to be some funding'* [Lydia, LASS/H: Lydia 369-372], and networking; *'...we're now finding it's clubs who are getting a lot more engaged in that process so in that respect it's a good thing...clubs are starting to realize there are other people out there for them, I suppose at that level that's where it's important, club aren't working in isolation by themselves'* [Patrick, SD/M: 71-74]. Members with a high or growing

sense of satisfaction could be distinguished from less satisfied members. These members had less positive attitudes regarding participation; '*I haven't seen around the table in terms of the voluntary members of the network anybody that I feel any real empathy with. Mainly because there's not that many people there and I feel that there's these two categories...just turning up but not having anything to say, or being totally on their own agenda*' [Andrew, VCS/M: 323-326].

Ownership and commitment

These factors compelled members to participate in CSN activities. The level of commitment varied. Those with a high level of commitment perceived that CSNs provided an important means of addressing organisational priorities; '*I want to give it a good go because we should do. We're obliged to give our clients, our clubs, our stakeholders the opportunity to get something extra, that's why I'm in it*' [Nicola, LASS/M: 259-261]. As such, there was a certain amount of pressure to commit to participating in CSNs; '*...obligated would be one of the words I would use but I also want to be a part of it because I can see the benefits of it, I can see how wonderful it could work. Whether it needs to on a smaller scale, whether you need one in each town, you know, whether they need to remain smaller, that remains to be seen*' [Ian, LASS/S: 168-171].

Other members with a high level of commitment perceived that CSNs were compatible with their own philosophies; '*...there's a lot of contacts there and there's a lot of people there from all the aspects that I'm talking about and if they work together, yes I think they can help improve health and activity*' [George, LS/G: 28-29]. However, these aspects were not necessarily exclusive to certain individuals and it was possible to observe elements of both at the same time; '*I suppose the simple answer is that it's part of my role. But, but*

also…. if you relate it to the discussion we've just had about changing people's hearts and minds and getting them to be more active so they have a healthier more active older age, erm, I suppose that's why I feel very committed. Because this is a group, the activities which they drive forward can make a difference' [Zoe, HS/H: 245-249]. Members with fewer convictions concerning the role and place of CSNs were more guarded in their level of commitment; *'…it's something that I stood back from a little bit because it was one of those things where I thought, well, you know in terms of the direct benefits that would have been for me in the partnership, you know, there are a lot of other areas I could have put my time into that would have been of greater benefit'* [Patrick, SD/M: 78-80].

Members with a high sense of ownership talked about CSNs in much more possessive terms than those without. Within these members it was possible to observe an underlying attitude or perception that motivated members; *'I sort of set it up and Chair it. I'm in charge of sport, play and healthy lifestyles for the borough council. So sport and physical activity are a key part of that'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 12-13]. Whilst local authority members in leadership positions frequently reported a high sense of ownership other members also reported similar attitudes; *'I enjoy that sort of thing* [networking] *and connected with that is if I do something it's either got to be bigger, better, or something than everybody else who's involved in similar activities'* [Graham, LS/S: 129-130]. Thus, a sense of ownership established links with CSNs that were by their nature very personal. Consequently, this established certain expectations regarding the functions of CSNs; *'I have a passion about sport, a passion about getting people involved in sport and I think the network should relate to that, it's aims should be to relate to all the issues related to sport…'* [Jason, SD/G: 125-127]. As such, it was possible to understand that whilst a sense of ownership established unique associations with CSNs these were not immune to the effects of wider contextual

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factors. For example, where CSNs were implemented with a strong outcome focus there was the danger that member involvement in CSN activities was perceived as restricted; '*I feel that the local authority officers lead everything and decisions have been made and probably set in stone prior to them coming to meetings to discuss*' [FT/LASS], which challenged the development of a strong sense of ownership

8.4.2 Organisational characteristics

This property relates to the structure of CSNs and the composition of the membership. CSNs tended not to have distinctive organisational boundaries, instead being loosely organised around sets of community issues. It was recognised that these often overlapped with other networks and partnership arrangements in which community stakeholders were involved; '*The difficulty is as soon as you put another group in place you're putting an awful lot of people in at different levels that will meet with each other anyway through further sort of sub groups or through ways in which they're already working*' [Patrick, SD/M: 20-23].

Structural flexibility

Structural flexibility reflects the potential to develop customised systems around which CSN activity was based. This was, potentially, in contrast to working arrangements found within traditional organisational structures outside of the CSN, for example, within members' own organisations; '*...with the network we had a structure, we can do something with this. Rather than just deciding how to spend the money were able to call together the group, have that as an agenda item and all of a sudden you've got the right people together, you've got a way of working, a system*' [Dennis, LGSS/C: 137-140]. Thus, structural flexibility provided a powerful means of customising the organisation of the CSN

to meet the needs of its projects; '*I think there's four of us including a member from Active Miltonshire that basically are on the hub to come back with some proposals. Basically, we had a meeting originally to make sure we all understood what we were trying to achieve'* [Graham, LS/S: 7-9].

Membership

The dimension of membership relates to the size and range of representation brought to CSNs by the members. Membership provided the raw material for CSN activities including financial and non financial resources; '*I bring a certain amount of funding opportunity I suppose, to the network, and support. My role is about the entire health and well being of the entire population of the locality, so from that perspective the kind of work that the network does very much meets that agenda. So I'm there to support the work that's going on...*' [Zoe, HS/H: 16-20]. A varied membership was considered necessary for effective collaboration, the importance of which was underscored by efforts to recruit members through specific recruitment events; '*...we had about forty five to fifty people there, different community groups, clubs, governing bodies, partners that we work with, interested parties – schools, county sports partnership, those sorts of people'* [Dennis, LGSS/C: 8-10], and events aimed at bolstering or increasing CSN membership; '*...we had the re-launch in June...probably seven or eight people from the community turned up and we decided to create two delivery and development groups'* [Andrew, VCS/S: 348-349].

8.4.3   Management

The final property of micro context concerns the systems and processes used to manage CSN activities, maintain the health of the CSN and to respond to internal and external circumstances. Three dimensions emerged through data analysis including formal

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agreements, roles, and core processes. These influenced the nature of activity within CSNs and established sets of working conditions which members responded to.

Formal agreements

Formal agreements established the operational boundaries of CSNs. These delimited the nature of activity through defining agreed terms. Formal agreements helped to secure consensus between members; *'...the terms of reference...*[were] *about having a common voice or a shared view of what we were trying to do for sport...what issues are there for sport...how can we work together to improve them'* [Dennis, LGSS/CT: 615-619]. These agreements were embodied within documents containing the terms of CSN operation which outlined the strategic objectives, targeted outcomes and programmes aimed at realising the proposed outcomes. These documents also served to highlight formal links with other local strategies and served as a critical link with external funding agencies in providing a reference for action plans and associated criteria; *'At the moment it's a sub group of our health and well being partnership, and that links with the local strategic partnership...That's our way into the LSP, one of the stipulations from Sport England was that the network needed to link to the LSP'* [Nicola, LGSS/M: 444-448].

Roles

Roles provided members with a sense of identity within CSNs and helped to establish expectations concerning what was required of themselves and others. Some members had specific duties or tasks within the CSN. For example, network Chairs had a principal role in fulfilling key leadership and performance management functions; *'My role is to Chair the network...I suppose I am the person that's doing all the monitoring and evaluation and making sure that we reach our targets'* [Lydia, LGSS/H: 38-39], and keeping the CSN on

track; '...*the role I've got is about keeping the network together and keeping people informed*' [Dennis, LGSS/C: 18-19]. This allowed members to assume key positions within CSNs which were justified by the demands of their existing roles; '*There's an element I need to, I want to give it a good go because we should do. We're obliged to give our clients, our clubs, our stakeholders the opportunity to get something extra, that's why I'm in it*'

Chair and core group roles placed demands on individuals over and above those experienced by other members. All network Chairs perceived that the position could be onerous and demanded significant amounts of time and energy to fulfil the requirements of the role in addition to existing commitments; '*I had to re-write the action plan six times before we had it right and that's not in terms of the stakeholder input, they were very flexible. It's in terms of getting it right for Sport England, erm, which to me wasted six months*' [Nicola, LGSS/M: 127-129]. The criticalness of local authority representatives was also evident given the centrally-determined CSN implementation process. However, the utility of this approach was questioned; *think because the funding sits ...if the funding is with the district council, it's assumed I would imagine, that the district council take the lead but I don't think it should have to be that way*' [Lydia, LASS/H: 80-82]. Thus, given the additional responsibility in assuming certain roles it was common to find that allocating these was a difficult task; '*...it all sort of dwindled away because nobody was taking a lead on it and I was wary about taking a lead on it. Another member of staff was in the process of being made redundant and another member of staff just doesn't have the capacity*' [Elizabeth, LGSS/S: 157-159]. As such, some members were hesitant in adopting core CSN roles when the opportunity arose; '*...nobody took ownership of the thing and that's why they wanted me to become Chairman and take ownership of the thing...actually, I've just*

taken on, well I've not taken on a poison chalice, but I question whether I can do anything' [Andrew, VCS/S: 315-319].

The qualities of roles were perceived according to member attitudes and experience. For example, some members attitudes meant that they perceived a less significant role in the CSN; *'...my role really is to try to steer, to see if there are any opportunities for physical activity projects that will impact on families in deprived areas'* [Grace, HS/M: 19-20]. Consequently, some members assumed roles that were perceptively less central to the CSN; *'I took an active role but not a controlling role so I suppose...it was a bit like well, let's wait and see'* [Patrick, SD/M 95-97]. In addition, members roles were also defined by experience or perceived expertise; *'I see my role as a facilitator, bringing a breadth of experience, trying to make sure that the paid people mesh with the volunteers'* [Andrew, VCS/S: 81-82]. Hence, roles were subject to a variety of interpretations and reflected the specific situations in which they were performed.

Core processes

The final dimension of CSN management refers to core processes which include decision making, planning, and communication. Decision making refers to the ways in which members cooperate in order to agree and execute common plans for action. Decision making processes provided impetus and a sense of purpose; *'Rather than [us] just deciding how to spend the money were able to call together the group, have that as an agenda item and all of a sudden you've got the right people together, you've got a way of working, a system'* [Dennis, LGSS/C: 138-140]. However, some members did not necessarily feel that they were included in these processes; *'...it's a bit boring to sit in a meeting where people are being told what to do all the time...there's not an awful lot of opportunity for people to*

communicate or share with each other' [Grace, HS/M: 376-378]. Decision making processes also provided an opportunity for sharing and cooperation through engaging members in formal and informal discussion; *'...there's a financial support and then there's also a sort of support for Lydia, we meet and discuss what the priorities are and how we're going to address those...we'll have a discussion and see which* [idea] *is going to best meet those priorities'* [Zoe, HS/H: 24-27].

Planning refers to the processes of designing CSN programmes and how member activity was organised to deliver these in practice. Involvement in planning processes was important for providing a sense of partnership and a focus for activity; *'...without those projects you don't know if the partners would keep talking. If you didn't bring them together would the partners go off and do their own thing?'* [Dennis, LGSS/C: 286-288]. Interest in planning was high when proposed programmes reflected the interests or priorities of members; *'...there were lots of opportunities to look for things that would help us as a club and help us...to pursue things and help us with what we're after'* [Graham, LS/S: 166-168]. Thus, involvement in planning processes encouraged a sense of ownership for CSN programmes; *'...it's been positive, I'm looking forward to this sub-committee thing. That could be very interesting. Looking in some more detail at one particular thing. At that last meeting there was a buzz and people thought, "yeah, something's happening now"'* [Terry, VCS/S: 96-99]. Thus, planning provided a useful means to secure a degree of responsibility for CSN activity; *'...it's not that people are being pushed into it but they're being encouraged to pick up the mantle for certain things...'* [Ian, LGSS/S: 305-306]. This helped to establish lines of accountability within CSNs and encouraged members to sustain their involvement.

Communication provided a mechanism through which members are able to contribute to CSN activities and share information; *'There are areas where it's not moving forward as well as it might be and we need to target those, but she is very good and keeps me informed very well of what's going on'* [Zoe, HS/H: 46-48]. Poor communication management led to ambiguity and uncertainty:

> *'I was kind of thinking, am I supposed to be going?...But then, again, is my role what they're interested in, is my work something they're interested in? Which I thought they probably should be but, not sure.*
> CB: *Right. I'm getting the sense that you're not quite sure about the network...*
> A: *Yeah, I don't really know where I stand with them'* [Anita, PH/G: 166-170].

The quality, frequency and medium of communication all posed challenges as members perceived differing needs and preferences; *'...a lot of the emails that Nicola sends out are quite lengthy...I don't always read them, so I suppose if there was a newsletter saying what they were doing...'* [Grace, HS/M; 231-233].

8.5   Chapter summary

This chapter has provided descriptive data concerning the qualitative sample. It has highlighted the categories, propertie, and dimensions of the macro and micro scale contextual factors. These establish the contextual conditions influencing participation in CSNs. Having introduced these factors Chapter 9 presents the findings from the analysis of data in the quantitative component.

Chapter 9

Results – Quantitative Data

9.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes the background data to the theoretical framework. For clarity the chapter is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides results from the descriptive analyses. This section presents a profile of CSN and member characteristics and explores the main components included in the research. Part 2 presents results from comparative data analysis conducted in accordance with the grounded theory methodology. Part 3 presents result from the inferential statistical analyses conducted after completion of the conceptual model. Table 17 provides an overview of the chapter contents.

Table 17: Overview of contents

Part	Section title	Subsection
Part 1	9.1 Descriptive quantitative analyses	-
	9.2 Respondent profiles	9.2.1 Representation
		9.2.2 Involvement
	9.3 Network profiles	9.3.1 Network governance
		9.3.2 Network administration
	9.4 Main components	9.4.1 Outliers
		9.4.2 Profile of outliers
Part 2	9.5 Comparative analysis for conceptual development	9.5.1 Level of involvement
		9.5.2 Demographic variables
		9.5.3 Member roles and representation
		9.5.4 Member conflict and decision making
		9.5.5 Main components
		9.5.6 Development of theoretical relationships
		9.5.7 Perceived benefits and costs
		9.5.8 Sense of ownership
Part 3	9.6 Regression analysis	9.6.1 Summary of models
	9.7 Chapter summary	-

Part 1

9.1   Descriptive quantitative analyses

This section provides details of descriptive analyses conducted on respondent data. For clarity attention is first given to background data including respondent characteristics and the nature of their involvement in CSNs. Secondly networks are addressed in relation to core processes. Descriptive analysis includes the range, mean and standard deviation of participant responses.

9.2   Respondent profiles

All study participants (N = 171) who completed the survey were members of community sports networks (CSNs) across England. This represented a survey response rate of 48.9%. Of the survey respondents the largest ethnic group was Caucasian (82.5%, N = 141), with Chinese and Asian respondents accounting for 1.2% (N = 2). 7.0% (N = 12) indicated 'other' and 4.7% (N = 8) selected not to state their race / ethnicity. There was little difference between genders with males representing 49.1% (N = 84) and females representing 46.2% (N = 79) of the sample population. Of the age bands included in the questionnaire the group with most representation was 25-29 years old (19.9%, N = 34), whilst the 65-60 years old group had the least representation (1.8%, N = 3). Overall, respondents' ages ranged between 20 and 69 years of age. The majority of respondents (90.6%, N = 155) reported not having a disability. This data is summarised in Table 18 on the next page.

Table 18: Respondent profile: demographic data

Variable	% (N)
Gender (n=163)[a]	
Male	49.1 (84)
Female	46.2 (79)
Age band (N = 168)[b]	
20-24	4.7 (8)
25-29	19.9 (34)
30-34	14.0 (24)
35-39	13.5 (23)
40-44	14.6 (25)
45-49	9.4 (16)
50-54	8.8 (15)
55-59	8.8 (15)
60-64	2.9 (5)
65-69	1.8 (3)
Ethnicity (N = 163)[c]	
Caucasian	82.5 (141)
Asian	0.6 (1)
Chinese	0.6 (1)
Other	7.0 (12)
Prefer not to state	4.7 (8)
Disability (N = 162)[d]	
Yes	4.1 (7)
No	90.6 (155)

Note: missing data values are as follows: [a] $N = 8$ (4.7%), [b] $N = 3$ (1.8%), [c] $N = 8$ (4.7%), [d] $N = 9$ (5.3%).

Figure 12 (overleaf) displays the county of origin in which network members worked. The region with greatest overall representation was the East Midlands (24%, $N = 41$). The least represented region was the West Midlands (2.3%, $N = 4$). A detailed breakdown of CSN members' county and region of origin is available in Appendix H (page 435).

Figure 12: Respondent region of origin*
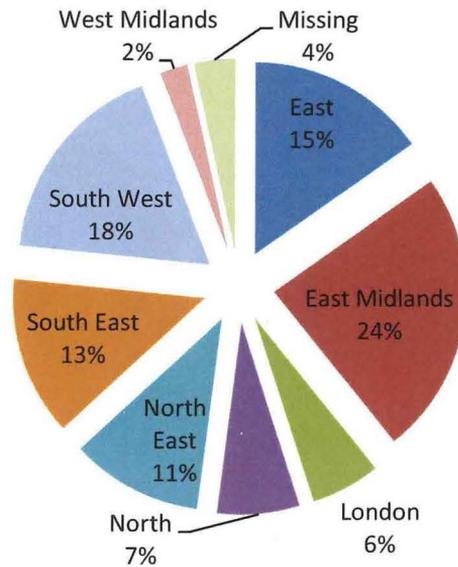
*Note: based on Sport England CSPAP areas.

9.2.1   Representation

The majority of respondents represented organisations within their CSNs (94.7%, N = 162), most of which were accounted for by local council and statutory service organisations (42.1%, N = 72) (Figure 13, overleaf), which reflects CSN implementation guidance from Sport England (Sport England, 2007a). Full details of the types of organisations represented are available in Appendix I (page 438). About 75% (N = 129) of respondents had previous experience of networks or partnerships (i.e. had previously been involved in partnership working or were engaged in similar arrangements concurrently). The largest proportion of those with experience were local council or government agencies (45.7%, N = 59). Combined, more than 80% of local authority and statutory service had previous experience of collaboration. Further details of members' level of experience are available in Appendix J, page 439.

Figure 13: Types of organisations and agencies represented in CSNs*

Legend:
- Local government / statutory services [a]
- Sport and Leisure [b]
- Sports development [c]
- Education [d]
- Hospitals / NHS / Health services
- Other
- Voluntary / community group [e]

Pie chart values: 44%, 15%, 11%, 10%, 8%, 8%, 4%
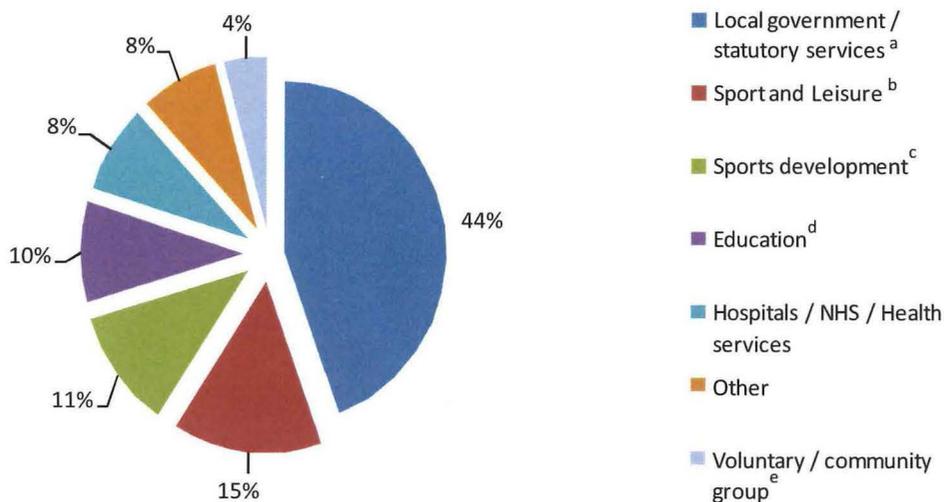
* Note: [a] Local council or government agencies, youth services, other statutory agencies. [b] Sports clubs, leisure facilities. [c] Sport England, school sports development. [d] Schools (up to year 13), higher / further education. [e] Community, neighbourhood, and volunteer groups.

Respondents were asked whether they felt there was sufficient representation within their network for it to achieve its objectives. If respondents replied not they were asked to select organisations from which they would like to see more representation in their network. Overall, there was little difference between those who felt their networks did have sufficient representation and those who did not (Figure 14, overleaf). However, representation groups shared contrasting perspectives. For example, the majority of school sports development representatives (92%, N = 12) reported there was insufficient representation in the CSN for it to achieve its objectives. However, representation groups shared contrasting perspectives. The majority (60%, N = 45) of local government and statutory service organisations and agencies felt there was sufficient representation, as did more than half (56%, N = 14) of sports club and local leisure providers. In contrast, 73.7% (N = 14) of sports development representatives felt that there was insufficient

representation for CSNs to achieve their aims which was also true of the majority of community and nieghbourhood group representatives (71.4%, *N* = 5).

Figure 14: Perceptions concerning sufficiency of representation in CSNs
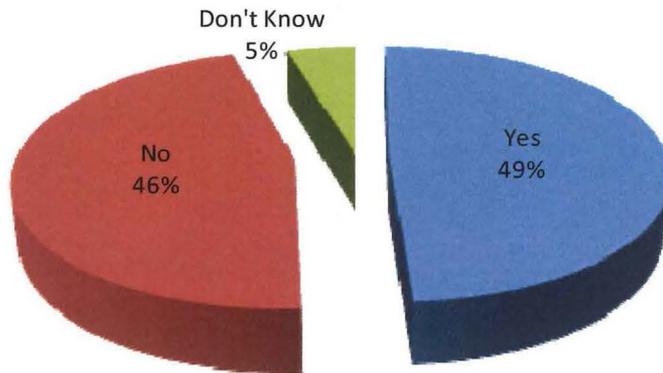
Data analysis revealed that sports clubs were perceived by the sample as the type of organisation most lacking representation in CSNs (Table 19, overleaf). Alone, sports clubs accounted for 6.5% (*N* = 11) of the organisations represented in CSNs.

Table 19: Organisations perceived as not being sufficiently represented in CSNs

Variable	% (N)
If 'no', which sectors/agencies are not well represented? (N = 277)*	
Sports clubs	15.8 (44)
Community/neighbourhood groups	14.4 (40)
Older age	12.2 (34)
Volunteer organisation or groups	10.8 (30)
Parents' organisations	10.1(28)
Sporting organisations (e.g. governing body)	9.3 (26)
Higher/further education	5.8 (16)
Youth services	5.42 (15)
School sports development	3.9 (11)
Community leisure	3.9 (11)
Sport England	3.6 (10)
Other	1.8 (5)
Hospital/NHS/Health services	1.4 (4)
Other statutory agencies	1.0 (3)

Note: * Respondents who answered 'no' were able to make multiple selections across 16 variables

Results indicated that of the three highest ranked groups (sports clubs, community / neighbourhood groups, and older aged people) the largest number of nominations came from respondents representing local council or government agencies who accounted for 29.5%, 30% and 33.3% of the responses for each group respectively.

9.2.2 Involvement

In addition to questions concerning representation in CSNs respondents were asked about the nature of their participation in CSNs, specifically concerning their roles within the CSN and perceived level of involvement (Table 20, overleaf).

Table 20: Primary roles and perceived level of involvement

Variable	% (N)
*Primary role (N = 168)**	
Network member	52.6 (90)
Member of core group	29.8 (51)
Network Chair	11.1 (19)
Other**	4.7 (8)
Perceived level of involvement (N = 171)	
Not very involved	5.8 (10)
A little involved	9.9 (17)
Moderately involved	29.2 (50)
Very involved	24.0 (41)
Extremely involved	31.0 (53)

Notes: * Missing data value $N = 3$ (1.8%). ** Of respondents who stated 'other', 8 roles were identified including; CSN Officer, CSPAP Director, School Nurse, Chair of sub-group, Local Authority Sports Development Officer, Minute Taker, Network coordinator, Network Secretary.

Approximately half (48.0%, $N = 36$) of local council or government agency representatives reported that they were extremely involved in the network. In addition, more than one third of school sports development agencies (35.7%, $N = 5$) reported that they were extremely involved in the network whilst just over one quarter (28.8%, $N = 2$) of community and neighbourhood organisations reported the same. For the whole sample the mean time invested in network-related activities was 14.02 hours (SD = 20.5 hours, ranging from 0 to 148 hours). Table 21 (overleaf) profiles types of CSN representation by primary role.

Table 21: Primary roles in CSNs by type of representation

Type of organisation represented	Primary role % (N)		
	Network Chair	Member of core group	Network member
Local government / statutory services[a]	55.0 (11)	62.5 (35)	30.8 (28)
Sport and Leisure	15.0 (3)	7.1 (4)	19.8 (18)
Sports development[b]	10.0 (2)	7.1 (4)	8.8 (8)
Education	5.0 (1)	3.6 (2)	14.3 (13)
Hospitals / NHS / Health services	0.0 (0)	5.4 (3)	12.1 (11)
Voluntary / community group	5.0 (1)	3.6 (2)	4.4 (4)
Other[c]	10.0 (2)	10.7 (6)	9.9 (9)

Notes: [a] excluding educational organisations and institutions; [b] including Sport England; [c] includes respondents who do not formally represent organisations or agencies and those whose organisations do not fit the categories listed.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (61.5%, N = 99) reported that their CSN employed paid professional staff to assist with the running of the network. However, it was not possible to identify these individuals due to limitations in the questionnaire i.e. respondents could select 'network Chair', 'member of core group' or 'network member' but not 'paid staff'. Hence, paid staff could declare their status in this respect. Usefully, it was possible to identify staff who contributed significant time to the CSN (N = 9) in comparison to other members (identified as those who invested 60 or more hours in the previous working month, mean 74.4 hours, SD = 28.9 hours). The majority of these represented local authority agencies (77.8%, N = 7). This demonstrates that staff who contributed the most significant amount of time was not employed directly by the CSN i.e. were not staff being paid directly through CSN funds. Rather, these individuals invested time in CSNs in accordance with the requirements of their professional positions. Excluding these staff the mean investment of time for those reporting to be extremely involved in the CSN was 17.5 hours (SD = 13.8 hours) whilst the mean number of hours invested for those who reported being the least involved was 1.6 hours (SD = 1.7 hours).

9.3   CSN profiles

Respondents were also asked about network age and processes such as decision making and recruitment efforts. The majority of networks had been running for 1 to 2 years (40.9%, N = 70) which is indicative of the strategy adopted by Sport England in 2007 where CSNs were considered a priority area for development. Of those who reported the duration for which they had been a member (N = 159), the mean length of membership was 19.6 months (SD = 13.7, median value N = 18.0 months).

9.3.1   CSN governance

The majority (87.6%, N = 140) reported that the terms and conditions of the CSN had been formally defined in documents containing the terms of reference although 6.2% (N = 10) stated that they did not know, 50% of which were members of networks reported to have been operational for between 1 and 2 years. Of the respondents reporting whether clear accountability arrangements were in place (N = 159) the majority (72.3%, N = 115) confirmed that clear terms of reference had also been established.

New member recruitment

Members were asked to report whether or not their CSN was recruiting new members (Figure 15, overleaf). The most responses were received for the networks that had been running for 2 to 3 years (N = 70), of which 47.1% (N = 33) confirmed their networks were actively recruiting new members, 24.3% (N = 17) that their networks were not actively recruiting new members, whilst 28.6% (N = 20) did not know.

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Figure 15: Recruitment efforts in CSNs

Decision making

Approximately half of the sample (53.3%, *N* = 89) reported that they were very comfortable with the overall decision making process in their network, 40.4% (*N* = 68) reported that they were somewhat comfortable, whilst 5.3% (*N* = 9) reported that they were not at all comfortable. There was no discernable pattern in terms of the types of organisations represented for those who reported that they were not at all comfortable, organisations including local council or government agencies, hospitals, NHS and health services, higher and further education, community leisure facilities, and community or neighbourhood groups.

Respondents were also asked to rate the perceived level of influence they personally felt they had in decision making processes. Of the whole sample (*N* = 163), the mean rated level of influence was 64.8% (SD = 24.4%, out of a possible maximum perceived score of 100%), although this varied when compared across groups. For the group who responded 'very comfortable' (*N* = 89), the mean rated level of influence was 71.3% (SD = 19.5%), for those 'somewhat comfortable' (*N* = 69) the mean score was 61.3% (SD = 25.3%), and for those 'not at all comfortable' (*N* = 9), the mean score was 28.4% (SD = 24.8%).

Conflict

Approximately half of respondents (56.7%, N = 97) indicated that there was less conflict than expected, 35.7% (N = 61) indicated about as much conflict as was expected and 5.3% (N = 9) indicated there was more conflict than was expected. Of those who reported that there was less conflict than expected (N = 97), 93.9% (N = 91) represented organisations within the network. The majority of those who reported more conflict than expected (N = 9) represented local council or statutory service organisations (44.4%, N = 4) and community leisure facilities (22.2%, N = 2).

9.3.2   CSN administration

Table 22 (overleaf) provides information concerning network administration including accountability arrangements and provisions for the monitorting and evaluation of network activity.

Table 22: Key aspects of CSN administration

Variable	N*	Yes % (N)	No % (N)
Has the network the capacity to undertake evaluation to monitor its progress?	160	78.1% (125)	21.9% (35)
Has the network undertaken evaluation(s) to monitor progress?	156	55.8% (87)	44.2% (69)
Has the network the ability to recognise members' contributions?	161	78.9% (127)	21.1% (34)
Has the network undertaken activity to recognise members' contributions?	156	54.5% (85)	41.5% (71)
Are there professional staff employed to assist the network?	161	61.5% (99)	38.5% (62)

* Note: missing data values range from 5.8% to 8.8% across variables.

Of those respondents who reported that their networks did have the capacity to undertake evaluations or to monitor progress ($N = 125$), 66.4% ($N = 83$) confirmed that evaluation or monitoring had been undertaken. In addition, of those who reported that their network had the ability to recognise members' contributions ($N = 127$), 66.1% ($N = 84$) reported that activity had been undertaken to this effect. In addition, 87.6% ($N = 140$) of the sample reported that Terms of Reference documents were in place in their CSN. This demonstrated that CSNs had largely devised and agreed upon action plans and the necessary processes to bring these to life.

9.4 Main components

Table 23 presents descriptive data for the main components.

Table 23: Descriptive data for main components

Component (N items)	N	Mean	Maximum possible score	Alpha* Current research	Alpha* Previous research**
Network management (22)[a]	170	113.46	154	.95	.93[g]
Leadership (15)[b]	169	57.62	75	.90	-
Network functions (11)[c]	167	38.80	44	.81	-
Communication (9)[b]	168	32.98	45	.82	-
Decision making (6)[a]	168	31.63	42	.71[†]	.67[g]
Contributions (4)[a]	168	19.58	28	.76	.72[g]
Participation (5)[d]	168	12.45	25	.81	-
Barriers to participation (13)[e]	164	30.99	39	.82	-
Participation benefits (13)[a]	164	65.00	91	.92	-
Participation costs (8)[a]	163	20.26	56	.82[†]	-
Trust (7)[b]	163	27.63	35	.81	-
Network strategy (5)[b]	163	19.71	25	.83	-
Perceived outcomes (3)[a]	163	16.47	21	.86	-
Network sustainability (3)[a]	163	13.98	14	.70[†]	-
Synergy (9)	163	30.60	45	.92	-
Sense of satisfaction (6)[b]	164	28.35	42	.92	.84[g]
Sense of ownership (4)[a]	160	22.18	28	.92	.76[g]
Commitment (6)[a]	160	28.75	42	.77[†]	-
Empowerment (7)[b]	161	24.33	35	.70	.77[h]
Perceived effectiveness (9)[f]	163	18.51	36	.89	-

Notes: [a] responses rated on 7-point scale: higher scores indicate more agreement; [b] component scored on 5-point scale: 1 = *don't know*, higher scores indicate more agreement; [c] component scored on 4-point scale: 1 = *don't know*, 2 = *not a function*, 3 = *a minor function*, 4 = *a major function*; [d] component scored on 4-point scale: 1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely* (1-2 times), 3 = *sometimes* (3-4 times), 4= *often* (5 or more times), 5 = *not applicable*; [e] component scored on 3-point scale: higher scores indicate less barriers; [f] component scored on 4-point scale: higher scores indicate more perceived effectiveness. *Cronbach Alpha. ** Alpha scores are provided where reported and only where scale items are identical to the current research. [g] El Ansari *et al.* (2009). [h] Ogden *et al.* (2006). [†] Item/s reverse-scored to improve reliability. [‡] 1 Item removed to improve reliability score.

Table 24 overleaf provides details of zero-order correlations (τ) for all components. No correlations exceeded 0.629.

Table 24: Zero order correlation matrix (τ) for main components

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1 Management	-																			
2 Leadership	.397	-																		
3 Functions	.280	.241	-																	
4 Communication	.367	.428	.176	-																
5 Decision-making	.387	.433	.241	.427	-															
6 Contributions	.129	.166	.127	.147	.205	-														
7 Participation	.043*	.157	.58	.232	.154	.448	-													
8 Barriers	.368	.220	.147	.200	.206	.052*	-.049*	-												
9 Benefits	.449	.310	.289	.303	.314	.211	.173	.306	-											
10 Costs	-.358	-.283	-.180	-.183	-.290	-.171	-.023*	-.336	-.284	-										
11 Trust	.299	.353	.162	.322	.412	.136	.170	.213	-.323	.252	-									
12 Strategy	.348	.392	.214	.423	.359	.286	.210	.189	-.321	.216	.401	-								
13 Outcomes	.369	.299	.164	.297	.287	.209	.227	.216	-.424	.313	.304	.407	-							
14 Sustainability	.390	.256	.210	.297	.240	.120	.202	.281	-.402	.299	.205	.353	.437	-						
15 Synergy	.413	.436	.262	.442	.409	.230	.209	.304	-.478	.298	.259	.421	.431	.497	-					
16 Satisfaction	.486	.425	.251	.483	.402	.163	.154	.335	-.489	.363	.349	.453	.499	.491	.573	-				
17 Sense of Ownership	.449	.362	.257	.327	.357	.305	.283	.282	-.492	.372	.287	.374	.468	.492	.514	.530	-			
18 Commitment	.364	.323	.190	.354	.329	.274	.388	.173	-.406	.256	.290	.398	.404	.423	.430	.459	.629	-		
19 Empowerment	.264	.288	.163	.326	.301	.189	.245	.097*	-.353	.204	.345	.310	.291	.257	.363	.350	.378	.315	-	
20 Perceived effectiveness	.335	.386	.160	.354	.361	.151	.139	.273	-.385	.316	.305	.393	.433	.360	.465	.520	.387	.325	.263	-

All correlations are significant at the P < 0.05 level (2-tailed) except * where correlations are not significant.

9.4.1 Outliers

Outliers are cases which seem unattached to the rest of the data distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

9.4.2 Profile of outliers

The majority (92.5%, $N = 37$) were Caucasian. Local authority or government agencies and hospital, NHS and health service organisations accounted for 50.0% ($N = 20$) and half worked as network members (50.0%, $N = 20$). The majority had worked in partnerships or networks before (70.0%, $N = 28$). Approximately one third (32.5%, $N = 13$) reported that they had been extremely involved in the network whilst 17.5% ($N = 7$) reported that that had not been very involved. The majority (80.0%, $N = 32$) were aged between 20 years old and 59 years old. There was little difference between genders with approximately half of the outlier cases being male (47.5%, $N = 19$). All outlier cases ($N = 40$) were assessed for the nature i.e. the name of the component, and consistency i.e. whether the score was higher or lower than the sample distribution (Table 25, overleaf). In total, there were 57 (higher N = 8, lower $N = 49$) instances of outlier scores that fell across the main components ($N = 13$).

Table 25: Consistency of outlier scores for main components

Component	Consistency			
	Frequencies of scores lower than sample distribution (N)	P	Frequencies of scores higher than sample distribution (N)	P
Strategy	14	NS	6	NS
Trust	11	NS	1	NS
Leadership	7	NS	1	NS
Communication	6	NS	5	0.001
Outcomes	6	NS	0	NS
Perceived effectiveness	5	NS	3	NS
Functions	4	NS	0	NS
Ownership	4	NS	1	NS
Benefits	3	NS	0	NS
Commitment	3	NS	0	NS
Decision making	3	NS	1	NS
Barriers	1	NS	1	NS
Costs	1	< 0.05	0	NS
Total	**49**		**8**	

Notes: Outliers were assessed using Kruskal-Wallis tests. Data were split into categories representing 'yes' or 'no' in respect of whether they were high or low outliers. Scores were then assessed on each component. NS Denotes that P values were not statistically significant at the $P < 0.05$ level.

Part 2

9.5   Comparative analysis for conceptual development

This chapter has so far presented results from the descriptive analysis of quantitative data.

Attention is now turned to the results of data analyses performed in accordance with the

integrative methods outlined in Chapter 7. These methods provided a way of exploring

relationships based on emergent theoretical relationships in the data.

9.5.1 Level of involvement

Level of involvement (LoI) was used as a principal means of exploring the data. Data for gender and race/ethnicity were obtained by combining quantitative and qualitative data in a single data set.

9.5.2 Demographic variables

Approximately half of the low level involvement group (LI) (52.3%, N = 34) and more than 50% (54.4%, N = 49) of the high level of involvement group (HI) were male. Overall, there was a weak relationship between gender and the level of involvement (χ^2 = .682, P > 0.05). The majority of respondents (92.5%, N = 148) reported their race/ethnicity as Caucasian. Comparisons between Caucasian and non-Caucasian groups (7.5%, N = 12) demonstrated a relationship nearing significance between race/ethnicity and level of involvement (χ^2 = 3.243, P = 0.072). This was unsurprising given the difference in frequencies between the groups. Results for disability status were based on the quantitative sample alone. These indicated that there was no significant difference between disability status groups and LoI (χ^2 = .747, P > 0.05).

9.5.3 Member roles and representation

Data concerning organisational representation and primary role were obtained by combining quantitative and qualitative data. For comparison, two groups representing statutory and non-statutory organisations were created. Statutory organisations included; local authorities and local government agencies; Hospitals, NHS, and Health services; educational establishments; and other statutory organisations for example, Police. Non-statutory organisations included; community sport and leisure facilities; sports

development agencies (excluding Sport England); voluntary, community and neighbourhood groups, and sports clubs).

In total, nearly two-thirds of the combined sample represented statutory organisations (65.3%, N = 113). Those who did not represent an organisation (N = 2) and those who selected 'other' (N = 13) were not included in the analysis. Chi-square tests for independence indicated a significant difference between the type of organisation represented and LoI (χ^2 = 4.89, $P < 0.05$). The majority of statutory organisations (72.8%, N = 67) were highly involved in networks in comparison to non-statutory organisations (27.2%, N = 25). In addition, two groups representing network members and core network members and Chairs were created. This revealed a statistically significant difference between primary role groups and LoI (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Primary roles by level of involvement

χ^2 = 61.64, $P < 0.001$
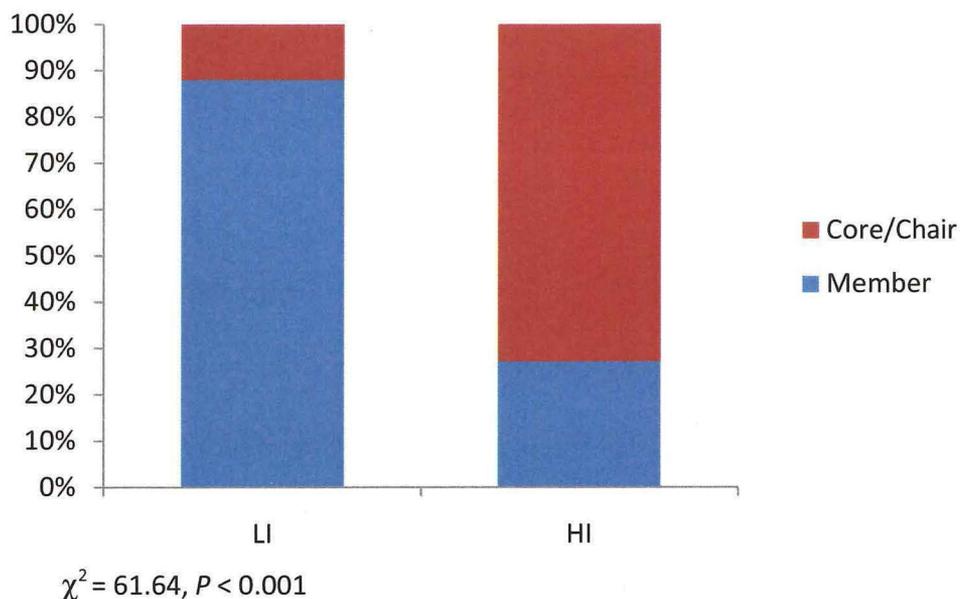
Results also indicated a significant difference between those with previous experience of working in networks or partnerships those without previous experience (χ^2 = 9.52, $P <$

0.001). Nearly two-thirds of the HI group (62.8%, N = 81) had previous partnership or network experience compared to 37.2% (N = 48) in the LI group (χ^2 = 12.96, P < 0.001).

9.5.4 Member conflict and decision making

Members generally agreed that leadership was ethical (M = 4.10, SD = .870, rated on a 7-point scale). The majority of those who perceived a high degree of influence over decision making processes reported that there had been less conflict in the network than had been expected (62.8%, N = 49). This group tended to be very comfortable with decision making processes (64.1%, N = 50). More than half (54.1%, N = 46) of the low perceived influence group reported that there had been less conflict in the network than had been expected. Of this group only 43.5% (N = 37) indicated that, overall, they were very comfortable with decision making processes. More than half of those who perceived a high level of influence in decision making processes were very comfortable with how decisions in the networks were made (61.2%, N = 49). Data analysis revealed no significant difference between groups representing low and high perceived influence over decision making groups, and the degree to which members felt comfortable with decision making process (χ^2 = 4.27, P > 0.05).

9.5.5 Main components

Cross-tabulations were run in SPSS v.16 to establish 2x2 contingency tables (see Appendix K, page 440 for examples). These were used to explore differences between high and low dimensions of the main components. Analysis showed a statistically significant association between commitment and perceived benefits (χ^2 = 35.14, P < 0.001). Commitment shared a statistically significant association between with level of involvement (χ^2 = 14.61, P < 0.001). Leadership played a crucial role in member experiences. Significant associations (P <

.05) were revealed between leadership and communication (χ^2 = 38.11, *P* < 0.001), perceived benefits (χ^2 = 26.70, *P* < 0.001), member satisfaction (χ^2 = 43.17, *P* < 0.001), commitment (χ^2 = 29.19, *P* < 0.001), sense of ownership (χ^2 = 31.26, *P* < 0.001), and perceived CSN effectiveness (χ^2 = 25.03, *P* < 0.001). The results also showed that members generally agreed that leadership was ethical (M = 4.10, SD = .870, rated on a 7-point scale). (M = 4.10, SD = .870, rated on a 7-point scale), which suggested that members were generally agreed on the leadership style within their CSN.

In addition, analyses revealed a significant association between communication and various facets of collaboration including CSN management (χ^2 = 25.98, *P* < 0.001), decision making (χ^2 = 25.20, *P* <.001), strategy (χ^2 = 21.60, *P* < 0.001), synergy (χ^2 = 20.02, *P* < 0.001), and CSN outcomes (χ^2 = 9.24, *P* < 0.05). Interestingly, a comparison of the three conflict groups found no statistically difference in perceptions concerning communication across three different conflict groups (χ^2 = 3.89, *P* > 0.05). However, a Chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between communication and strategy i.e. the plans implemented to achieve success in the overall mission of the CSN (χ^2 = 21.60, *P* < 0.001), thus highlighting a critical link between effective communication and the means by which CSNs pursued their core objectives. Communication was also significantly associated with member satisfaction (χ^2 = 38.18, *P* < 0.001), sense of ownership (χ^2 = 6.46, *P* <.05), commitment (χ^2 = 22.44, *P* < 0.001), and trust (χ^2 = 16.74, *P* < 0.001). Interestingly Chi-square analyses did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between the adequacy of representation and perceptions of CSN sustainability (χ^2 = 1.48, *P* > 0.05), suggesting that members did not perceive a broad membership as critical to the long term survival of networks.

Data were also explored using the concept of LoI. Table 26 (overleaf) presents differences between group means for HI and LI groups. A positive value indicates that the mean value is higher for the high involvement group. The differences between groups for contributions (e.g. member time) and participation (e.g. recruiting new members) were not surprising given that it was anticipated that members who perceived themselves as highly involved would undertake more activities in support of the network. The differences between the means for perceived benefits and costs were more interesting, although not statistically significant. The difference between means for perceived benefits of participation compared to the difference for perceived costs suggested that the perceived benefits were theoretically more important to the level of involvement than perceived costs i.e. that high perceived benefits had a positive impact on the level of involvement. This reflected emergent findings from qualitative data analysis in which the perceived benefits of participation provided a powerful motivation for involvement.

Table 26: Comparison of mean component scores for HI and LI groups

Component	HI	LI	Difference between means*	P
Contributions	22.3	16.2	+6.2	0.001
Commitment	30.9	26.1	+4.8	0.001
Participation	14.5	9.9	+4.6	0.001
Perceived benefits	66.7	62.9	+3.7	NS
Sense of ownership	23.7	20.3	+3.4	0.001
Communication	34.4	31.2	+3.2	0.001
Management	114.8	111.9	+2.9	NS
Leadership	58.8	56.2	+2.7	< 0.05
Decision making	32.6	30.4	+2.2	NS
Trust	28.6	26.5	+2.0	< 0.05
Sense of satisfaction	29.2	27.4	+1.8	NS
Empowerment	25.1	23.4	+1.7	< 0.05
Synergy	31.3	29.7	+1.6	NS
Strategy	20.4	18.9	+1.4	< 0.05
Function	39.2	38.3	+0.9	NS
Effectiveness	26.5	25.7	+0.8	NS
Outcomes	16.8	16.1	+0.7	NS
Barriers	31.3	30.6	+0.7	NS
Sustainability	14.2	13.7	+0.5	NS
Perceived costs	19.8	20.9	-1.1	NS

Notes: * Differences between means are presented in rank order. Results based on Mann Whitney U tests which explore differences between two independent groups on a continuous variable. *NS* Denotes that *P* values were not statistically significant at the *P* < 0.05 level.

9.5.6   Development of theoretical relationships

Correlation coefficients were assessed to investigate the nature of associations between the main components. This helped to explore relationships within the thematic groups that emerged through data analysis. Figure 17 (overleaf) maps the strength of associations according to the primary and associated components entered into the correlation matrix.

Figure 17: Map of associations between main components

Associated components	Primary components
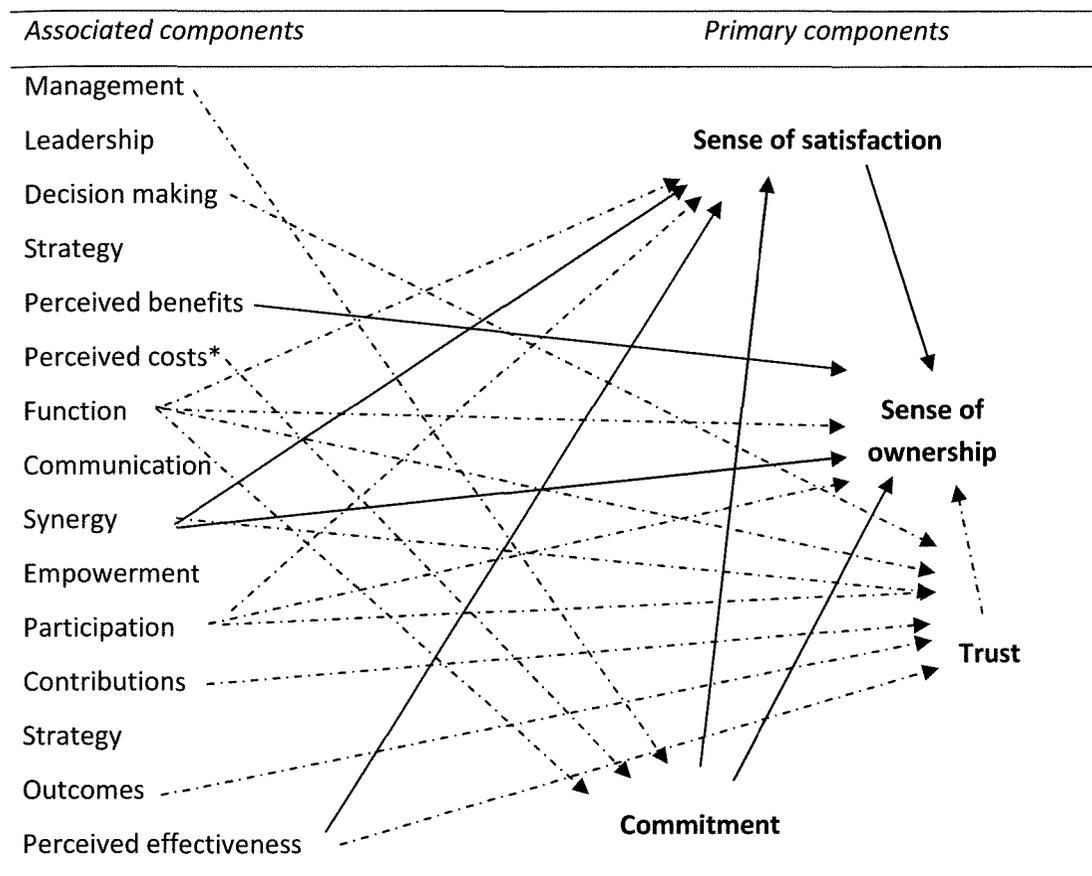
All components share medium associations (τ = 0.30 to 0.49) except: − · − ▶ Small association (τ < 0.30); ⟶ Large association (τ ≥ 0.50). Note: * Perceived costs shared a negative association with components.

Figure 17 demonstrates the complex and overlapping associations within the data. All correlation coefficients were positive indicating that positive perceptions on the associated components were consistently associated with higher perceptions along the four primary components of sense of satisfaction, sense of ownership, trust, and commitment. All associations except those between the component of participation and the components of management and perceived effectiveness were significant ($P < 0.05$).

Subsequent to the analysis of the correlation coefficients four conceptual groups emerged through iterative process of data analysis as being theoretically important to participation

in CSNs. In conjunction with the concept of LoI these represented concepts that appeared frequently through the analysis of transcripts and appeared to have strong theoretical grab (Glaser, 1998). These were employed as a principal means of comparative analysis.

9.5.7   Perceived benefits and costs of participation

These components were explored in relation to the four conceptual groups (HIHS, HILS, LIHS, and LILS). Figure 18 charts the results from the comparison of mean group scores for perceived benefits and costs based on these groups. The perceived benefits of participation were consistently higher than the perceived costs of participation across all groups. Further, there were consistent increases in perceived benefits and consistent decreases in perceived costs moving toward HIHS. For the HIHS group the perceived benefits were more than four times the level of perceived costs. Figure 18 illustrates the fact that for the LILS group the perceived benefits were approximately twice the level of perceived costs.

Figure 18: Comparison of perceived benefits and costs by four conceptual groups
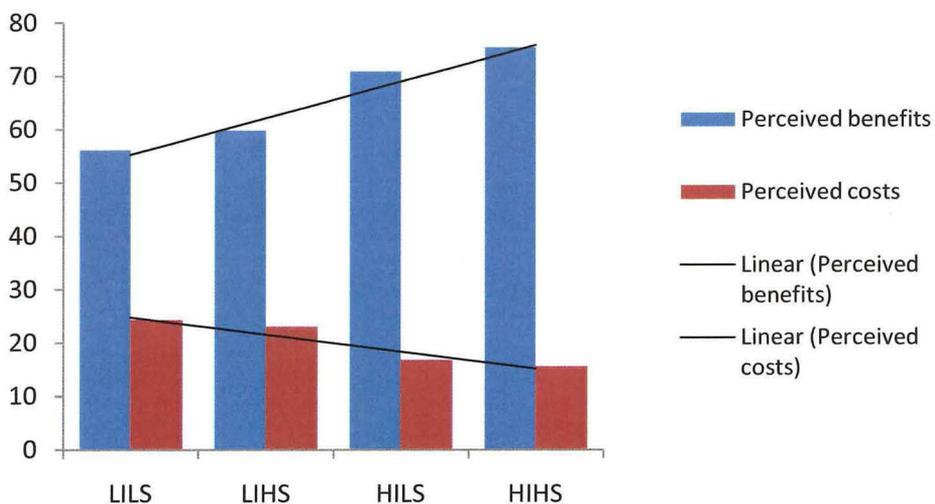
Note: Definition of groups: (LILS) low involvement and low satisfaction; (LIHS) low involvement and high satisfaction; (HILS) high involvement and low satisfaction; (HIHS) high involvement and high satisfaction.

There was no significant difference between HI (*Md* = 68, *N* = 92) and LI (*Md* = 72, *N* = 66) for perceived benefits, *r* = 0.02, *P* > 0.05. However, for the same component there was a significant difference between high sense of satisfaction (HS) (*Md* = 74.5, *N* = 74) and low sense of satisfaction groups (LS), (*Md* = 59, *N* = 88), *r* = 0.17, *P* < 0.001. Similarly, for perceived costs there was no significant difference between HI (*Md* = 19, *N* = 21) and LI (*Md* = 20, *N* = 72) groups, *r* = 0.00, *P* > 0.05. However, there was a significant difference between HS (*Md* = 15, *N* = 74) and LS groups (*Md* = 24, *N* = 88), *r* = 0.14, *P* < 0.001.

The majority of the HIHS group (73.1%, *N* = 30) indicated that, overall, there were many more benefits than costs. Nearly two thirds (64.7%, *N* = 22) of the LIHS group indicated that there were many more benefits than difficulties. In addition, nearly one-third (27.5%, *N* = 11) of the LILS group indicated that, overall, there were a few more difficulties than benefits. Analysis of mean item scores revealed consistently higher perceived benefits for those with a high level of satisfaction (Table 27, overleaf).

The perceived benefits were higher across all items and were consistently significant. The range of differences between values indicated that some items were more important to members' sense of satisfaction than others. For example, 'Getting access to target populations with whom I / we have previously had little contact' (+1.3, *P* < 0.001) was recognised as a core benefit of participation. This negatively affected members' perceptions when CSNs struggled to help realise this benefit.

Table 27: Perceived benefits by high and low satisfaction groups

Component	HS	LS	Difference between means*	P
Getting access to target populations with whom I / we have previously had little contact	5.3	4.0	+1.3	< 0.001
Helping to build my, or my organisation's capacity	5.1	3.8	+1.3	< 0.001
Getting help from or helping other organisations	6.1	4.8	+1.3	< 0.001
Increasing my professional skills and knowledge in partnership working	5.6	4.3	+1.3	< 0.001
Developing collaborative relationships with other agencies	6.3	5.0	+1.3	< 0.001
Gaining recognition and respect from others	5.8	4.6	+1.2	< 0.001
Making our community a better place to live	5.9	4.7	+1.2	< 0.001
Helping me or my organisation move towards our goals	5.9	4.8	+1.1	< 0.001
Reducing unnecessary duplication between members' organisations	5.4	4.3	+1.1	< 0.001
Getting funding for me or my organisation	4.6	3.5	+1.1	0.001
Helping me or my organisation to develop effective action plans	5.2	4.1	+1.1	< 0.001
Learning about community events, services, etc	5.9	4.8	+1.0	< 0.001
Getting to know other agencies and their staff	6.3	5.4	+0.9	< 0.001

Notes: * Mean differences presented in rank order.

Analysis of mean item scores also revealed consistently higher perceived costs for those with a high sense of satisfaction (Table 28, overleaf).

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Table 28: Perceived costs by high and low satisfaction groups

Component	HS	LS	Difference between means*	P
Time spent on the network keeps me from doing my work	5.8	4.5	+1.3	< 0.001
Meeting the criteria for external grants and / or funding is a problem	5.4	4.2	+1.2	< 0.001
My skills and time are not well used	6.0	4.8	+1.2	< 0.001
Being involved in implementing the network's activities is a problem	5.9	4.8	+1.2	< 0.001
Me / my organisation doesn't get enough public recognition for work in the network	5.7	4.7	+1.0	< 0.001
The network's activities do not reach my target audience	5.8	4.9	+0.9	< 0.05
The financial burden of participating in network (barring travel) activities is too high	6.5	6.1	+0.5	< 0.05
The financial burden of travelling to network meetings is too high	6.5	6.4	+0.1	NS

Notes: *Mean differences presented in rank order. *NS* Denotes that the *P* value was not statistically significant at the *P* < 0.05 level.

The HS group consistently reported higher perceived costs than the LS group. This indicated that the effects of perceived costs were mediated by another factor in order for the HS group to maintain higher perceived sense of satisfaction. Differences between groups were significant across all items except 'the financial burden of travelling to network meetings is too high'. This was not surprising given the localised nature of the CSNs. In contrast, although small, the differences regarding the overall financial costs of participation were significant. This suggested that some members felt the financial ramifications of participation were not warranted. In addition, a failure to reach members' target audiences indicated a small but significant difference between groups. This suggested that some members perceived that participation in the network did not necessarily help them to address their organisational priorities. This finding also supported findings from analyses of perceived benefits items which indicated that certain aspects for example, 'helping to build

my, or my organisation's capacity', were relatively more important than others, for example, 'getting funding for me or my organisation.'

Figure 19 compares member perceptions for the perceived benefits and costs of participation using groups based on the reported ratios between benefits and costs.

Figure 19: Actual levels of benefits and costs by ratio groups
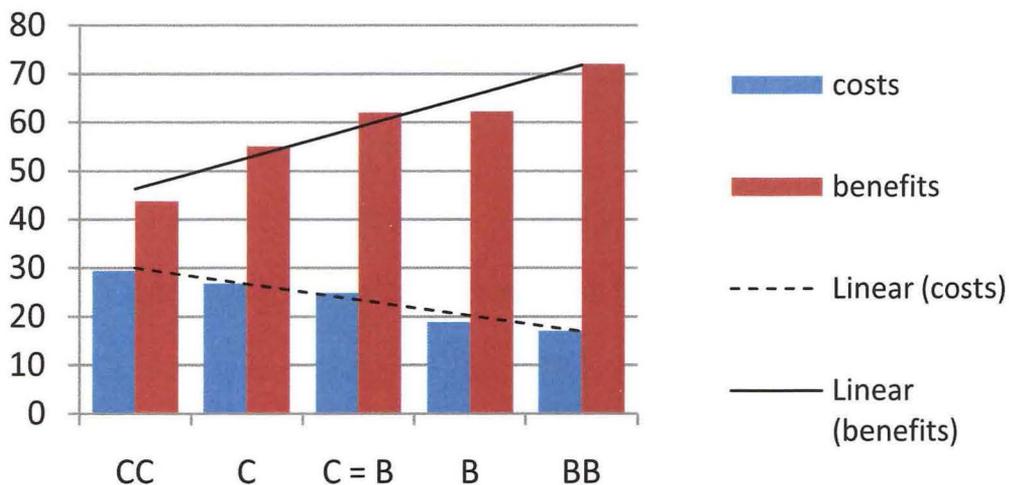
Notes: CC: 'There are many more difficulties than benefits'; C: 'There a few more difficulties than benefits'; C=B: 'The difficulties and benefits are about the same'; B: 'There are a few more benefits than difficulties'; BB: 'There are many more benefits than difficulties'. Kruskal-Wallis tests showed a statistically significant difference between the five different groups for perceived benefits (χ^2 = 37.60, P < 0.001) and perceived costs (χ^2 = 33.90, P < 0.001).

Figure 19 demonstrates that it was necessary that a high level of benefits were perceived in order that a favourable benefits-costs ratio was reported. Even when members reported that benefits and costs were equal data indicated that benefits were actually at least twice the level of perceived costs. Furthermore, whilst the level of perceived benefits and costs were fairly similar between HS and LS groups the

results were statistically significant. This suggested that the HS group perceived the effects of benefits and costs very differently from the LS group. However, sense of satisfaction alone was not necessarily a core factor in explaining LoI as analyses did not reveal significant differences (see Table 26, page 240). In addition, LoI itself lacked explanatory potential. Whilst it provided a useful means of exploring the data it did not help to explain the nature of differences in the data. Thus, whilst the findings supported the use of the four conceptual groups in analyses (Table 10, page 183), it was evident that it was important to identify additional factors that were theoretically important.

9.5.8 Sense of ownership

Quantitative data analysis identified sense of ownership as a powerful explanatory concept. There was a significant difference between HI (Md = 24, N = 88), r = 0.29, P < 0.001, and LI groups (Md = 21, N = 72), r = 0.09, P < 0.001. In addition, data analysis revealed a significant difference between HS (Md = 34, N = 58) r = 0.53, P < 0.001, and LS groups (Md = 26.5, N = 102), r = 0.25, P < 0.001 for sense of ownership. The results indicated that members with a higher sense of ownership were more likely to report a high level of involvement. The strong association between sense of ownership and HS indicated that these components shared an important relationship which helped to explain participation in CSNs. Furthermore, that the HS group reported higher costs than the LS group also suggested that a high sense of ownership potentially reduced or deflected the negative aspects of participation. As such, sense of ownership helped to explain the participation of members both because of, and in spite of, factors affecting participation.

PART 3

9.6   Regression analyses

Four regression models were created to predict the transformation of dependent variables by a set of predictor variables (Altman, 1991). These were created after the conceptual model had been completed. All predictor variables were selected on theoretical grounds. Prior to being entered into the models SPSS v.16 was used to check for multicollinearity among the independent variables (see Appendix L, page 446). Given the wide range of theoretically relevant data all the main components were entered into analysis. In addition, two variables representing member primary role and experience were entered. The primary role groups were distinguished by whether a member was network member or a member of the core group including the network Chair. The variable relating to experience was based on whether a member had previous experience of working in partnerships or networks. The relevance of these variables was theorised as important to the process of participation in CSNs.

Model 1: Level of involvement

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors on the likelihood that respondents would report a high level of involvement. The model contained twenty two predictor variables including the main components and the two additional variables developed during data analysis (Table 29, overleaf).

Table 29: Predictors of a high level of involvement

Predictor variable	β*	S.E.	Wald	P	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for Odds ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Constant	-19.65	5.86	11.248	0.00	0.00		
Experience	3.21	0.97	11.080	0.001	24.88	3.75	165.08
Primary role	2.76	0.78	12.519	0.001	15.75	3.42	72.50
Sense of ownership	0.46	0.17	7.452	0.010	1.58	1.14	2.20
Communication	0.34	0.12	7.629	0.010	1.40	1.10	1.77
Contributions	0.29	0.08	12.412	0.001	1.34	1.14	1.58
Sense of satisfaction	-0.24	0.11	4.850	0.03	0.79	0.64	0.97

Notes: * Beta values presented in descending order. Only components returning statistically significant results are presented.

The full model containing all the predictors was statistically significant, χ^2 (22, N = 155) = 129.33, P < 0.001, suggesting that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported a high level of involvement and those who did not report a high level of involvement. Support for the model fit was evident with the Hosmer-Lemeshow test reporting a non-significant value (P > 0.05). On the whole the model explained between 56.6% (Cox and Snell R square) and 75.9% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in level of involvement. Six of the twenty two predictor variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (experience, primary role, communication, sense of ownership, contributions, and sense of satisfaction).

Overall, the strongest predictor of reporting a high level of involvement was experience which recorded an odds ratio of 24.88. This suggested that members' experience of partnerships or networks were nearly twenty five times more likely than other network members to have a high level of involvement, controlling for other factors in the model. However, the wide confidence interval (3.75 to 165.08) suggested that it was difficult to determine the true value of the OR.

Model 2: Sense of satisfaction

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors on the likelihood that respondents would report a high sense of satisfaction (Table 30). Twenty one predictor variables were entered including the main components and the additional variables of experience and primary role.

Table 30: Predictors of a high sense of satisfaction

Predictor variable	β*	S.E.	Wald	P	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for Odds ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Constant	-30.64	7.64	16.09	0.000	0.00		
Communication	0.29	0.10	7.74	0.005	1.33	1.09	1.64
Outcomes	0.27	0.14	3.96	0.047	1.31	1.00	1.72
Perceived effectiveness	0.25	0.12	4.49	0.034	1.28	1.02	1.60
Perceived costs	-0.11	0.04	6.54	0.011	0.89	0.82	0.97
Primary role	-1.74	0.89	3.84	0.050	0.18	0.03	1.00

Notes: * Beta values presented in descending order. Only components returning statistically significant results are presented.

The full model containing all the predictors was statistically significant, χ^2 (21, N = 155) = 127.85, P < 0.001, suggesting that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported a high sense of satisfaction and those who did not report a high sense of satisfaction. On the whole the model explained between 56.7% (Cox and Snell R square) and 75.1% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in sense of satisfaction. Five of the predictor variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (communication, outcomes, perceived effectiveness, perceived costs, and primary role). Overall, the strongest predictor of reporting a high sense of satisfaction was communication. The odds ratio of 1.33 indicated that for a unit increase in communication the odds of a member reporting a high sense of satisfaction increased by a factor of 1.33. Hence, the better the communication the more likely it was that a member felt satisfied.

The results for perceived effectiveness suggested that the ability of CSNs to carefully use member resources to deliver specified outcomes was also important.

However, because the confidence interval contained the value of 1 it was not possible to state that the OR was statistically significant i.e. that it did not occur by chance. In contrast, the confidence interval for perceived costs (0.82 to 0.97) showed that satisfaction could potentially be decreased by nearly 20%, or as little as 3%, by the perceived costs of participation

Model 3: Commitment

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors on the likelihood that respondents would report a high level of commitment. The model contained twenty one predictor variables including the main components and the two additional variables developed during data analysis (Table 31).

Table 31: Predictors of a high level of commitment

Predictor variable	β*	S.E.	Wald	P	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for Odds ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Constant	-24.32	6.07	16.06	0.000	0.00		
Sense of ownership	0.52	0.15	11.79	0.001	1.68	1.25	2.27
Communication	0.22	0.10	4.73	0.030	1.25	1.02	1.52
Experience	-1.37	0.69	3.95	0.047	0.25	0.07	0.98

Notes: * Beta values presented in descending order. Only components returning statistically significant results are presented.

The full model containing all the predictors was statistically significant, χ^2 (21, N = 155) = 119.34, $P < 0.001$, suggesting that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported a high level of commitment and those who did not report a high level of commitment. Support for the model fit was evident with the Hosmer-Lemeshow test

reporting a non-significant value ($P > 0.05$). On the whole the model explained between 53.7% (Cox and Snell R square) and 71.8% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in level of commitment.

Three predictor variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (sense of ownership, communication and experience). Overall, the strongest predictor of reporting a high level of satisfaction was experience. This recorded a negative relationship indicating that the greater the level of experience the less likely it was that members would feel committed to the CSN. The odds ratio of 0.25 suggested that members with experience were 75% less likely to feel committed to CSNs than members with no previous experience. Confidence interval data did not contain the value of one indicating that this was a statistically significant finding i.e. that it had not occurred by chance.

Model 4: Sense of ownership

In the final model logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors on the likelihood that respondents would report a high sense of ownership. Sense of ownership represented a core theoretical concept in the main results. The model contained twenty one predictor variables including the main components and the two additional variables developed during data analysis (Table 32, overleaf).

The full model containing all the predictors was statistically significant, χ^2 (21, $N = 155$) = 134.34, $P < 0.001$, suggesting that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported a high sense of ownership and those who did not report a high sense of ownership. Support for the model fit was evident with the Hosmer-Lemeshow test reporting a non-significant value ($P > 0.05$). On the whole the model explained between

58.0% (Cox and Snell R square) and 79.2% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance for the component sense of ownership. Seven predictor variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (primary role, commitment, strategy, synergy, perceived costs, contributions and communication).

Table 32: Predictors of a high sense of ownership

Predictor variable	β	S.E.	Wald	P	Odds ratio	95% C.I. for Odds ratio	
						Lower	Upper
Constant	-39.15	12.06	10.54	0.001	0.00		
Primary role	1.93	0.94	4.19	0.041	6.88	1.09	43.56
Commitment	0.61	0.19	10.63	0.001	1.83	1.27	2.64
Strategy	0.42	0.19	4.67	0.031	1.52	1.04	2.21
Synergy	0.35	0.14	6.17	0.013	1.42	1.08	1.88
Perceived costs	-0.19	0.06	8.90	0.003	0.83	0.74	0.94
Contributions	-0.21	0.10	4.24	0.039	0.81	0.67	0.99
Communication	-0.24	0.11	4.55	0.033	0.78	0.63	0.98

Notes: * Beta values presented in descending order. Only components returning statistically significant results are presented.

Overall, the strongest predictor of reporting a high sense of ownership was primary role. This recorded an odds ratio of 6.88 which suggested that for each unit increase in primary role members were nearly seven times more likely to report a high sense of ownership. However, the confidence interval data indicated that it was not possible to state with certainty that the result had not occurred by chance. In contrast, the odds ratio for perceived costs, contributions and communication indicated statistically significant results. The negative relationships suggested that these components could potentially decrease sense of ownership by as much 26%, 33%, and 37% respectively.

9.6.1 Summary of models

The smallest number of cases per predictor variables across all models was 11.4. This exceeded the minimum requirements recommended for logistic regression (Peduzzi *et al.*, 1996). The sensitivity of the regression models ranged from 81.4% to 88.6%. Specificity of the models i.e. identification of true negatives ranged from 88.1% to 90.6%. Data from the regression analyses indicated that all four models had reliable fit.

9.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided results from descriptive and comparative analysis conducted on the quantitative data. The descriptive analyses are important data for the contextualisation of CSNs and help to frame the conceptual model which is outlined in Chapter 10. The results from the comparative analyses illustrated the use of quantitative data during the iterative process of conceptual development. In the following chapter attention is turned to the conceptual model which provides a theoretical explanation of participation in CSNs. This brings together concepts developed through the constant data comparison during the process of quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Chapter 10

Results - Conceptual Model

10.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual model. This outlines a substantive grounded theory

of participation in CSNs based on the integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The

chapter is broken down into two parts. The first part introduces the conceptual model and

its component parts. This highlights the location of the model in relation to macro and

micro scale contextual factors. The second part provides a detailed outline of the

conceptual model demonstrating the theoretical interrelatedness of the categories. This is

supported by a diagram outlining the sequence of the model. Also included are quotations

from respondent transcripts which help to illustrate the theoretical concepts and maintain

the voice of the participants.

10.1   The conceptual model

The conceptual model outlines a substantive grounded theory which provides a psycho-

social explanation of network members' participation in CSNs. At the centre of the

conceptual model is the core category searching for value. The core category accounts for

variations in patterns of behaviour, appears frequently in the data, and is theoretically

related to other major conceptual categories (Glaser, 1998; Glaser and Holton, 2004;

Strauss, 1987). The core category of searching for value represents what CSN members

understand participation to be about. This is conceptualised as a cyclical process.

Community stakeholders may pass through the cycle numerous times as value is sought.

The conceptual model highlights the theoretical inter-relatedness of categories that explain

this process.

The model also highlights two outcomes of the process of searching for value. The first is the integration of community stakeholders as members of CSNs. This involves accepting the legitimacy and significance of CSN functions, structures, and objectives. Integration provides CSNs with the resources required to continue operating. As such, integration is theorised as important to the long term survival of CSNs. The second outcome of the process of searching for value is dropping out. Here, community stakeholders stop searching for value in CSNs. The two outcomes demonstrate the consequences of the process of searching for value for community stakeholders.

The conceptual model highlights the sequence of other major categories which are theoretically related to the process of searching for value including notionally endorsing, speculating, scrutinising and embedding. Notionally endorsing represents the first step in searching for value. Subsequent to this is the category of speculating. Speculating is the process of investing in CSN activity in order to explore what types of benefits may realistically be received. This represents the second step of searching for value. Third is the category of scrutinising returns. Here, assessments concerning the value of returns that arise from speculating are made. A positive balance encourages stakeholders to forge increasingly important relationships with CSNs. This is represented by the category of embedding. Embedding is a precursor of integration. Through further investing stakeholders move towards integration as the value of participation is increasingly recognised. Together, the core category and associated categories convey theoretically what the research is about (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) and demonstrates a process that is influenced by a range of macro and micro scale contextual factors (Figure 20, overleaf).

Figure 20: Integrative diagram - core category and its relationship to contextual factors
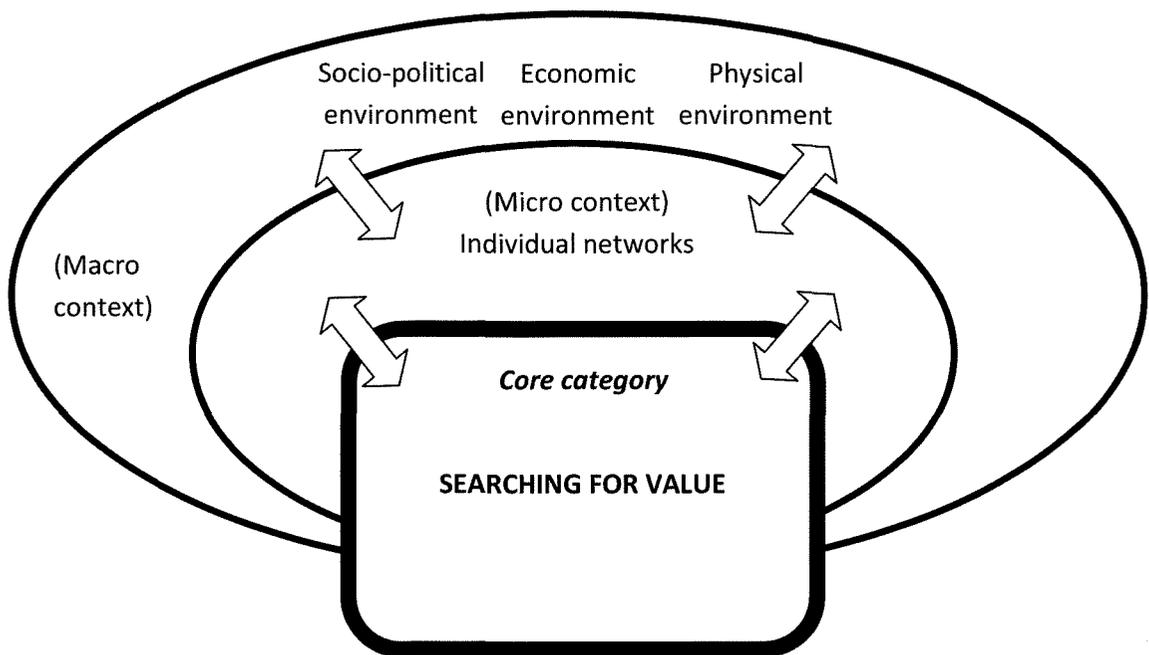
Due to the theoretical density of the model (Figure 21, overleaf) it is fragmented for the

purposes of explanation according to its individual component parts. These unpack major

categories which represent interconnected sets of conceptual themes in order to explain

the conceptual model more clearly.

Figure 21: Conceptual model - searching for value

Searching for value

Notionally
endorsing

Dropping
out

Speculating

Embedding

Scrutinising

Integration
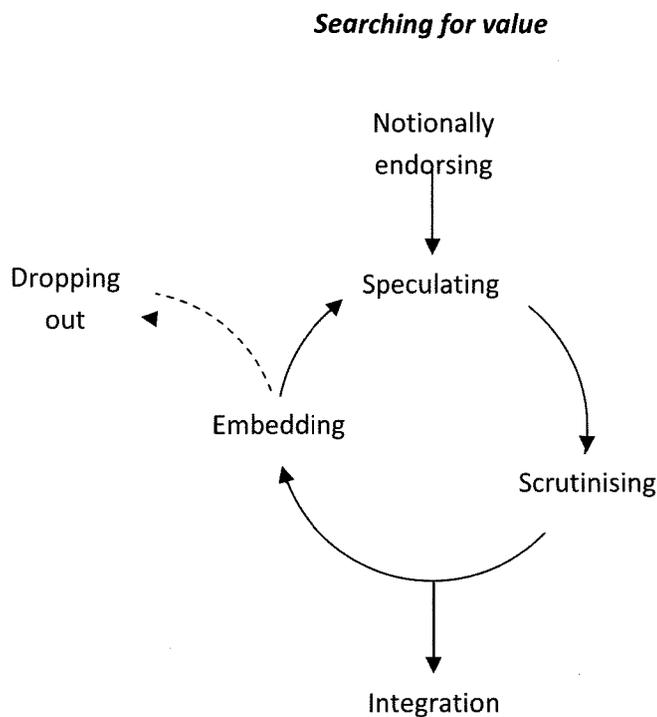
10.2 Core category: searching for value

This section introduces the core category, its properties, and dimensions (Table 33).

Searching for value is what drives member involvement in CSNs.

Table 33: Core category - searching for value

Core category	Properties	Dimensions
Searching for value	10.2.1 Capacity	Tangible resources
		Intangible resources
	10.2.2 Impact	Innovation
		Efficiency
		Community outcomes

Value is perceived in different ways by different stakeholders. Consequently, it is possible

to conceive of multiple types of value. This is represented by the properties and dimensions

of the core category.

10.2.1 Capacity

Capacity refers to the ability of CSN members to address priority or target areas as a result of working with other CSN members; '...*it's consolidated relationships. Relationships that were fairly informal or loose based around a couple of people who got on and kept each other informed. It's formalised some of that work, we're able to deliver partnerships with people that we weren't working with before*' [Dennis; LASS/C: 107-110]. Different members require different resources according to the nature of the organisation which they represent. As such, capacity is characterised by two types of resource. Access to these resources allows members to work towards priority or target areas.

Tangible resources

These include financial and material resources for example, equipment, space, and funding; '...*we didn't know about things like Sport Unlimited and* [the CSPAP] *and so on...it was those relationships and contacts which have helped us identify a whole range of potential funding sources*' [Graham, SL/S: 56-59]. As a consequence members were better able to deliver projects; '*The network plan enabled me to direct the funding towards it. We needed some funding to develop that scheme and we didn't have funding to develop that within my little pot*' [Grace, HS/M: 37-39].

Intangible resources

These include member skills, time, experience, and knowledge. Access to these resources is provided through relationships within CSNs, between community networks, and with external bodies; '...*there's a lot of contacts there and there's a lot of people there from all*

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the aspects that I'm talking about and if they work together, yes I think they can help improve health and activity' [George, SL/G; 28-29]. These relationships provide a potential means to access further resources. As such, they can be conceptualised as a resource in themselves; *'That was the hope. Potentially other funding, potentially see what other people are doing out there, because I might be missing a trick, obviously'* [Jason, SD/G; 73-74].

10.2.2 Impact

The second property of searching for value refers to impact. This refers to the effects of activities undertaken by individual members for example, local sports projects, and the effects of activities undertaken by the CSN for example, community programmes aimed at increasing participation in physical activity. The perceived impacts of these activities motivate CSN members to sustain their involvement in the network. The characteristics of the impact of participation on member and CSN activities are highlighted by the three dimensions.

Innovation

This dimension refers to the potential for CSNs to combine resources in such a way that new, untried, or adapted approaches to community issues or problems are developed. The flexibility inherent within CSNs allows members to use resources creatively to develop novel approaches; *'What we're going to be able to do is develop a project of our own using the healthy lifestyle advisors ... which is like an exercise on referral course for children which up until now we haven't been able to do'* [Lydia, LASS/H: 159-161].

Efficiency

This dimension refers to improvements in the ways resources are obtained; '*...by doing it in a structured way as part of a structured group we were able to put in the funding bids to deliver projects that previously were not happening*' [Dennis, LASS/C: 34-36], and used to address local issues; '*...we meet and discuss what the priorities are and how we're going to address those priorities...we'll have a discussion and see which one is going to best meet those priorities, if you like* [especially] *as we move into this current economic climate...*' [Zoe, HS/H: 25-28]. Consequently, members are better able to access resources for example, funding from external agencies, and target these efficiently through CSN project plans.

Community outcomes

This aspect of value refers to the perceived effects of CSN activity for example, community-focused projects, through which target populations are positively affected; '*Me and my colleague have just done a tag rugby course with kids from a local schools which has been really good...we took them to a massive tournament and that was done across the county. And that was driven by the police force working with the RFU. We actually got qualifications from it so we can go it into schools*' [June, LASS/CT: 136-142].

10.3 Notionally endorsing

Notionally endorsing represents a response to information received about the CSN (Table 34).

Table 34: Notionally endorsing

	Category	Properties	Dimensions
10.3	Notionally endorsing	10.3.1 Supporting	Philosophical congruence Network function

This information may be passed on at formal meetings, launch events, or through informal channels for example, communication between colleagues or practitioners in the local area; '...*the reason I did was I heard about Sport Unlimited and erm, I thought that erm, I could deliver a project*' [Andrew, VCS/S: 228-229]. Notionally endorsing refers to the tentative backing given to CSNs by community stakeholders. This represents the first step in the process of searching for value in which members begin to explore the potential value of participation; '...*we're sort of starting to mix and talk about how we can help each other, how we can bring all this knowledge in to help each other. So that's been interesting you know*' [Terry, VCS/S: 35-36].

10.3.1 Supporting

Supporting is conceptualised as an attitude which allows members to begin mobilising resources for the purposes of participation in CSN activities. This is a relative concept and varies according to the circumstances surrounding a given situation. Supporting is characterised by two dimensions. These demonstrate the different bases on which individuals and organisations lend support to CSNs.

Philosophical congruence

Philosophical congruence refers to the degree of fit between member philosophies and the ethos of the CSN. A positive attitude towards stakeholder participation is engendered when members perceive philosophical congruence; '*I like working in the network way, I like people connected with one another, I like the creativity that can generate, and, as a network, the common the purpose, you feel you're not working in isolation, you're working as part of a bigger picture*' [Zoe, HS/H: 363-365].

Network function

This dimension refers to support for CSN functions and the nature of associated activities. For example, planning projects to address issues surrounding participation in sport and physical activity; *'...it's for everyone. If anyone has a part to play in it then they should be a part of it...anything to do with physical activity that is new or coming on and needs support, it would be nice to think that it came through the network...I think by having that central body, maybe it's being a little idealistic, but it would be nice to know that, through the network, there's some activity going on here'* [Lydia, LASS/H: 87-92].

10.4 Speculating

Speculating represents the second step in the process of searching for value (Table 35). Here, community stakeholders invest in CSN activities in order to explore what types of returns may realistically be received.

Table 35: Speculating

	Category	Properties	Dimensions
10.4	Speculating	10.4.1 Investing	Tangible resources Intangible resources

10.4.1 Investing

Investments are conceptualised as the outcomes of calculated decisions concerning the efficacy of contributions to CSN activities. Hence, they are contributions from which some form of return is expected. Consequently, investments are made on the condition that some benefit will arise as a consequence of the investment being made. These benefits provide a source of value for involvement in CSN activities. Given the range of individuals and organisations in CSNs it is possible that a wide range of investments are made. The

nature of these is determined by the context in which speculating takes place. The dimensions of investing relate to the types of resources that can be invested in CSNs.

Tangible resources

Resources are conceptualised as a source of member power. These are valuable to members and to CSNs. The investment of resources indicates that members perceive there is some degree of value in participating in CSNs. This establishes an expectation that involvement in CSN activities will yield some form of beneficial return. As such, stakeholders who invest resources establish a claim over the outputs of CSN activities.

Tangible resources include financial and material resources including, funding, equipment and space. Conceptually, investments of tangible resources provide a concrete demonstration of an investment because these are visible i.e. in the form of supplying a meeting room.

Intangible resources

These include member skills, time, knowledge and experience; '*I picked up a club which had half a person worth it on the committee and when I resigned there were thirty people that were worth it on the committee. We had a turnover from five thousand a year to fifty thousand a year. That's just the sort of person* [I am], *that's one thing that I've done*' [Andrew, VCS/S: 273-276]. The relative value of stakeholder resources can be defined by the capacity of members to invest in CSNs. For example, a member may have few tangible resources to invest. Further, they may possess limited intangible resources to invest in the CSN; '*...we put the links in, I get the notes, we put out four pennies in, and you all know we're if you need us. It's the catch twenty two; there's just not enough of me to go*

around...on twenty hours a week you can't do it' [Alison, VCS/H: 10-13]. Thus, investments although small may be of considerable value when understood in relation to other factors which restrict the ability to invest. Consequently, the value of investments is inherently influenced by the context in which they are made.

10.5   Scrutinising

This category represents the third stage in the process of searching for value in CSNs (Table 36). This refers to assessments concerning the value of returns in relation to investments made in; *'...it's weighing up the benefits of it really, we have got some real and practical benefits from it but it's weighing up the effort that goes with realising those benefits I think'* [Patrick; SD/M: 121-122]. The value of returns is determined by the nature of investments made in CSN activities. Consequently, community stakeholders have expectations concerning what it is they would like to receive from their investments; *'I don't want to be involved if it's going to be something that I plough loads of hours into and it not work'* [Ian, SD/S: 384-385].

Table 36: Scrutinising

	Category	*Properties*	*Dimensions*
10.5	Scrutinising	10.5.1 Tangible returns	Negative-positive continuum
		10.5.2 Intangible returns	Negative-positive continuum
		10.5.3 Mutuality	Goal consistency

Scrutinising can be conceptualised as an outcome of speculating. This encompasses the tangible returns of investing in CSNs for example, funding and intangible returns for example, learning about other community stakeholders. These returns relate to both individual members and the effects on community issues with which they are concerned.

Returns provide members with an indication of the potential value of participating in CSNs. A positive balance confirms the presence of value in participation. In contrast, a negative balance questions the presence of value. Assessments concerning the scrutinising of returns are made in relation to member expectations of what it is they deem acceptable. These expectations are influenced by the context in which speculating takes place; '...*it's early days, it's developing, we know where we want to get it to but at the moment we're working on how to get it*' [George, LS/G: 31-32]. The two properties represent the nature of returns received through participation.

10.5.1 Tangible returns

These include financial and material resources including, funding, equipment and space; '*there's things we can do that we couldn't do previously because of budgetary constraints. Now we have additional money or we've been able to help the partners get money so the funding side of it has certainly helped to things happen*' [Dennis, LASS/C: 60-62].

10.5.2 Intangible returns

These include member skills, time, experience, and knowledge; '...*there was* [sic] *masses of useful information to acquire, and there were lots of opportunities to look for things that would help us as a club to pursue things*' [Graham, LS/S: 166-168]. Other intangible returns include social resources; '*being able to speak to people who are in a similar situation, people who have tried ideas, need incentives to try new things, contacts to speak to...I feel very isolated and on my own...so to have people in a similar situation is beneficial*' [Jason, SD/G: 92-100], and personal development; '...*from a very personal point of view I've handled a situation that I thought I couldn't...I've achieved something that I thought I wasn't going to achieve*' [Elizabeth, LASS/S: 336-340].

Negative-positive continuum

The two properties of tangible and intangible resources are characterised by the same dimension. To avoid duplication, therefore, they are presented here in relation to both properties. The dimension is represented by a continuum along which members rate the value of returns between those that are positive and those that are negative in value. The rationale for presenting this dimension only once is that both tangible and intangible resources contribute to the nature of the perceived returns. As such, member perceptions may differ concerning the relative mix of tangible and intangible resources, each member attaching values according to their own situation.

10.5.3 Mutuality

Mutuality refers to the sharing of effects that arise as a consequence of network participation. These relate to procedural effects i.e. how responsibility for the business of the network is shared and those which demonstrate how the effects of community outcomes are distributed between members in CSNs.

Goal consistency

CSN goals help to determine the overall trajectory of network activity. This is important given the wide range of organisational objectives that are associated with the inherent diversity of network membership. Community stakeholders have various goals that reflect the nature of their organisation. These goals include those based on acquiring funding; '...*of course where funds were concerned my ears pricked up...are we eligible for any of this, can we get on the band wagon for want of better terminology*' [Angela, LS/G: 24-27], and opportunities to link with local agencies and organisations to address local priorities; '*I'm there to support the work that's going on and make sure that the priorities the PCT has got*

around health and well being... all of those priorities are encompassed where it's relevant' [Zoe, HS/H: 19-21]. A broad range of CSN goals that encompass a range of organisational and individual goals reinforce the presence of mutuality in CSNs; *'...it's very much internal. Another thing we're working on is marketing, media and communications, we want to raise the profile of the clubs with the papers so we want to have our own little group to, so that we have some communication consistency with the papers...it's very much an internally focused project, it's about what the community and the clubs want rather than what's being imposed'* [Elizabeth, LASS/S: 321-325].

Flexibility in developing CSN goals helps to offset the potential for some community members to be excluded from CSN activity; *'... if you weren't involved in those initial phases of the projects then the network doesn't really offer you a lot because it's quite focused on five or six partners. But what the network's done, it's re-enthused partners, 18 months down the line they have come along and there's actually a fresh pot of money that's been talked about. There's still a fresh opportunity to get involved'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 224-230].

10. 6   Embedding

Embedding is conceptualised as a precursor of integration (Table 37). Embedding represents the process through which community stakeholders develop increasingly important relationships with CSNs.

Table 37: Embedding

	Category	Properties	Dimensions
10.6	Embedding	10.6.1 Subscribing	Mission-vision Strategy

These relationships are based on the value discovered through speculating. On the basis of this value stakeholders understand CSNs to be an inherently good thing; *'This is the model we need to take to other towns ...I think that could work a treat, I really do'* [Ian, SD/S: 392-393]. Consequently, the function and philosophy of CSNs assume increasingly important positions within the concerns and priorities of stakeholders; *'This is like the seed of something more to come, for too long we've worked, you've got a target you have to meet and we'll all go about ways of meeting our targets whereas if we all joined forces we could achieve the same targets with far less resources and achieve far greater results at the end of the day, that's what I see'* [Lydia, LASS/H: 192-196]. Embedding is evident in stakeholder attitudes towards CSNs. These attitudes are reflected in the single property of subscribing.

10.6.1 Subscribing

Subscribing is conceptualised as a statement of stakeholder support for the CSN. This is demonstrated in stakeholder attitudes; *'...it builds on what the job requires. Sport development for me has never been about one agency working alone in silos. In order to get people working you have to work in partnership. To support community projects and make them successful you have to be working with leisure facilities, clubs, coaches, NGBs, other partners so the network has just pulled that together'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 214-218]. There are two dimensions of subscribing.

Mission-vision

Mission-vision encapsulates the intention and aspiration of CSNs. Subscribing to these affirms the prominence of CSNs as valid responses to substantive community issues. This is reflected in the attitudes of community stakeholders; *'I went there for the Sport Unlimited but as soon as I got involved I wanted to do it for the CSPAN and the CSPAN reasons. A lot of*

people are only involved for their own gain I would suggest, which is a different angle. But it needs to be done...dealing with, you know, partnerships, getting other ideas and resources which as far as I'm concerned is the idea' [Jason, SD/G: 40-45]. Mission-vision is also reflected in the actions of actions of community stakeholders for example, speaking publicly on behalf of the network or seeking to recruit new members; *'...trying to pull people together for that Sport Unlimited funding was really hard work...I know there are a lot more people who should be involved with the network but they're not coming forward and I don't know why. That's something when I get five minutes I'll work on trying to develop'* [Lydia, LASS/H: 254-258].

Strategy

This dimension refers to the specific approaches taken by CSNs to address areas identified as strategically important. The research participants did not make comments specifically in relation to the strategies adopted or developed by the CSNs. However, data analysis revealed that it was possible to imply the importance of strategy to embedding. For example, research participants discussed aspects of participating in CSN activities which could be related to a lack of strategy including frustration; *'...you've got the vision and the dream that you're gonna change the world and then very quickly you realise that there are lots of cogs in the wheel to make it turn, to drive it forward and there are a lot of people in the way stopping it'* [Jason. SD/G: 141-143], and confusion; *'If you've got a small number of people around the table the targets can be easier because you have less people who want a say. But should that be easy? You've got different personalities who might want their own agenda out of the CSPAN so I think there's got to be some sort of purpose. People need to know what the group is about'* [Nathan, SD/G: 165-168].

By implication, therefore, strategy is an important aspect of embedding. Further support for this is provided by evidence that revealed stakeholders did not necessarily perceive that CSN were clearly distinguishable from other existing collaborative arrangements; '...*like us they can understand the need for one voice for sport and physical activity, but there are already voices for sport and physical activity. So they're questioning, does this give me anything more than I already have?*' [Nicola, LASS/M: 93-95]. It is implied, therefore, that a clear strategy would help to address these concerns and provide a further criterion which stakeholders could subscribe to.

10.7   Outcomes

Outcomes demonstrate the consequences of the process of searching for value for community stakeholders. The two outcomes of the process of searching for value include integration (section 10.8) and dropping out (section 10.9).

10.8   Integration

Searching for value represents what CSN members understand participation in CSNs to be about. Integration is conceptualised as the outcome of discovering value (Table 38).

Table 38: Integration

	Category	Properties	Dimensions
10.8	Integration	10.8.1 Reconciling cultures	Adjusting practices Political sensitivity
		10.8.2 Taking ownership	Role/task adoption

Here, community stakeholders assimilate aspects of CSNs into everyday practices and routines. This signifies the legitimacy and significance of CSN structures, purposes, and objectives to community stakeholders. The integration of stakeholders as CSN members

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provides CSNs with the resources required to continue operating. As such, integration is inherently valuable. It helps to establish a set of relationships through which individual members and the wider membership are able to facilitate the on-going creation of value for the benefit of themselves and others. The two properties demonstrate ways in which community stakeholders integrate into CSNs.

10.8.1 Reconciling cultures

This property refers to the process of assimilating network practices and customs into the day-to-day routines of community stakeholders. Network culture is a conceptualised as a conglomeration of beliefs and values imported by CSN members. Consequently, it is characterised by cultural artefacts that each member brings with them as they participate in network activities. Those who integrate into CSNs are able to reconcile differences between these cultures for the benefit of the CSN. The two dimensions of reconciling cultures demonstrate how this takes place.

Adjusting practices

Adjusting practices acknowledges and embraces the need for CSN practices to take precedence over member practices in CSN activities. The organisational practices of stakeholders may not be wholly compatible with those of the CSN or other members; *'Some are easier to work with than others, that's life...Some have come from a very different background, very business, a very different idea about what it's like to work in community work. That's created certain challenges...'* [Elizabeth, LASS/S: 27-30]. As such, adjusting practices to suit the requirements of the CSN allows the CSN to coordinate its activities unencumbered by restrictions posed by these differences.

Political sensitivity

The second dimension of reconciling cultures refers to the recognition of members' different backgrounds with regard to the nature of their representation. Being sensitive to these differences allows members to understand that CSNs provide a mechanism through which a range of perspectives may be combined; *'Some of them may only be interested in one of the projects and not be interested in any of the other five. But then again, some partners are actively involved in all of them. Thinking about the Youth Service, they were interested in only one aspect but they've been able to contribute to areas that are harder to reach so they've given us a different angle on projects which has been able to help shape other things...people have brought different things to the table'* [Dennis, LASS/C: 76-81].

10.8.2 Taking ownership

Taking ownership establishes a bond between members and CSNs. This establishes the prominence of CSNs in the day-to-day routines of members. Consequently, members commit resources to ensure that progress is made in the elements of CSNs with which they are concerned; *'...we lead by example, we lead the way. I'm talking a year, two years, we will get people being able to see we can get things done, what it says on the tin and more. So for us we lead by example and we deliver...'* [Nicola, LASS/S: 374-376]. Taking ownership is characterised by a single dimension.

Role / task adoption

Adopting roles or tasks help members to commit to specific courses of action. Roles and tasks convey the importance of CSN activities to members and help to identify the specific skills and resources needed to support these. This helps members to delimit the scope of their activities and to understand how this relates to the work of the CSN; *'I see my role as*

a facilitator, bringing a breadth of experience, trying to make sure that the paid people mesh with the volunteers' [Andrew, VCS/S: 81-83].

10.9   Dropping out

Searching for value represents what CSN members understand participation in CSNs to be about. Dropping out (Table 39) is conceptualised as an outcome of the effects of participation in CSN activities. If, through the scrutinising of returns, a positive balance is not achieved it is possible that participation in CSN activities will cease. As a result, stakeholders drop out of the cycle of investing, scrutinising and embedding. The point at which this occurs during participation is contingent on the context in which participation takes place. Dropping out is characterised by a single property. This had the potential to override other aspects of involvement for example, sense of ownership.

Table 39: Dropping out

	Category	Properties	Dimensions
10.9	Dropping out	10.9.1 Incompatibility	Function
			Goals

10.9.1 Incompatibility

This property refers to a perceived lack of fit between community stakeholders and the effects of participation in CSNs. Consequently, the relevance of participation comes into question as does the motivation to continue speculating. The two dimensions characterise the nature of incompatibility.

Function

This refers to purpose of CSNs around which its structures and objectives are formed. Here, incompatibility is evident in stakeholder perceptions that CSN functions lack any functional consistency with those of their own organisation; '...*there was one particular meeting...we were going through the different allocations of grants to different projects and I kind of realised it was very different to working with clusters of schools because part of that work, ... is about getting schools on board, the whole idea how you might impact on children's learning and attainment...*' [Lisa, LASS/C: 193-197]. This is conceptualised as a form of incompatibility that arises at an organisational level.

Goals

Goals refer to the projected outcomes at which CSN activity is targeted. Goals that fail to include elements that are consistent with those of community stakeholders are perceived as incompatible. As a consequence, participation in CSN activity ceases; '*I had more involvement at the start of it because we try and make sure that the voluntary and community sector is remembered...But, as it's developed it wasn't hitting our work plan in quite the same way and you've got to prioritise*' [Alison, VCS/H: 5-7]. Here, incompatibility arises between the nature of projects developed by CSNs and those envisioned by community stakeholders.

10.10   Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined a substantive grounded theory of participation in CSNs. This explains the experiences and meanings of participation in CSNs by community stakeholders. This is presented as a conceptual model which demonstrates the relationships between the main categories. At the centre of this is the core category which

is conceptualised as searching for value. This represents theoretically what CSN members understand participation to be about. The effects of the process of searching for value are explained as outcomes. Having outlined the conceptual model Part 4 turns attention to the discussion of the research findings.

PART 4

Part 4 represents the final part of the thesis. Chapter 11 discusses the findings of the research in relation to existing literature in the field of sport and physical activity, as well as research in the wider field of health promotion. Attention is focused on the conceptual model and the main components that emerged as theoretically important to participation in CSNs.

Chapter 12 provides a series of conclusions based on the findings of the research. This explores the relevance of collaboration within contemporary policy and its position within a changing policy landscape. This chapter also includes a reflective exercise which explores some of the practical and methodological challenges posed by the research. Finally, limitations of the research are discussed.

Chapter 13 discusses the overall implications of the research. Specific consideration is given to the implications for research, including implications for the use of mixed methods research designs. Following this, attention is focused on the implications of the research for practice. Recommendations are made which may assist stakeholders participating in CSNs.

Chapter 11

Discussion

11.0   Introduction

This chapter reviews the findings of the research. It is broken down into three sections. The first presents the core finding of the research. The second section discusses contextual factors influencing participation in CSNs. The third section discusses the characteristics of CSN members' perceptions. These demonstrate the complex and overlapping nature of factors relating to participation in CSNs. For completeness, findings from the quantitative and qualitative research components are included.

11.1   Participation in CSNs

Participation in CSNs was explained by a process of searching for value. Value was perceived in terms of increased individual or organisational capacity and greater community impacts. Value was defined within sets of inter-related contextual factors relating to individual circumstances and broader social, political, and economic factors. Participation in CSNs presented a means through which members could potentially realise this value. Members were motivated to invest in CSN activities when it was perceived that participation could help them to address their needs and priority areas.

The results indicated that the need for collaboration between local organisations and agencies in order to develop sport and physical activity opportunities was widely understood. This need was based on a range of macro and micro scale contextual factors including economic concerns, statutory obligations, and the ability to recognise the importance of collaboration in respect to wider social issues. This was articulated in the concept of notional support. Research from elsewhere in the literature also identifies the

importance of value in collaboration (Alexander *et al.*, 2003). These authors suggest that the sustainability of collaborative capacity is based on relationships between the activities and behaviours of those working in partnership and the wider context in which this takes place. Collaborative capacity can be considered as a condition needed to build and sustain community change which involves the identification of a distinct collaborative mission (Butterfoss, 2006; Sullivan *et al.*, 2006).

In contrast to the research by Alexander *et al.* (2003) the present research was concerned with investigating participation in CSNs rather than sustainability *per se*. Thus, value in this research is conceptualised not as a precursor of sustainability but as a rationale for involvement in CSN activities itself. It demonstrates that the relationship with participation is unique to community stakeholders and is qualitatively complex. Reflecting the principles of existing theoretical perspectives including SET and RDT the substantive theory developed here is sensitive to a variety of moral, economic, social, and resource-based perspectives of collaboration. The core category of searching for value had the greatest potential to explain variations in patterns of behaviour. Linked to the other major categories of notionally endorsing, speculating, scrutinising, endorsing, and integration, this explained what it was that members understood participation in CSNs to be about.

An important aspect of the findings is that, in the process of searching for value, stakeholders contribute to the process of value creation. As such, it could be argued that value in CSNs is contingent on participation. CSNs can be understood as a space in which member interaction can take place in support of the development of opportunities for sport and physical activity. It is within this space that stakeholders seek to identify potential sources of value and act accordingly. Importantly, it is conceivable that certain types of

value may only arise when certain members or combinations of members are present. Whilst this presents a somewhat nebulous image of participation in that it is hard to define where value lies, it supports suggestions that all affected stakeholders should be included in collaboration (Gray, 1989). Without such approaches the potential value in CSNs may be restricted.

This point is consistent with the concept of synergy. Synergy represents the product of inter-organisational partnerships (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Lasker *et al.*, 2001). It is related to financial and non financial resources i.e. the combining of knowledge, skills, and resources from a range of stakeholders (Lasker and Weiss, 2003a; Lasker *et al.*, 2001) and is useful for demonstrating to practitioners that collaboration is effective (Weiss *et al.*, 2002). In the present research quantitative data analyses revealed a medium to strong association ($\tau \geq 0.30$) between synergy and satisfaction ($P < 0.001$), sense of ownership ($P < 0.001$), and commitment ($P < 0.001$). Hence, one might argue that it may usefully be applied in the present context as a potential indicator of value within CSNs. Further support for synergy as a key aspect of partnership working is demonstrated by members' perceptions of the perceived benefits of participation. Results showed that social or solidary benefits for example, increased status (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1993; Chinman *et al.*, 1996), were more important than funding for the HS group.

The conceptual model also demonstrated that the search for value involved an iterative process in which repeated investments were made. Members used the balance of returns to scrutinise the effects of participation. The relative balance influenced a number of factors including level of satisfaction, level of commitment, and sense of ownership which, in turn, were influenced by macro and micro scale contextual conditions. A positive balance

encouraged stakeholders to strengthen relationships with CSNs by embedding core elements of CSNs into their own practices and routines. The outcome of this process was integration into the CSN. In contrast, a negative balance of returns increased the possibility that CSN members would drop out of the participation process. Consequently, members varied in the level of their involvement and status as CSN members. This finding underscores the need to understand the point at which involvement in partnership working becomes problematic (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004). Given the range of members and the associated differences in perspectives and objectives this is likely to vary. Consequently, the findings in this research support the practical utility of employing perceived benefits and costs of participation as core components of research strategies investigating member perceptions. These have been usefully employed in the literature as a means of articulating the effects of participation (Butterfoss et al., 1993; Chinman and Wandersman, 1999; Chinman et al., 1996; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Kegler et al., 1998; Lachance et al., 2006; Prestby et al., 1990).

Furthermore, the literature recognises the difficulty of establishing criteria which adequately assess the outcomes of partnership working (Clarke and Glendinning, 2002; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Weiss et al., 2003; Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). In response, the perceived benefits and costs of participation may provide a useful heuristic which helps to understand the multiple dimensions of partnership including leadership, sense of satisfaction, and sense of ownership. The focus of the discussion now turns to factors relating to the context in which participation in CSNs takes place.

11.2 Operating environment

This research found several interrelated contextual factors relating to the macro and micro scale context (Figure 11, page 195) that influenced the process of participation in CSNs. These might usefully be described as the operating environment. The factors were conceptualised as active ingredients in the experiences of CSN members and were evident in the implementation of CSNs structures and process and CSN membership. In order to explore these factors in more detail they are reviewed in relation to the literature identified in Part 1. This helps to unpack the data within the broader context of partnership working.

11.2.1 CSN implementation

Collaboration is recognised as a means of involving communities in decision making in order to improve transparency and accountability (Daly and Davis, 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). The findings in this research suggest that the desire to involve community stakeholders is set against a framework that maintains the primacy of traditional decision making authority. This framework includes guidance outlining the intended function and composition of CSNs and a series of performance criteria from multiple agencies to which members are accountable once projects have commenced. Following Phillpots *et al.*, (2010), it is clear that Sport England has contrived to use CSNs as a means by which to simultaneously address the objectives of increasing participation in sport and physical activity and those relating to more general health-related priorities at the local level.

One could argue that this resonates with a governmental preoccupation with the apparent need to create a more efficient and simplified means of increasing population level participation in sport and physical activity outlined in the literature (Bloyce and Smith,

2010; Charlton, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2009). In this respect, whilst the Coalition government will likely introduce certain structural changes within governmental departments it is apparent that CSNs represent a piece of much wider patchwork of community governance which is tasked with producing specific outcomes. As highlighted by Lindsey (2010), certain elements of this are likely to challenge participation in partnership working whereby centrally-determined outcomes frustrate local decision making and empowerment. Indeed, although members broadly perceived CSNs as a useful means to address local issues surrounding opportunities for sport and physical activity participation tensions were evident in practice. For example, where CSNs were implemented with a strong outcome focus there was the danger that member involvement in CSN activities was perceived as restricted which potentially hindered a sense of ownership (see section 8.4.1, page 209). Hence, although arguments suggesting that power and authority operate at the expense of knowledge and expertise are naïve in the sense that power and knowledge may be considered interdependent (Solesbury, 2001), it is apparent that this is not always true in practice. Consequently, as long as CSNs rely on external funding a fundamental challenge facing their implementation and growth is the skilful development of projects that satisfy criteria of external funding agencies and local preferences in order to foster a sense of ownership and control.

One could also argue that some members are more naturally suited to working in partnerships that incorporate externally imposed conditions. This is particularly so for local authority and statutory service organisations where skills and experience of partnership are an endemic feature. Indeed, the quantitative data showed that representatives of these types of organisations were more likely to report a high level of involvement. Whilst local authority and statutory service representatives were also the largest group in CSNs this

finding might reflect the suggestion by Newman *et al.* (2004) that, despite an apparent shift to more collaborative styles of governance, the traditional bureaucratic power of professionals remains strong. Indeed, qualitative data revealed that other stakeholders, for example sports club and volunteer group representatives, often found it difficult to sustain involvement. In light of research by Phillpots *et al.,* (2010), this might have serious implications for community sport and physical activity initiatives because in reality, partnerships may be no closer being able to define local agendas.

One might argue, therefore, that the considerable overlap between CSNs and LSPs outlined in Figure 1 (page 44) may have favoured members with the skills and experience of formal partnership working and left little room for manoeuvre for less traditional partners. Indeed, in keeping with the literature it was evident that local authorities played a central role (Cowell and Martin, 2003; Geddes, 2006) and tended to occupy positions of strength in CSNs in terms of control and influence. Where this was the case, for example Casbridge, CSNs tended to be well organised, formalised and focused around agreed action plans. However, whilst the formalisation of collaboration might be associated with increased levels of trust and short term intervention effectiveness (Casey *et al.,* 2009; Lindsey, 2009), there is the danger that this is cast within the image of strong local stakeholders regardless of the level of skills and experience. This may be at the expense of stakeholders who are disinclined to participate in partnership arrangements involving measures that formalise relationships or default power to particular representatives. This argument is supported by literature that suggests that those with substantial resources i.e. government-backed agencies may dominate agendas at the expense of less experienced stakeholders (Rowe and Devanney, 2003; Vickridge and Ayub, 2003). Although there were exceptions, the finding in this research that members with collaborative experience and access to a large

number of resources were able to have a greater influence on CSNs than those with relatively less experience and resources, should be recognised as a potential issue. Hence, whilst formalisation can be viewed as a fundamentally positive aspect it is evident that careful attention should be paid to the role of powerful stakeholders. Failing to do so may impair the inclusion or sustained involvement of a range of stakeholders.

The results also show that some representatives, including local authority and statutory service organisations, struggled to understand the strategic relevance of CSNs. Experiences with previous iterations of Sport England were perceived as largely unfruitful or negative because of organisational incompatibilities and bureaucracy. Consequently, there was an underlying degree of suspicion and mistrust concerning the role of CSNs. This finding resonates with the suggestion by Pearce and Mawson (2003) that the involvement of citizens in the bureaucracy of local partnerships and policy implementation can quickly lead to disillusionment. One potential solution to the negative effects of these situations is the establishing of trust. The presence of trust has been cited as a key element in collaboration (Clegg and McNulty, 2002; El Ansari et al., 2008; Lindsey, 2009). Trust establishes a platform on which to coordinate relationships without the requirement to continually seek legitimacy from other parties (Ammeter et al., 2004; Fukuyama, 1996; Hudson and Hardy, 2002; 6 et al., 2006). Thus, in the context of CSNs this may provide a useful bridging tool that facilitates a positive working climate.

However, issues hindering trust-building processes were noted. For example, organisational and individual reputation provided a challenge to CSN implementation. Although members were generally supportive of the concept of collaboration tensions were evident between some organisations. One notable example was a lack of mutuality

and trust between a local authority representative and the local CSPAP. Although there were certain confounding conditions for example, significant organisational change, it was possible to identify similar sentiments in other local authority representatives reflecting similar tensions. Research by Butterfoss *et al.* (1993) highlights that participation is, in part, related to member expectations about outcomes. In support of this the results in this research suggest that participation in CSNs is unlikely to be a natural response where expectations are negative. This would seem to contradict the suggestion by Teisman and Klijn (2002) that network governance raises expectations concerning the quality of decision making and outcomes. More likely one might argue, these expectations will only be improved if contextual conditions are conducive to this occurring i.e. members have a reason to believe that collaboration offers a genuinely different approach. This underscores the importance of consultation in the implementation of CSNs and the promotion of measures that enhance the creation of value. Consultation can be considered a fundamental aspect of collaborative approaches that seek to raise the profile of community involvement in response to the dominance of traditional decision makers (Hamer and Box, 2001). However, the results indicated that minimal consultation had taken place prior to the nationwide roll-out of the CSN programme. As such, there had been few opportunities to dispel concerns or develop trust between stakeholders in the specific context of CSNs. Thus, considering that organisations should commit to collaboration only when there are clear and compelling reasons and realistic expectations (Weiner *et al.*, 2000), the significance of consultation to CSN implementation is apparent.

11.2.2 CSN structure and processes

Results from the qualitative data indicated that CSN structures were relatively flat with no more than three tiers including network Chairs, core groups and network members. The

quantitative data indicated that the majority of CSNs had established clear lines of accountability (73.7%, N = 126) and terms of reference outlining the purposes, aims and responsibilities of members CSNs (82.5%, N = 141). Evidence suggests that clear responsibilities and accountability are prerequisites for successful projects (Cole, 2003) and that formalised structures may increase member confidence and programme effectiveness (Casey *et al.* 2009; Lindsey, 2009). As such, this finding suggests that many CSNs have in place core structural features that may contribute to collaborative success.

Although CSN structures tended to be relatively flat it was still evident that network Chairs were perceived as crucial in providing and overseeing leadership and management functions. Network Chairs were generally responsible for overseeing processes including applications for funding, project planning, communication, and the reporting of KPIs to external agencies. These aspects added to existing personal and professional demands and were reported to have varying effects ranging from an increased sense of satisfaction to feelings of frustration and discontent. The literature indicates that overload potentially leads to partner burn out whereby member involvement is at threat (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004). It is important, therefore, to recognise the importance of support particularly for partners who might be at risk of burning out. Chi-square analyses showed a significant association between management and the presence of paid professional staff to support CSNs (χ^2 = 1.29, P = 0.05). This indicated that the presence of paid CSN staff increases member perceptions of CSN management. Similarly, one might argue that passing certain functions to paid staff will help to address potential imbalances in workloads that arise from time to time during participation and improve the quality of management. Such support may be vital for those who spend significant amounts of time engaged in partnership related activities. In the present research it was evident that those most

involved i.e. Network Chairs received support from members of core groups or individual members who worked on identifying and developing CSN projects. This is important given that research elsewhere suggests that delegating tasks and responsibilities may contribute to a positive working environment (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001) and contrasts the research by Kempster (2009) identified an example of a CSN which had failed to foster a positive collaborative approach.

Furthermore, despite the challenges of fulfilling core CSN functions (see section 8.4.3, page 213), more than 90% of the quantitative sample reported that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with decision making processes in CSNs. The literature shows that that perceived personal influence in decision making is significantly and positively associated with perceived fairness in decision making (Weiner *et al.*, 2002). This finding provides positive evidence of CSNs as mechanisms for local decision making. Problematically, the large proportion of local government and statutory agencies present in CSNs may mean that this finding is skewed in favour of particular partners. In addition, given the nature of the questionnaire used in this research it was not possible to investigate in detail perceived fairness in decision making. As such, one must view this result with caution. Whilst it could be implied that members who were very satisfied with decision making would also report that decision making was fair it is not possible to rule out that these same members had a strong influence on decision making processes. Hence, these decision making process may ultimately have been unsatisfactory to other members but would have been hard to detect. Indeed, analysis showed that those who were most comfortable also perceived the highest degree of influence over decision making processes (see page 237). However, results for core CSN processes usefully showed that issues similar to those in existing research in collaboration for sport and physical activity were evident including negotiating

competing values and a lack of adequate communication (Frisby et al., 2004; Babiak and Thibault, 2009). As such, it is evident that CSNs are subject to a range of well known challenges common to other partnership arrangements.

However, network Chairs did report several fundamental concerns. Notably, some demonstrated a reluctance to adopt the position of Chair. Concerns were also raised regarding the need for local authority members to adopt Chair positions long term (see section 8.4.3, page 213). These members also reported difficulty in encouraging members to attend meetings. Interestingly, the quantitative data showed little difference between high and low satisfaction groups for variables relating to the burden of travelling to CSN meetings. Thus, one reason for this may have been the timings of meetings which were not necessarily conducive to regular attendance for some members, particularly those who worked on a voluntary basis. However, given the added potential for incompatibility, tension and overload it is apparent that concerns over recruitment present very real challenges for CSN leaders.

In contrast, other network Chairs were keen to maintain their position of authority within the CSN (see section 8.4.3, page 214). What this demonstrates is that, similar to the finding by Lindsey (2010), network structures are likely to be determined by external factors, for example, CSN implementation guidance (Sport England, 2007a) in addition to much more localised factors. Indeed, one might argue that the considerable flexibility afforded in CSN guidance which, ostensibly, seeks to smooth the process of CSN integration into local strategic frameworks, provides a fair amount of room for manoeuvre. However, it is arguable that, within this space, it is strong stakeholders i.e. those with experience and resources, who are fundamentally better able to capitalise on this flexibility. This is

consistent with research within this area (Lindsey, 2009) and elsewhere (Bäckstrand, 2006; Huxham, 2003; Vickridge and Ayub, 2003), which recognises that certain individuals may be able to wield significant levels influence within collaboration settings. This is concerning if one considers the broader governance discourse which has increasingly focused on the role of those traditionally left out of decision making to become partners in processes for change (Houlihan, 2008). Following Fuller and Geddes (2008), if these partners are less able to articulate their needs or preferences than more powerful members it is conceivable that they may, ultimately, be accountable for centrally-determined priorities even though they have had minimal input into partnership programmes. Whilst the results in this research cannot provide direct evidence of this it is perhaps worth noting that CSNs represent a top-down approach noted by Phillpots et al. (2010). Problematically, characteristics of such approaches include predetermined memberships (Shortall, 2004) and processes that hinder rather than encourage local decision making and ownership, for example, tightly defined funding application processes (Lindsey, 2010). In this respect, one might argue that CSNs are in danger of keeping those less traditionally involved in local decision making on the margins despite their community-focused mandate.

11.2.3 Membership and resources

This research found that the representatives of local authority and statutory service organisations were the largest group (43.9%, $N = 75$) represented. The range of members was also consistent with research on collaborations in the context of sport and physical activity that identifies representatives including local authorities, the voluntary sector, and representatives of national agencies i.e. Sport England (Lindsey, 2009). One explanation for the strong local authority and statutory services presence is the importance attached to these representatives in CSN guidance (Sport England, 2007a). These organisations have

been closely aligned with the core functions of CSNs. As such, this may be interpreted as an attempt to overlay existing accountability arrangements in local governance onto CSNs.

However, the results suggest that this might not necessarily be the best approach for encouraging new forms of engagement with organisations that might not be considered traditional contributors to local strategy for example, sports clubs. Indeed, the results showed that member perceptions regarding adequacy of local representation was evenly split, but a comparison between representation groups showed that local government and statutory services were the only group to state with certainty that CSNs had sufficient representation to achieve their objectives (see section 9.2.1, page 221). Concerns for the lack of spread in representation have been raised elsewhere in the literature on partnership (Halliday *et al.*, 2004; Rogers *et al.*, 1993). Thus, a core finding is that the effectiveness of CSNs as mechanisms for attracting a wide range of representatives may be questioned. Ostensibly, this might reflect a desire of certain organisations i.e. traditional statutory service organisations and agencies to maintain the status quo in local settings. Indeed, whilst statutory service representatives indicated that they would like to see more community and neighbourhood groups represented, the overall figure was fairly low (21%, $N = 22$). No other groups for example, sports clubs and older aged services exceeded this statistic.

This finding may suggest that, whilst implementation guidance identifies stakeholders deemed consistent with CSN core functions i.e. increasing participation in sport and physical activity, recruiting these may present a significant practical and cultural challenge. Indeed, CSN Chairs reported difficulty in encouraging new stakeholders to attend network meetings. One key explanation for this was that the scheduling of CSN meetings often

meant it was difficult for certain members for example, sports club representatives, to attend due to limited time and other commitments. A further explanation relates to the CSN processes themselves. These were commonly focused on developing and implementing action plans in order to ensure that funding was accessed. Whilst action plans were an effective means of outlining the nature of projects and responsibilities these potentially excluded stakeholders who were not participants when projects were being developed. Consequently, opportunities to attract new members arose only when further funding opportunities came about. As such, it was noted that Sport Unlimited funding had provided a useful adjunct to established CSN action plans. The programme enabled new members to access funds and realise short term projects despite not being part of wider CSN action plans. This provided a useful vehicle for attracting new interest and, in some cases, integrating stakeholders into core CSN activities.

However, it was also perceived that the opportunity for short term narrowly-focused funding potentially distracted the membership from core network activities. The specific and focused objectives of the Sport Unlimited programme were not necessarily compatible with the broader strategic plans of the CSN. Thus, although Sport Unlimited funding provided a means of attracting new members, the types of members it attracted were limited to those interested in coaching provision for school-aged children. This finding demonstrates that participation in CSNs may represent a tactical decision for securing funding for narrowly defined projects and resonate with the perspectives outlined in Chapter 2 which view behaviour from a range contrasting angle. Exploring the distinction between a strategic and tactical focus from Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) (see section 2.2.3, page 25) suggests that action is defined within the context of organisational survival (Zakus, 1998). Importantly, a key concern here is to acquire resources necessary for

survival with only a minimal loss of organisational autonomy. Such concerns were related to by CSN members (see section 8.3.2, page 195). As a consequence of the need for survival, organisations may employ strategies to deny the legitimacy of other organisations in order to avoid the influence of other organisations (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Although resources, such as funding, were not necessarily seen as the prime motivator for participation (see section 8.3.2, page 196), tensions were apparent in some areas where it was perceived that strong leaders had not necessarily encouraged the full participation of local stakeholders, for example Casbridge and Shinstone. This is in contrast to the wider strategic function envisaged in core CSN guidance (Sport England, 2007a). It is possible to identify, therefore, a tension between attracting stakeholders required to develop effective community strategies and those with much narrower interests and concerns. This adds to the complexity of managing a range of members with diverse needs and perspectives on collaboration.

Overall, it was recognised that CSN membership provided a key resource. Without this CSNs would not have the pool of skills, knowledge, connections to external organisations and agencies or collective will to address issues surrounding sport and physical activity. Whilst it was recognised that a range of stakeholders should be included in CSNs the challenges in managing even a relatively small membership meant that members were keen to control the size of the membership. Interestingly, the results showed that members did not perceive a relationship between the adequacy of representation and perceptions of CSN sustainability (see section 9.5.5, page 235). Instead, sustainability in this research appeared to be related to member perceptions concerning the ability of CSNs to sustain its activities. This is problematic if one considers that the ability of a CSN to sustain itself long term does not necessarily indicate the quality of its activities. One explanation

for this might be that CSNs provide a useful mechanism for securing funding. As such, their existence maintains channels through which future opportunities may be accessed. In contrast, Alexander *et al.* (2003) define sustainability in terms of collaborative capacity. Given that collaborative capacity concerns the skills, knowledge, attitudes, relationships and procedures that provide the conditions needed for community change (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Ratna and Rifkin, 2007), investigating this construct might prove a useful strategy to increase understanding of sustainability issues in the present area.

11.3   Characteristics and perceptions of CSN members

This section discusses the research findings specifically in relation to the attitudes, skills and perceptions of CSN members.

11.3.1 Leadership

Overall, the results indicated that leadership played an important role in member experiences including the overseeing of CSN activities, the motivation of members (see section 8.4.1, pages 202 to 210), and shared significant associations with communication, perceived benefits, member satisfaction, commitment, sense of ownership and perceived CSN effectiveness (see section 9.5.5, page 234). These findings other support research linking leadership to successful partnership working (Butterfoss *et al.*, 1996; Hasnain-Wynia *et al.*, 2003; Hays *et al.*, 2000; Kumpfer *et al.*, 1993; Prestby *et al.*, 1990), and underline the criticalness of effective leadership skills in partnership (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008).

This research also found that leadership was commonly assumed by local authority representatives and that the majority of network Chairs and core group members were local authority representatives. This was consistent with the guidance developed for CSN

implementation (Sport England, 2007a). This finding also supports the suggestion by Lindsey (2009) that leadership commonly defaults to those in traditional leadership positions. Findings in the qualitative data indicated that the position of network Chair was, by its very nature, the core leadership position. Those occupying these positions were looked to for direction, vision, and inspiration. This gave certain representatives considerable influence over network affairs. Perceptions on the skills and abilities of network Chairs varied within and between CSNs. This finding reinforces the assertion that the relative mix of leadership skills likely to vary across partnerships (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008).

Effective leaders were perceived as those which were able to pull together the interests and concerns of members and provide direction for CSN activities. This finding supports research by Metzger *et al.* (2005) who found that the influence of leadership and governance on participation is based on vision consensus. Hence, pulling members together through an agreed vision is likely to influence member perceptions concerning the benefits of participation. Problems with leadership were related to individual skills and contrasting perspectives of leadership. Further, some potential CSN leaders were reluctant to accept or assume leadership roles because they felt that their skills were better suited to other areas. This would appear to support the suggestions that those in leadership positions may not necessarily be comfortable or possess the requisite skills and confidence to maximise leadership effectiveness (El Ansari *et al.*, 2008; Lindsey, 2009). Thus, whilst Casey *et al.* (2009) report that leadership is likely to provide a condition for successful or productive partnership it is evident that the conditions required for this are intricately linked to the context in which it is enacted.

The findings also revealed contrasts in the ways that power was exerted by network Chairs. Some were keen to share power by encouraging as many members as possible to engage in management and decision making processes. In contrast, the actions of other network Chairs demonstrated an apparent reluctance to share control of CSN functions with other members. Following Lukes (2005), it is possible that this could be interpreted according to a variety of observable and latent conflicts and interests within CSNs, for example, the explicit manipulation of agendas as a means to control CSN activities. However, McQuaid (2000) argues that the presence of power imbalances should not necessarily imply that these are corrected so that all stakeholders have equal power. However, one might suggest that it is the outcomes of these imbalances which are important. What was apparent in this research was that these imbalances left some members feeling excluded or marginalised. This was particularly the case in CSN meetings. Certain members, particularly those who worked on a voluntary basis, struggled to attend meetings. This was predominantly due to other family and professional commitments. This is problematic given that meetings provide a potential means of demonstrating CSN effectiveness and productivity (Kempster, 2009). In revisiting research notes taken during meetings it was evident that some CSNs had addressed these concerns more than others for example, meeting out of hours or for shorter durations. Partnership meetings have been identified as examples of situations where power is exerted (Huxham and Vangen, 2000b). Consistent with this, it is evident that the timing and place of CSN meetings provides an opportune way of demonstrating leadership sensitivity to members' needs. Importantly, members who reported problems with leadership approaches in this respect felt less satisfied than those who perceived that the leadership was helping them to work towards CSN objectives. This finding underlines the importance of finding opportunities to demonstrate that a wide variety of lay and professional input is valued (Ritchie et al., 2008).

Network Chairs also reported particular difficulties associated with assuming leadership roles in relation to the additional practical and emotional skills needed to execute the actions they perceived as necessary. This finding supports suggestions that member capacity to work in partnership may be increased through various forms of technical and social support (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001; Weiner *et al.*, 2000). Such support may provide a useful means of ensuring that leadership approaches are not only consistent with CSN implementation guidance but also sensitive to localised contextual factors. Indeed, numerous CSN members reported issues concerning leadership styles. These reflected perceptions that leadership was overly concerned with progressing toward CSN goals and was subsequently paying insufficient attention to the needs of certain members. Hence, although leading through vision has been highlighted as an important leadership skill (Alexander *et al.*, 2001), it is essential that this vision is widely agreeable.

Thus, the findings in the present research suggest that leadership provides a critical challenge for CSNs. Those from leadership positions within their own domains may not necessarily represent the best choice of leader in the CSN environment. Findings in the qualitative data suggested that members were more satisfied and committed when the leadership was developed around the particular needs and purpose of the CSN. This approach necessitated considerable time in which to develop relationships and develop CSNs as core strategic devices. Consequently, leadership development took place at the cost of implementing CSN plans. Thus, whilst leadership plays a key role in demonstrating the value of collaboration (Metzger *et al.*, 2005), it is important to recognise that value is understood in different ways between stakeholders and may take considerable time to

demonstrate effectively. This demonstrates that CSNs may have to earn their place within the patchwork of local governance and collaboration.

11.3.2 Communication

The quantitative results indicated a significant association between communication and various facets of collaboration including management, decision making, synergy and outcomes (see section 9.5.5, page 235). Communication was also significantly associated with primary quantitative components which corresponded with the emergent qualitative themes (see Table 11, page 187) including member satisfaction sense of ownership and commitment. Whilst not overlooking other components investigated in this research the findings confirm the place of communication as a fundamental piece in the collaborative jigsaw and build on evidence which has previously highlighted its significance to collaboration in the sporting context (Alexander *et al.*, 2008). However, consistent with literature that highlights the multiple qualities of communication (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006; Shaw and Allen, 2006; Yoo *et al.*, 2004; 2009), the frequency, style and content of communication varied within and between CSNs although, in addition to CSN meetings, e-mails were the most common communication methods in CSNs.

Research from elsewhere in the literature has reported that e-mails represent a principal means of communication in addition to phone calls and face-to-face contact (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2006). It was not surprising, therefore, that problems with communication were related to the communication method, individual approaches to the dissemination of information, and the contrasting needs of members. As such, the communication needs of some of those participating in CSNs sometimes exceeded the capacities of those sending information. This resulted in information being poorly communicated and resulted in some

members feeling dissatisfied. Even where leadership was rated highly there were notable problems with communication. Although the precise nature of leadership skills were not investigated in this research the finding demonstrates that the range of key skills necessary for effective leadership is likely to vary according to the context in which leadership takes place. Literature focusing on partnerships between leisure service departments also links communication problems with inadequate management (Frisby et al., 2004). As such, the significant association between communication, management and decision making in this research would appear to support this connection. In addition, members who perceived that the method or quality of communication was inadequate were less satisfied with the CSN. This suggests that communication has a direct effect on member experiences and requires careful attention. However, problems with communication were not necessarily apparent to those sending information. For example, one research participant reported that despite voicing concerns about the use of emails these had been maintained as a principal communication channel in the CSN.

Furthermore, that communication approaches commonly reflect those normally used in members' own domains would appear to support the claim made in research that partnership skills tend to be imported or acquired 'on the job' (Halliday et al., 2004: p296). Overall, there was little evidence suggesting that the methods of communication had been tailored to suit the needs of CSNs. Given the potential range and type of members in CSNs the key finding here is that the frequency, style, and content of communication requires specific attention. This supports research from the literature on partnership which highlights that professionals need to better understand how to communicate with their interest groups (Frisby et al., 2004; Hamer and Box, 2000). However, given the diverse range of representatives in the current research one might argue that the range of skills

required for adequate management is likely to be greater than in partnership with relatively homogenous membership as in the research by Frisby *et al.* (2004).

11.3.3 Conflict

Results from the quantitative data showed that more than half of the sample perceived that there had been less conflict than had been expected. One explanation for this might be that many CSN members were accustomed to working with each other in similar contexts for example, LSPs. Thus, potential areas of conflict may have already been broached. Indeed, the results showed that members generally agreed that leadership was ethical (see section 9.5.5, page 235). However, this does not necessarily indicate that ethical leadership was more inclusive i.e. that certain members did not seek to control or manipulate members to their advantage. Furthermore, the relative infrequency of contact between members, the use of informal communication, and the development of CSN action plans may have meant that tensions rarely had the opportunity to manifest as full-blown conflict. What is significant is that the majority of the sample (87.6%, $N = 140$) reported that Terms of Reference documents were in place in their CSN. As such, the overall mission and objectives of CSNs and the processes and procedures required to enable subsequent action had largely been agreed to. Considering that collaboration may have a better chance of success when it is built around specific objectives (Miller and Ahmad, 2000) and that the formalisation of relationships may help to foster stability (Lindsey, 2009; PMP, 2006), the importance of key CSN documentation such as Terms of Reference documents is clear.

Similarities between member objectives may also have contributed to a sense of compatibility within CSNs. Indeed, Alexander *et al.* (2008) usefully suggest that

organisational compatibility might help to offset differences in values and motives. Thus, whilst some commentators are pessimistic about new directions in governance, suggesting conflict and hidden power-relations are inherent characteristics (Coaffee, 2005), it is also possible to identify elements CSNs which may limit the potential for conflict and promote constructive partnership working. That said, it was evident that there were tensions within CSNs between members with contrasting perspectives, experience, and objectives. Similar sources of conflict have been identified elsewhere in the literature (Takahashi and Smutny, 2001). This is problematic given that evidence from research into sport and physical activity partnerships suggests that dyadic partnerships might be more likely to achieve objectives than those with multiple partners which is at odds with the broad membership promoted in CSN guidance (Sport England, 2007a).

In these situations it is recognised that a lack of understanding concerning the nature of power may exclude less powerful groups (Diamond, 2002). Usefully, research has demonstrated that communication can positively impact conflict in partnership (Butterfoss *et al.,* 1993) although the results in the present research found no statistically difference in perceptions concerning communication across three different conflict groups (see section 9.5.5, page 235). However, whilst this research did not explicitly investigate power dynamics, concerns that could be related to issues of power were evident, for example, when members felt they were not presented with opportunities to communicate with one another (see section 8.4.3, page 211). One might suggest, therefore, that establishing common ground i.e. a shared CSN vision increases understanding of the role of the network and counters the effects of stronger or more dominant members. Research from elsewhere in the literature on partnership has emphasised the need to give close attention to internal group dynamics including working climate and vision (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). One

strategy for achieving a collaborative vision may be to balance the perceived benefits and costs of participation so that members identify overlap between their own and the group's strategy (Shortell *et al.*, 2002). Given the potential for community representatives to perceive their presence in partnership working as tokenistic (Gilchrist, 2006) such a strategy may assist CSNs in developing a shared vision that minimises the potential for conflict.

11.3.4 Perceived benefits and costs of participation

The practical value of investigating the perceived benefits and costs of participation have long been established (Chinman and Wandersman, 1999). Overall, the results of this research support the suggestion that understanding participation in terms of the perceived benefits and costs offers a useful theoretical starting point from which to investigate partnership (Chinman *et al.*, 1996). Results indicated that members who reported a high level of involvement reported greater levels of benefits and lower levels of perceived costs of participating in CSNs. This finding supports the core principles of SET and is consistent with research which suggests that those with the highest level of participation perceive the greatest benefits and least costs (Chinman *et al.*, 1996; El Ansari and Phillips, 2004).

However, the results in this research were in contrast to Prestby *et al.* (1990) who found that highly active coalition members reported fewer costs than less active members. In the present research, those who perceived a high level of involvement perceived higher levels of benefits *and* costs in comparison to those who perceived a low level of involvement. This suggests that the perceived benefits and costs increased as the level of member involvement increased. Interestingly, that the HS group reported significantly more costs than the LS group indicates that other factors reduce the impact of costs or reduce their

effects to a more tolerable level. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) (see section 2.2.2, page 21) identifies that individuals tend to seek to maximise benefits and minimise the costs (Hogg and Vaughan, 2010). The findings in this research do not fully support this argument. Whilst it is clear that the perceived benefits are associated with a higher level of involvement, the apparent acceptance of increased costs as a consequence would suggest a more complex relationship. One potential explanation for this might be due to the presence of a high number of local authority and statutory service organisations. One could argue that, consistent with aspects of stakeholder theory (SHT) (see section 2.2.1, page 20) which recognises the contractual obligations and ethical motivations of organisations (Jones *et al.*, 2007; Lépineux, 2005; Pesquex and Damak - Ayadi, 2005). Consequently, these types of organisations may be more willing than other types of organisations, for example commercial businesses, to accept increased costs because they are mandated to ensure the delivery of certain services. As such, increasing levels of costs are considered an acceptable aspect of participation so long as core objectives are met.

Alternatively, that CSNs were, relatively speaking, still within their infancy might also have had a mitigating effect on the perceived costs of participation. Research by Metzger *et al.* (2005) suggests that members may weigh the costs of participation against the promise of future benefits rather than existing benefits. Hence, members may have been willing, at least initially, to incur greater costs on the proviso that the future relationship between benefits and costs would become much more favourable. In support of this, research participants in the qualitative sample recognised there was an inevitable delay between implementing and realising the returns of CSN projects. This suggests that CSN members were, generally, aware of the reality that participating in partnership activities that may take considerable time to yield positive effects.

In addition the results indicated that, of those who perceived their level of involvement as being low, nearly two thirds indicated that there were many more benefits than costs (see section 9.5.7, page 238). This suggests that a high level of involvement is not a necessary condition to perceive a high level of benefits. Whilst research from elsewhere in the literature on collaboration suggests that the perceived benefits and costs are key factors in decisions to actively engage in collaboration (Kegler et al., 1998; Lasker et al., 2001) these results suggest that the benefits and costs of participation are insufficient alone to explain involvement in CSNs. As such, it might be that perceived levels of benefits and costs are deceptive. Whilst the benefits and costs components depicted member perceptions they may lack the ability to reflect exactly what these mean to members. For example, a member who reports a high level of benefits may not necessarily feel that these necessarily balance or offset the effects of the costs of participation. In support of this argument El Ansari and Phillips (2004) discuss the importance of the benefits-to-costs ratio. The authors found that even when members perceived equal benefits and costs the actual level of costs was still less than the benefits. In the present research results from Kruskal-Wallis tests indicated statistically significant differences ($P < 0.001$) across the five groups assessing the ratio of benefits to costs (Figure 19, page 246). Consistent with the research by El Ansari and Phillips (2004) the results indicated that even when members rated the perceived benefits as equal to the costs of participation the level of benefits was approximately twice the level of costs. This was true for groups representing high and low levels of involvement. Whilst similar costs and benefits items were used in this research it was not possible to confirm the exact ratio as in the research by El Ansari and Phillips (2004) due to the data analysis strategy employed. However, the results suggest that members need to perceive far more benefits than costs in order to report a positive benefits-to-costs ratio. One might suggest that some CSNs were more effective than others in maximising the benefits of

participation given that approximately 50% of the sample reported that there were many more benefits than costs. However, it is notable that nearly two-thirds of these respondents (61.3%, $N = 46$) represented statutory service organisations and agencies.

It is important, therefore, that the perceived benefits and costs are investigated in conjunction with a wide variety of factors which reflect the complexity of collaboration, including the ratio between the two. This underscores the utility of value as a concept with which to understand participation. This may be usefully expanded to include a range of other factors for example, communication, trust, and leadership. As such, it may help to demonstrate that, in addition to achieving specific outcomes, the value of collaboration lies also in the way of doing things and creating opportunities for future interaction.

11.3.5 Trust

Consistent with extant literature in this area (Babiak and Thibalut, 2008; Shaw and Allen, 2006), trust was acknowledged as an important aspect of CSNs. It was evident that establishing trust provided stable relationships and helped to develop the membership base. Trust was implied in the ways members acted. For example, despite making investments in CSNs members were not necessarily certain of the actual outcomes. Hence, investments were made on the understanding that the outcomes would be sufficiently positive to warrant participation. This implied a high level of trust in the CSNs and is consistent with existing research that suggests trust provides an important foundation for cooperation (Hudson and Hardy, 2002; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Jackson and Stainsby, 2000; Lindsey, 2009; Schulz et al., 1995).

Perceptions of low trust were more explicit. One reason for this might have been that members were able to relate to specific situations in which a lack of trust was evident. Indeed, notable problems with trust were related to previous experiences and perceptions concerning organisational culture and priorities. These were consistent with the literature (Nooteboom, 2003; 6 *et al.*, 2006). One response to a lack of trust was to try and demonstrate positive outcomes of participation (see section 8.4.1, page 203). This finding reflects suggestions in the literature that recruiting and retaining partners may prove difficult where there is little history of trusting relationships (Lasker *et al.*, 2003). It is understood that developing stable relationships in collaboration takes considerable time (Kramer *et al.*, 2005; McKimm *et al.*, 2008). Problematically, CSNs were under pressure to establish sets of relationships that integrated stakeholders in order to pull resources together. Consequently, there was often insufficient time or resources to properly address concerns over trust. This finding suggests that the centre-led implementation process was not necessarily conducive to the consultation and negotiation processes on which the building of trust was dependent and would seem to support the concerns of Phillpots *et al.* (2010) regarding the use of partnerships as instruments of governance rather than any shift toward community involvement.

Thus, in practice a lack of trust prevented connections between some stakeholders, for example common organisational priorities, developing into concrete and purposeful sets of relationships. This finding supports literature elsewhere which suggests trust acts as a bonding agent (Jackson and Stainsby, 2000). Even where CSN plans had been agreed low levels of trust between certain members were sometimes evident, particularly between CSPAP representatives and CSN members including local authority organisations, voluntary, and community organisations. A potential explanation may have been the perceived lack of

consultation prior to the launch of CSNs (see section 8.3.2, page 196). As such, in contrast to Robson (2001), it could be suggested that there is a notional rather a natural compulsion for sports-related organisations to work together. Thus, more than shared or agreed objectives, trust can be conceptualised as a particularly important ingredient in the collaborative mix that bridges gaps in member philosophies and practices.

11.3.6 Sense of satisfaction

The results in this research indicated that sense of satisfaction alone provided a limited means of explaining participation in CSNs. Although it was possible to understand reasons why some members were more satisfied than others it was evident that sense of satisfaction represented part of a wider set of conditions necessary for involvement in CSN activities. For example, members who were satisfied with CSNs felt comfortable investing in CSN activities. However, unless some inherent value was perceived it was unlikely to provide sufficient motivation for sustained involvement. In contrast, those who were less satisfied were hesitant to invest in CSN activities. These members were more likely to drop out from participation and cease involvement in CSNs altogether. This draws attention to the ways in which members defined value.

Quantitative data analyses indicated that communication, outcomes, perceived effectiveness, and perceived costs might be important for sense of satisfaction. The components of outcomes and perceived effectiveness were consistent with the theoretical relationship between value and participation in the conceptual model. Interestingly, perceived costs were more important than perceived benefits in predicting sense of satisfaction. One might argue that this is not surprising when looking to the broader picture. The range of personal and professional pressures identified suggests that CSNs

operated within environments that were very demanding and challenging. Hence, the imperative may have been to avoid involvement in activities that incurred additional or unnecessary costs. In support of this, Figure 19 (page 246) demonstrates that the perceived benefits may have to be twice as high as the perceived costs for members to report an equal benefits-to-costs ratio. This finding supports evidence provided by El Ansari and Phillips (2004) which indicates that costs are directly related to satisfaction and involvement. As such, it is possible to endorse their suggestion that support may be required when it is perceived that additional involvement is associated with additional costs. However, that perceived costs were more important than perceived benefits in predicting sense of satisfaction might suggest that the benefit items may not entirely have reflected what it is that members value. This lends further support to the broader concept of value which may be usefully expanded to include less obvious but important factors in collaboration such as respect and the feeling that members are being listened to.

Primary role also made a significant but negative contribution to the regression model for sense of satisfaction ($P = .05$). This suggests that those in Chair and core group positions were less likely to report a high sense of satisfaction. Hence, whilst these members may be used to performing similar functions in other contexts for example, LSPs, CSNs may actually represent a serious strain on resources (see section 8.3.2, page 195). The problem here is that CSN implementation encourages certain stakeholders to assume key positions. This may work to exclude members with contrasting philosophical and practical standpoints. It may also provide an unwanted burden for preferred members. Thus, although philosophical congruence is important for the practice of collaboration (Swenson *et al.*, 2000) this may provide insufficient justification for participation alone in consideration of other factors. Indeed, one could argue that negative relationship between primary role and

sense of satisfaction in this research suggests that the potential for members to mould CSNs to their organisational or individual preferences this not necessarily guarantee a positive or happy relationship

However, although the regression model for sense of satisfaction (Table 30, page 250) returned statistically significant relationships between the predictor variables of communication, outcomes, and perceived effectiveness the results for the ORs were not statistically significant. One explanation for this may have been the relatively small sample size used in the research. Although the number of cases for the predictor variables exceeded the minimum requirements recommended for logistic regression (Peduzzi *et al.*, 1996), smaller samples will result in wider confidence intervals (Pallant, 2007). Consequently, it may be harder to be confident that the value is representative of the whole sample.

11.3.7 Sense of ownership

Analysis of correlation coefficients indicated that sense of ownership was positively related to all main components with the exception of perceived costs with which it shared a negative association. CSN members with a high sense of ownership reported a higher level of involvement in CSN activities than those with a low sense of ownership. Involving members in planning processes and encouraging the adoption of specific tasks or roles helped members to take ownership of CSN activities and helped to secure their ongoing investments. Members with a high sense of ownership were also more committed and perceived more benefits than those with a low sense of ownership. These members were more resilient to the negative effects of participation and tended to think about the long term goals of CSNs. Results also indicated a large association ($\tau > 0.50$) between sense of

ownership and the components of sense of satisfaction and synergy. Thus, one can suggest that sense of ownership provides a fundamental means of understanding participation in CSNs. Members with a high sense of ownership are able to articulate notions of value in a way that ultimately translates into practice. These members are able to recognise tangible and intangible resources and the promise of greater impact in target and interest areas.

Building on the existing literature in the sport and physical activity context (Alexander *et al.*, 2008; Babiak, 2007; 2009; Babiak and Thibault, 2008; 2009; Frisby *et al.*, 2004; Lindsey, 2009; Shaw and Allen, 2006), management and leadership skills were essential to encouraging a sense of ownership. Effective management of practical issues such as ensuring members were kept up to date with CSN activities demonstrated that members' investments were valuable and being put to good use. In addition, leadership styles that sought to actively make use of the range of skills available within the membership encouraged the sense that CSNs could find genuinely new solutions to community issues. This encouraged members to see things through even when no immediate benefits were apparent.

In contrast to Ansari and Phillips (2004) however, the regression model for sense of ownership (Table 32, page 253) did not provide conclusive evidence of the relationship between perceived benefits and a sense of ownership ($\beta = 0.00$, $P > 0.05$). In addition to the limited sample size, one explanation for this result may be that partnership working represents a common approach for many of the organisations and agencies participating in CSNs. Consequently, it may be the 'norm' for representatives in CSNs to partake in collaborative activities either through professional obligation or financial necessity. As such, members have already established a strong track record with the types of activities

being undertaken. Hence, it could be argued that the perceived costs may have been more important in determining sense of ownership i.e. members were willing to invest in CSNs so long as the costs were not wholly prohibitive as new activity was taken on.

At first glance, this argument appears to be supported by results from the regression model which demonstrated that perceived costs made a statistically significant contribution ($P < 0.05$). However, that the OR for perceived costs, contributions, and communication are less than one is problematic. In choosing to invert these scores (Pallant, 2007), it becomes evident that the ORs are not statistically significant i.e. it is not possible to rule out the possibility that the true OR is 1 indicating an equal probability of being in the high or low sense of ownership group. Despite the problems with the statistical data it is evident that sense of ownership is crucial to participation. However, it is evident that sense of ownership is not necessarily a guarantee of sustained involvement. As such, approaches that foster and sustain a sense of ownership in CSNs should be encouraged.

11.3.8 Commitment

Those with a high level of commitment understood what the CSN was trying to achieve, were able to understand its strategic relevance, and were confident that participation would yield some form of benefit. Members felt a stronger sense of loyalty to CSNs when they understood what it was they were committing to. Correlation coefficients between commitment and sense of ownership indicated a large association ($\tau > 0.50$, $P < 0.01$). This suggests that encouraging the adoption of specific tasks and roles provides a potential means of facilitating commitment by fostering a sense of ownership for CSN activities. The results suggested that it was important this took place within an environment that was trusting and open. Central to this environment was effective communication. This supports

previous evidence from research on collaboration (Rogers *et al.*, 1993). However, a lack of individual skill and understanding and changes in personnel presented challenges to communication in CSNs. As a consequence, the processes of creating a shared action plan, agreeing responsibilities, and managing its implementation were problematic. This was due to the range and complexity of interests and the mix of individual skills of those in key leadership and management positions. These factors were associated with poor or changing inter-personal relations, a perceived lack of benefits and poor communication. This finding reflects research by Lindsey (2009) who also reported that instability within the organisational context hampered efforts to cultivate commitment.

These findings suggest that commitment is likely to be greater in members who have high strategic sensitivity i.e. the ability to understand the relevance of CSNs, are in a position to influence the activities of CSNs, and who perceive high sense of ownership. That those in Chair or core group positions were more likely to perceive a high level of commitment than other members of CSNs might support this suggestion. This is because adopting or assuming Chair or core group positions could be taken to demonstrate that these members had subscribed to the mission and goals of the CSN. However, one might also suggest that these members wielded more influence within CSNs and thus were potentially better able to engineer processes and outputs that suited their objectives. This can be contrasted with members who were less committed and who were yet to feel comfortable with the purpose, processes, and overall direction of CSNs. Casey *et al.* (2007) found that the allocation of resources and workforce development encouraged sporting and recreational organisations to accept the principles of health promotion programmes. Although workforce development was not relevant in the present context their findings support the

idea that demonstrating participation provides value and is thus an inherently worthwhile endeavour may encourage the embedding process.

It was also evident that a clear action plan and supporting strategy provided members with the confidence to endorse CSNs. Thus, such approaches may help stakeholders with less influence and authority in other formal partnership settings for example, LSPs to commit to CSNs. Research elsewhere in the literature on collaboration has stated the importance of clarifying systems and roles in collaboration and the nature of inputs from members (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001; Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). However, it was evident in this research that the processes of creating a shared action plan, agreeing responsibilities, and managing its implementation represented fundamental challenges. In this respect a lack of clarity was associated with feelings of frustration and confusion. Consequently, as endorsed in the literature (Frisby *et al.*, 2004; PMP, 2006), this research supports the importance of clearly articulating the limits of and responsibly for CSN activities as a means of fostering member commitment.

The results also showed that communication was also associated with the level of understanding that members had concerning the purpose of CSNs and their individual roles within them. Furthermore, the significant association between communication and strategy i.e. the plans implemented to achieve success in the overall mission of the CSN, indicated that effective communication was positively associated with the level of understanding concerning CSN strategies. One reason for this might have been that a well-structured strategy enabled members to feel comfortable in respect of where the CSN was heading and how their investments fitted into the bigger CSN picture. Indeed, reflecting on research elsewhere (Lindsey, 2009; PMP, 2006), CSN strategies may usefully help to

formalise relationships between members. However, it is recognised that both formal and informal processes are critical to partnerships in this context (Babiak and Thibault, 2008; Shaw and Allen, 2006). This finding underscores the importance of effective communication within CSNs which took place via informal or 'non-binding agreement processes' (Shaw and Allen, 2006: p209), and more formal channels, for example, CSN meetings.

However, whilst communication made a statistically significant contribution to the regression model for commitment ($P < 0.05$, Table 31, page 251) it could not be stated with confidence that the estimated value was an accurate representation of the true value. One explanation for this might have been the relatively small sample size in this research. Further, the presence of outliers for communication ($N = 11$) may have distorted the data. In contrast, previous experience of partnership working or networks made a statistically significant contribution to the regression model for commitment ($P < 0.05$). The negative relationship indicated that members with greater levels of experience were up to 75% less likely to report that they were committed to CSNs. One explanation for this might be that CSNs were perceived as one component of a much wider set of obligations within local governance. Here, the onus on partnership working compelled certain stakeholders, particularly representatives of statutory service organisations and agencies to take advantage of funding opportunities based around collaborative working. As such, the emotional 'buy in' from participants may have been lower than if the CSNs had emerged as a purely bottom-up response to community issues.

A further explanation for this finding may have been that previous experiences may have had a negative effect on members' perceptions of partnership working. Thus, there may

have been only minimal commitment until there was sufficient evidence to warrant more meaningful emotional buy-in from those participating in CSNs. Overall, the majority (75%, N =129) of the quantitative sample had previous experience of working in networks or partnerships. The results also indicated that local authority and statutory service organisations accounted for a large proportion of CSN membership and, of these, more than 80% had previous experience of collaboration. Crucially, the findings showed a statistically significant association between commitment and perceived benefits (see section 9.5.5, page 234). Hence, members who are committed to CSNs are likely to perceive more benefits as a result of participation. It is acknowledged in the wider partnership literature that commitment may vary between members (El Ansari and Phillips, 2001; Ritchie *et al.*, 2004). Thus, the finding that more than 50% of the sample could be classified as having a low level of commitment indicates that fostering and maintaining commitment to CSNs presents a very real challenge.

11.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the key findings of the research in relation to literature from within the field of sport and physical activity and wider research relating to collaboration. It has demonstrated that participation in CSNs can be explained by the process of searching for value. A number of factors pertinent to this were identified including macro and micro scale factors, and member perceptions. The discussion has demonstrated the complex and overlapping nature of factors affecting member experiences. Chapter 12 draws conclusions based on these findings.

Chapter 12

Conclusions

12.0   Introduction

The theory and practice of collaboration have been well documented in the literature on partnership working. However, few studies have specifically investigated collaboration in the context of sport and physical activity (see Chapter 3). It was within this context that the current research was proposed. This research has investigated the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders participating in CSNs. In order to understand the range and complexity of factors associated with participation in CSNs a mixed methods research design was employed. This facilitated the investigation of a variety of factors as perceived by a range of stakeholders across England.

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 draws conclusions from the findings of the research. Part 2 identifies limitations of the research and presents researcher reflections on the research process.

Part 1

12.1   Context and complexity in CSNs

Consistent with policy approaches that seek greater efficiency and local consultation (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Charlton, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2009), it is clear that CSNs have been established to function as mechanisms that simultaneously address objectives around sport, physical activity, and the wider health agenda. Whilst there is a strong underpinning outcome focus the inherent flexibility afforded in CSN implementation (Sport

England, 2007a) also demonstrates a commitment to the principles of community participation. As such, it can be argued that the success of CSNs is premised on a pragmatic approach to policy (Miller and Ahmad, 2000; Newman, 2000; 2001; Stoker, 2004) that blends minimal state-level involvement with a strong outcome orientation. This emphasises the importance of allowing people representing communities to have a say in the prioritising, planning, and delivery of services (Health Development Agency, 2003; Zakus and Lyscak, 1998). A key point is that in a climate of financial instability and increasing concerns over the legitimacy of traditional institutions such approaches may foster increased confidence in the nature and fidelity of local services. Problematically, however, there is the danger that, within the presence of tightly defined performance criteria, it is possible that CSNs merely resemble collections of agencies reliant on government funding for survival who have been obligated to ensure the delivery of pre-determined objectives (Grix, 2010). As such, CSNs that have the capacity to be self sustaining i.e. free of obligations to external funding agencies represent an important opportunity for local decision making processes for sport and physical activity.

Importantly, this may help those participating in CSNs to explore new and untapped sources of value. For example, it is suggested that efficiency-oriented programmes such as Best Value may encourage institutional change (Le Grand, 2007) but that pressures to perform may frustrate attempts to develop horizontal partnership (Powell *et al.*, 2001). In practice, this lead to overly instructive approaches and tight timelines within which to complete partnership activities, for example, completing bidding applications (Lindsey, 2010). The evidence from this research certainly reflects this tension (see section 8.3.1, page 194). Furthermore, it was apparent that those with traditional local authority roles i.e. members that had experience of providing services and access to a variety of resources

tended to understand the strategic relevance of CSNs. Here, CSNs provided a useful means of linking with local stakeholders that shared broadly similar interests of developing health-enhancing opportunities, for example in Hingley, Casbridge and Milton. In these situations CSNs were liable to be created in the image of structures and processes that reflected these traditional organisations. Whilst this helped to formalise relationships, devise action plans, and maintain momentum there were concerns that the voices of less powerful members were not acknowledged. Thus, in addition to formalised systems for decision making consideration should also be given to use of CSNs as informal networks based around non-financial resources. Members reported that non-financial resources are as important, if not more so, than financial resources. However, these resources are potentially overlooked or remain unexplored given the pressures of funding and concomitant demands for example, formalised decision making processes. In an era of increasing austerity such approaches may help some CSNs to be sustained in spite of changes in the wider political landscape.

The use of CSPANs as mechanisms to assist stakeholders with accessing external funding added a further complicating dimension. For example, although the introduction of the Sport Unlimited programme created new opportunities for stakeholder participation it resulted in a qualitatively different type of involvement. In particular, sports club representatives tended to act much more tactically than other representatives. Here, CSNs provided a form of value that assisted with the pursuit of more individualistic objectives. This had the effect of distracting CSNs from core objectives and creating potential instability in the membership. It is recognised that the distinction between a strategic and tactical focus might represent something of a false dichotomy. Members expressed a range of attitudes towards collaboration that included resource-based and socially-oriented

perspectives which reflect the range of motives highlighted in existing research including increased legitimacy and efficiency (Alexander *et al.*, 2008). However, this distinction is useful in that it helps to illustrate the types of decisions stakeholders make during their participation in CSNs.

Thus, addressing research question 3 it is possible to conclude that a principal factor characterising the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of stakeholders participating in CSNs is a process of searching for value. This value serves a variety of functions including access to resources, increased legitimacy and power, and a means of supporting the delivery of core strategic objectives. The search for value takes place within a context that is multifaceted, overlapping, and continually evolving. Whilst the inherent worth of collaboration was widely understood one might suggest the concept of searching for value demonstrates that CSNs are emergent and developing systems. That value was interpreted in different ways by different members might indicate that that their role and place of CSNs in local settings continues to unfold as the nature of value becomes clearer. It is important to note that value is defined within sets of inter-related contextual factors that relate to individual circumstances and the broader social, political, economic, and geographical environment. Realising this value helps stakeholders to maintain their involvement in CSNs and necessarily draws attention to the importance of understanding the local context. Consequently, the participation of a range of stakeholders is contingent on the ability to reconcile multiple forms of value through CSN structures and processes within local settings. Thus, although collaboration can be viewed as a cooperative endeavour that unites individuals and groups (Chinman *et al.*, 1996), this research reflects existing literature (Alexander *et al.* 2008; Babiak, 2007; 2009; Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Casey *et al.*, 2007; Frisby *et al.*, 2004; Lindsey, 2009; Thibault *et al.*, 1999), highlighting that

achieving and sustaining cohesion involves the challenge of managing a range of stakeholders and their associated needs, preferences, histories, experience, and resources.

Given that CSNs operate within a rapidly changing political landscape and continue to develop as forms of partnership it is possible to argue that the functions of CSNs are yet to be translated in practice in ways that are intelligible or clear to all. Whether this is symptomatic of ongoing experimentation with concepts such as citizenship and consumerism (Bevir and Richards, 2009; Bevir and Trentman, 2007) is difficult to assess. What is more apparent is that CSN guidance clearly seeks the involvement of a range of stakeholders representing various sections of the community. Problematically, community remains a contested term. It is at once a place of interest, identity, and contest but also a place for progression and support (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Taylor, 2000). Thus, not only are CSNs faced with practical challenges for example, managing internal processes and activities, they are also subject to broader philosophical debates concerning the environment in which they are situated. As such, it is likely that the role and place of CSNs will continue to be the subject of scrutiny as with other related partnerships (Phillpots *et al.*, 2010).

These idiosyncrasies usefully demonstrate that CSNs are situated within a governmental scheme that is, ostensibly, experimental but also focused on efficiency measures that are tethered to pre-defined outcomes. Indeed, it is possible to argue that, whether out of convenience or proven effectiveness, existing frameworks have been looked to as templates for collaboration between local stakeholders with an interest in developing opportunities for sport and physical activity for example, LSPs. It is evident that this has facilitated the integration of CSNs into the tapestry of local strategies, most notably where

local authorities have taken up a strong leadership position for example, Casbridge. However, it is also apparent that sharing a degree of functional overlap with LSPs has caused some to question their utility in that CSNs seem to needlessly replicate existing strategies and programmes for example, in Shinstone and Grindsham. What is common to both these scenarios is that CSNs overlay relationships already existing within local settings.

Although this is consistent with the modernisation agenda traceable to the Labour administrations one might argue that this approach has confused the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of those at the local level including local authorities and community groups. As such, CSNs have the potential to both reinforce mutuality between stakeholders but also to stir existing tensions. In this respect, it is likely that the arrival of the Coalition government will herald certain structural changes that may lead to greater clarity. As part of its review of policy programmes the new Conservative – Liberal Democrat administration has outlined a vision of a 'Big Society' (Cabinet Office, 2010). Focusing on community work and social enterprise this programme seeks to give citizens, communities and local government greater power to solve local issues. Usefully, this might bring greater attention to bear on the specific roles that community-focused partnerships are to play in the future.

Whether this reflects a significant reorientation of beliefs concerning governance in the UK remains unclear. It could be argued that the programme merely recycles the aspirations of the previous Labour administration and those preceding it. Indeed, Newman (2000) suggests that reforms shaping relationships between public and private sectors, and central and local government are part of a long-standing political process that updates services to match the demands of contemporary society. Furthermore, it may be that fundamental changes in the cultures of the public and private sectors are necessary to before

meaningful community engagement is possible, if at all (Purdue, 2005; Vigoda, 2002). Thus, it remains apparent that more needs to be understood about the realities of partnership working in practice (Parent and Harvey, 2009). This may help policy makers to better comprehend the impact of policy decisions. Indeed, by its own admission, Sport England recognises that understanding of the role of CSNs remains limited (Sport England, 2007a).

Thus, in response to the desire to better understand the role of the community in local strategies one might argue that a greater level of clarity is required concerning its place and function within the wider spectrum of government strategies. This may help develop guidance for those working in partnership arrangements such as CSNs and combat certain pitfalls of partnership working. Indeed, the findings in this research suggested that without a clearly articulated role and function there is the danger that CSNs are subsumed by powerful stakeholders. Whilst it is understood that power in collaboration is inherently unequal (Coulson, 2005; Whittington, 2003) and that those with key interests may rightfully seek greater influence (McQuaid, 2000), there is the danger that those with the skills and expertise to participate may ultimately limit input from community groups at which programmes are targeted (Zakus and Lysack, 1998). There is the further potential problem that the role of CSNs may become lost in the complexity of implementation. Consistent with research in sport and physical activity context (Lindsey, 2009; 2010), it is an inescapable fact that the complexity of the context in which CSNs operate impacts their development. As such, it is important that this complexity is recognised and explored in order that CSNs are able to fit with existing systems without unnecessarily replicating or overlaying local roles and functions. This suggestion is consistent with the wider principles of community participation that promote the involvement of people in institutions or decisions that affect their lives (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002). Thus, it seems that CSNs

represent a classic approach to contemporary policy in which it uneasily augments the role of the community against a backdrop of central authority (Phillpots *et al.*, 2010).

As an original contribution to knowledge this research has demonstrated the complex and overlapping factors relating to participation in CSNs. It has located participation within the multifaceted social and political contexts with which these factors interact. In doing so it is possible to argue that whilst policy has consistently emphasised the importance of partnership (Department of Health, 2000; 2004b; 2006b; 2010), there remains a potential disconnection between the rhetoric of joined up working and practical reality highlighted in the literature (Asthana, 2002, Halliday *et al.*, 2004). As demonstrated by the contrasting degrees of CSN formality, structures and process, partnership working means different things to different people. To some it represents an opportunity but to others it represents a threat. Whether recent changes to strategy within the context of sport (Sport England, 2008a) have added to this complexity in attempting to delineate the sport and health agendas is perhaps too early to say.

Despite these issues it seems unlikely that the salience of collaboration will diminish. Indeed, it is recognised that economic, political, and social pressures have long been forcing the use of partnerships to improve public services (Thibault *et al.*, 1999). If anything, the recent change in strategy in England has underscored the need for organisations engaged with the development of sport for example, National Governing Bodies of sport, to work with a variety of local partners to support the development of sporting and physical activity opportunities (Sport England 2008a; Department of Health, 2008). However, whilst the economic benefits of sport participation are clear (Sport England, 2010), promoting sport may offer only a partial solution to issues surrounding

physical inactivity (Fox and Hillsdon, 2007) Thus, one could argue that CSNs are, more than ever, in a position to explore the potential of sport *and* physical activity. Furthermore, given moves towards the rationalisation of government services (Robertson, 2010), the renewed emphasis on community actors (Cabinet Office, 2010), and calls for sports development approaches that genuinely involve communities (Walpole and Collins, 2010), one might suggest that collaboration will become increasingly relevant at all levels. It is important, therefore, that the language of collaboration and its implications for stakeholders are better understood. This may help to establish realistic expectations of what might reasonably be achieved.

12.2   Member perceptions

It is evident that understanding context is critical given the continuing relevance of collaboration. In seeking to develop the evidence base concerning collaboration for the promotion of sport and physical activity this research has investigated a range of perceptions relating to the experiences and attitudes of stakeholders participating in CSNs across England. It has reported evidence obtained through quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures. This has demonstrated that participation concerns the interaction of variety of contextual factors relating to individual stakeholders and the wider environment. Central to understanding participation is the conceptual model which outlines a grounded theory of participation in CSNs. In support of the conclusion that participation in CSNs is chiefly concerned with searching for value the following sections outline specific aspects of the research that address research questions 1 and 2.

12.2.1 Level of involvement

Participation refers to an individual's ongoing involvement in collaboration (Metzger *et al.*, 2005). Thus, investigating the level of member involvement is useful for understanding what factors characterise the participation process. In this research members were asked to rate their level of involvement along a continuum of low to high involvement. Categorising members into low and high conceptual groups helped to identify a range of factors that influenced member involvement. Exploring member perceptions in this way helped to identify characteristics of member experiences and attitudes whilst also accounting for members' capacities and skills to participate. Indicators of involvement included attending CSN meetings, investing resources, recruiting new members, obtaining outside support and resources, implementing CSN activities, communicating with other members, and taking on specific roles and tasks.

However, whilst these indicators demonstrate the behavioural characteristics of members i.e. the relative intensity of participation they do not account for the quality of participation or the complexity of contextual factors that influence this. For example, a member who rates their involvement as high may perceive a low level of satisfaction, commitment and ownership. Thus, although a high level of involvement may appear as inherently beneficial to CSNs it may in fact represent a weak relationship. The regression model (Table 29, page 249) usefully highlighted a range of factors which were important to member involvement including experience, primary role, sense of ownership, communication, contributions, and sense of satisfaction. However, whilst level of involvement provided useful evidence concerning the complexity of participation it developed only a rudimentary understanding. As such, it is important to recognise the contribution of other factors to member participation.

12.2.2 Sense of satisfaction

The results showed that only sense of satisfaction made a statistically significant contribution to the level of involvement. Data indicated a negative relationship (β = -1.74, P = 0.05) between primary role and sense of satisfaction. One could argue that this negative association appears to be counter-intuitive in that it is possible to surmise that those reporting a high level of involvement might also report stronger perceptions on other components. This suggests that other factors are important for explaining participation in CSNs of members with a high level of involvement. Interestingly, an investigation of CSN roles also showed that Chair and core members were less likely to report a high sense of satisfaction. These represented a large proportion of those reporting a high level of involvement (71.3%, N = 67). Thus, although these members might wield considerable influence in CSNs it is also apparent that responsibility for leadership and management activities brings additional pressures and concerns. These might act to reduce member satisfaction particularly as investments increase to match the demands of involvement.

Members with a high sense of satisfaction consistently reported a higher level of participation benefits and lower level of participation costs than members with a low sense of satisfaction. Quantitative data analyses showed that, with the exception of one cost item, these differences were statistically significant (P < 0.05). The regression model for sense of satisfaction (Table 30, page 250) showed that perceived costs were more important than the perceived benefits of participation in explaining satisfaction. Consequently, in the context of CSNs it may be important to ensure that the costs of participation are controlled rather than maximising the perceived benefits in order to increase member satisfaction. This does not necessarily negate the importance of demonstrating the benefits of participation. For example, El Ansari and Phillips (2004)

reported that changes in the level of involvement were associated with strong and consistent changes in perceptions concerning the benefits of participation ($P < 0.001$). Employing a contrasting research strategy their findings suggest that maximising the perceived benefits may be particularly important for encouraging a positive cost-benefit ratio. This, they suggest, has an important and deterministic relationship with sense of satisfaction, member commitment and a sense of ownership.

In this research sense of satisfaction provided a key component of the conceptual model by establishing one of a set of conditions needed for participation. Quantitative data analysis showed a strong association ($\tau \geq 0.50$) between sense of satisfaction and synergy, perceived effectiveness, commitment, and sense of ownership. However, for sense of satisfaction the difference between HI and LI groups was not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). Thus, whilst it is possible to conclude that certain members are more likely to perceive a high sense of satisfaction this component is not necessarily a sensitive indicator of involvement in CSNs i.e. increased involvement does not necessarily follow higher satisfaction. Furthermore, members may perceive a high sense of satisfaction but report a low level of involvement, and vice versa. Consequently, fostering a high sense of satisfaction may not necessarily secure the involvement of members without considering of its relationship with additional factors for example, commitment and perceived effectiveness.

12.2.3 Commitment

Members with a high level of commitment were clear about what the CSN was trying to achieve, were able to understand its strategic relevance and were confident that participation would yield some form of benefit. This was particularly so for members who

were able to identify congruence between their own needs and preferences and those pursued by the CSN. In addition, quantitative data analysis showed that commitment was strongly and positively associated with communication ($\tau > 0.50$, $P < 0.05$). This finding lends support to the suggestion that collaboration is essentially a communicative enterprise and, as such, requires systems that promote information sharing and resolution of problems (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001).

With the exception of perceived costs, commitment was also positively associated with all the main components employed in this research. In particular, commitment was strongly associated with a sense of satisfaction and a sense of ownership ($P < 0.001$). Quantitative data analysis also showed a statistically significant association between commitment and level of involvement ($P < 0.001$). Theoretically, therefore, commitment provides a useful means of understanding member participation in CSNs. Given its relationships with the main components is possible to conclude that a high sense of commitment is essential to member participation. Consequently, one can conclude that it is important to promote approaches that consistently foster or encourage stakeholder commitment.

12.2.4 Sense of ownership

Members with a high sense of ownership consistently reported a higher level of involvement in CSN activities than members with a low sense of ownership. Members with a high sense of ownership were also more committed and perceived more benefits and less costs than those with a low sense of ownership. As such, sense of ownership provides an important means of understanding participation in CSNs. In addition, inferential quantitative data analyses showed statistically significant differences between high and low sense of ownership groups for perceived benefits ($P < 0.001$) and costs of participation ($P <$

0.001). Thus, it is possible to conclude that members with a high sense of ownership perceive more benefits and fewer costs than members with a low sense of ownership. Hence, members with a high sense of ownership may be characteristically more resilient to the negative effects of participation.

Correlation coefficients also indicated a large association ($\tau > 0.50$) between sense of ownership and the component of synergy. Synergy is the product of inter-organisational working that enables individuals and organisations to accomplish more than could be achieved independently (Butterfoss and Kegler, 2002; Lasker et al., 2001). In this research synergy provided a conceptual characteristic of the dimension 'innovation' (Table 33, page 258). This represented the potential of CSNs to combine resources in order to offer genuinely new responses to community issues. Importantly, therefore, CSNs that are able to emphasise the synergistic potential of collaboration may increase members' sense of ownership and imply a greater level of value. One might suggest that this reflects the essence of collaboration which, essentially, is a process 'through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible' (Gray, 1989: p5).

12.3   Summary of conclusions

Participation in CSNs can be theorised as a process of searching for value. Patterns of member behaviour reflect aspects of this process including speculating, scrutinising, and embedding. The meaning of value and reasons for its pursuit varies according to the contextual conditions surrounding participation. For some members it may be important to minimise the costs of participation early on. In contrast, other members are likely to respond favourably to resource opportunities despite initial costs being incurred. Members

in Chair or core group roles are more likely to be highly involved in CSNs. However, the level of involvement is not a sensitive measure of member participation. In contrast, member perceptions concerning sense of satisfaction, sense of ownership, and commitment are important indicators of participation. In particular, fostering a sense of ownership may help to establish relationships with CSNs that are qualitatively strong and able to resist or deflect challenges to participation. These factors are influenced by a range of factors including experience, values and beliefs, opinions of other members and the perceived benefits and costs of participation. As such, this research demonstrates the significant role played by contextual factors.

Part 2

12.4   Limitations of the research

Certain limitations to the research were identified. Sections 12.4.1 to 12.4.7 discuss these limitations and their implications for the research.

12.4.1 Sample selection

Employing a non-probabilistic, or purposive, sampling scheme (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007), the sampling frame sought stakeholders that represented a range of organisations and agencies. As such it is difficult to generalise the findings beyond the limit of CSNs. Hence, the objective of exploring the experiences, attitudes and opinions of community stakeholders participating in CSNs may limit the potential utility of the findings. Although it may be possible to generalise the findings to partnership arrangements in similar contexts, a probability sampling scheme would have allowed for direct comparisons with other research employing similar strategies.

However, one could argue that probability sampling schemes are inappropriate to research investigating the lived experiences of individuals. It is important to recognise that mixed methods researchers must decide on the objectives of the study and select a set of methods that are appropriate (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Furthermore, sampling issues are inherently practical in that they are constrained by the realities of time and resources (Kemper *et al.*, 2003). Consequently, when implementing a research design that incorporates quantitative and qualitative research components it is inevitable that certain compromises will have to be made. Thus, consistent with the objective of completeness this research adopted a selection strategy that maximised the scope of the sample population rather than seeking representativeness.

12.4.2 Sample recruitment

Given the reliance on the researcher to locate CSN members across England it is possible that coverage errors may have arisen in the quantitative component. Considerable time and resources were required to establish relationships with CSPAPs, CSNs, and local authority representatives. As such, it was necessary to prioritise leads in areas where feedback concerning participation in the research proved to be more positive than others. Hence, whilst safeguards to protect the integrity of the data were employed i.e. measures to reduce the likelihood of multiple submissions (Zimitat and Crebert, 2002), it is apparent that some areas of England were less well represented. Furthermore, it was not possible to say with absolute certainty that multiple submissions had not occurred. Thus, although the software platform used in the research helped to police participant responses it is possible that a reliance on online tools increased the potential for sampling issues.

For instance, the number of internet users may be limited in some populations and there are further issues of 'spam' (unsolicited emails) and the notion of unwanted interference (Sarantakos, 2005). Hence, some recipients may have failed to access the questionnaire due to the presence of anti-spam filters whilst others may have selected to ignore it. Non-response represents a major source of bias because it reduces the size of the sample and potentially limits the precision of data (Bowling, 2007). Thus, although measures were taken to minimise these risks for example, prior consultation, ongoing communication with CSN members and a choice of response formats, it is impossible to state with confidence that the entire sample had an equal opportunity to respond.

In addition, the selection of research participants for the qualitative component of the research was based on the logic of respondent knowledge for the purpose of developing theory (Charmaz, 2009). In pursuit of information-rich cases opportunistic and snowball sampling techniques were employed (Kemper *et al.*, 2003; Robson, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005). A core issue here is that the researcher is reliant on the knowledge, connections, and willingness of those working in, and around, CSNs. Consequently, it is possible that potential research participants were missed due to factors specific to each individual. Whilst attempts were made to increase the fidelity of responses i.e. the use of inclusion criteria, it is possible that research participants self-selected or directed the researcher to specific individuals with which they themselves perceived as significant to the research. Furthermore, despite the broad inclusion criteria it was found in practice that this had potentially negative effects on the integrity of the data. For instance, several non-CSN members were located that provided important evidence for the broader process of conceptual development. Due to the theoretical importance of their evidence some of these (N = 3) were included in the research. As such, although purposive sampling

facilitated the research process overall in providing the basis for the GTM it was evident that inherent challenges included self-selection, respondent bias, and potentially restrictive inclusion criteria.

12.4.3 Measurement

Due to the exploratory nature of this research and the recognition that collaboration is inherently complex it was anticipated that a wide range of variables would be relevant to member experiences. Consequently, the quantitative and qualitative components were used to explore a wide range of factors. Whilst it is understood that no research has yet undertaken an approach that encompasses such a range of factors this also presents a number of challenges. Firstly, although a wide range of components for example, sense of satisfaction, were collated from existing research for use in the survey questionnaire this does not by implication mean that they were necessarily the most sensitive. Indeed, one might argue that that any single component is unlikely to account comprehensively for the multiple dimensions of concepts. Hence, despite employing components that returned satisfactory *alpha* scores it is not possible to rule out the possibility that some dimensions were ignored. For example, empowerment has been identified as a key principle in contemporary health promotion which enhances the ability of communities to define priorities, make decisions, and plan and implement strategies (Bell, 2003; Butler, 2001). In this research, however, it did not feature as a prominent characteristic of member perceptions. This was surprising given the relevance of empowerment to the ecological model of health in which partnership working is located (Davies, 2001).

One reason for this is that empowerment is both a value orientation and a theoretical model that operates at the individual, organisational, and community level (Zimmerman,

2000). As a result, in the context of health promotion, empowerment has assumed different meanings (Ritchie *et al.*, 2004) and represents both a process and an outcome (Fawcett *et al.*, 1996). Hence, developing scale items that are sensitive to the context in which empowerment is defined is challenging. In this research, therefore, it is possible that the scale items may have been insufficiently sensitive to the contextual factors. Thus, it is possible that some important aspects of empowerment were left out.

Secondly, despite the range of factors explored in the quantitative component it is not practically possible to include a set of questions that address every minute detail of collaboration. Based on a pragmatic approach it was the intention to develop a broad base of evidence concerning numerous aspects of collaboration. This meant that compromises in the nature of items used i.e. dichotomous, multiple choice, and open-ended, were necessary in order to make the data manageable and the questionnaire appealing to respondents. Thus, at the risk of assembling a questionnaire that included every conceivable angle, it was necessary to limit the number and type of variables. For example, the components of participation and contributions were measured on ordinal scales. This was consistent with the aim of investigating member perceptions as precisely as possible i.e. the level of agreement with scale items. As a compromise, however, variables that recorded actual participation and contributions for example, the number of times a member had actually attended meetings were not included. This restricted the potential to corroborate or counter research that has been conducted elsewhere.

Finally, it is not known how the age and sex of the researcher affected the ways in which research participants responded. Thurmond (2001) highlights that triangulation techniques, including the combination of at least two or more investigators, may counterbalance

certain deficiencies in research. Thus, although it may be difficult to account for the effects of researcher-participant interaction one could argue that a team approach comprising different interviewers may have offset perceptions concerning the researcher that distorted member responses.

12.4.4 Data analysis

Decisions in this research were guided by an underpinning pragmatic approach which sought to employ strategies that best addressed the research questions. The data analysis process was conducted using a synthesised GTM that included steps outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008), Glaser (1994), and Charmaz (2009). This involved a number of steps that allowed concepts to emerge from the data as the iterative process of data analysis took place. The rationale for this was to increase the explanatory potential of the research by combining elements of contrasting grounded theory approaches. Usefully, by developing a combined response to the research questions (Sandelowski *et al.*, 2006) it was possible to develop a negotiated account of the data (Bryman, 2007), rather than employing confirmatory or triangulation-based approaches commonly found in mixed methods research. This was in keeping with the aim of integrating quantitative and qualitative research components for the purpose of completeness (Bryman, 2006).

However, a fundamental issue with such an approach is that it is impossible for a single researcher to investigate all the possible theoretical relationships in the data. Hence, whilst the decisions guiding the data analysis process were informed by the substantive approach to mixing methods (Greene and Caracelli, 2003), and subsequent GTM, this precluded the use of data for the purposes of hypothesis testing. Thus, whilst the GTM provided a strict framework for empirical inquiry one cannot conclude that it necessarily addressed every

theoretically important relationship that would have had a bearing on the results. Although this does not limit the integrity of the results it may leave certain questions posed during the data analysis process unanswered. Consequently, although the rationale for mixing methods was completeness, it is difficult to assess the extent to which this has been achieved.

12.4.5   Researcher bias

It is acknowledged that constructivist grounded theorists develop interpretations of phenomena that are contingent on the researcher's knowledge of the participants and their situation (Charmaz, 2009). Glaser is adamant that classic GTM allows for the correction of researcher bias by rendering data at an abstract level that is free from the voices of research participants (Glaser, 2002a; 2002b). Thus, whilst constructivist and classic GTM share certain similarities for example, the process of constant comparison, there are fundamental differences which distinguish them. For instance, classic GTM assumes that data are separate facts from the researcher whilst constructivist grounded theorists argue that data are mutually constructed through interaction (Charmaz, 2009). Thus, although constant comparison may help to correct the findings it impossible to exclude all traces of researcher influence during the rendering of data. This was recognised early on as a potential threat. In response, the keeping of a reflexive research journal and frequent discussions with the supervisory team were used to help understand the role and influence of the researcher.

12.4.6   Respondent bias

Certain checks were used in the data collection processes to minimise sources of respondent bias. This included using negative and positive scales, alternating the style and

wording of response choices, and the use of a basic questionnaire schedule. Such measures encourage respondents to think more about their responses and help the researcher to maintain focus (Bowling, 2007). In addition, consultation with the research participants via email, telephone calls, and attendance at CSN meetings may have developed a level of professional trust and a sense that the research was being conducted by a *bone fide* organisation. However, this does not exclude the potential for respondent bias. Social desirability may have influenced how respondents in the quantitative and qualitative components reported their perceptions. Whilst it was possible to safeguard the identity of the research participants against unwanted exposure this might not necessarily have imbued respondents with the sense that they are able to respond freely. Given that the questionnaire inquired about their experiences of collaboration it may actually have encouraged respondents to think 'as professionals' rather than as 'individuals'. Indeed, many respondents represented organisations with core functions and strong systems of accountability. Consequently, they may have unwittingly responded with these aspects in mind. This might have been a particular problem where interviews took place within participants' place of work. This is because these represented a formal environment which was associated with particular attitudes and routines.

12.4.7 Cross-sectional research design

Cross-sectional research designs may limit the ability of researchers to infer causal relationships between variables (Bowling, 2007). As such, whilst is possible to indicate the direction of relationships in the quantitative data it is not possible to infer causality as in longitudinal studies. In this research it could be argued that the limitations of cross-sectional research designs pose a lesser threat to the validity of the results in comparison to research investigating specific relationships for example, the incidence of coronary heart

disease and its relationship with smoking. This is because the constructivist GTM sought not to generalise but to offer a theoretically dense account of the phenomenon of participation in CSNs. However, whilst this provides an in depth exploration of partnership working it is not possible to generalise this beyond the context of CSNs.

However, it is still possible to identify limitations reflecting those associated with cross-sectional research designs. In particular, the substantive grounded theory approach essentially creates abstract theory that it is specific to groups and places (Charmaz, 2009; Lempert, 2007). In contrast, formal grounded theory is concerned with using a wide range of data from a variety of substantive areas to offer explanations of phenomena that have much broader applicability (Glaser, 2007; Lempert, 2007). By implication, therefore, just as cross-sectional research may limit the ability to generalise, the implications of this research in the wider field of collaboration remain unexplored.

12.5   Researcher reflection

This research was designed to investigate the phenomenon of community stakeholder participation in CSNs. Inherent in the research process are factors which may impact the findings. Employing Gibb's (1998, cited in Johns, 2002) cyclic model of reflective practice it is possible to explore these aspects and their potential implications

12.5.1 Practical considerations

The design, implementation, and management of the mixed methods approach posed a significant challenge. Mixed methods research remains a contested area. Questions concerning the possibility and sensibility of mixing philosophical frameworks continue to challenge researchers (Greene, 2008). Given the nature of ongoing debates and the

complexity of enacting a mixed methods research approach considerable time was spent reviewing the literature. The objective was to develop a consistent, coherent, and defensible strategy with which to address the research questions. To assist with the design of the research a framework outlining four generic design features was employed (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) which, one might suggest, is consistent with the creative potential of mixed methods (Mason, 2006). The decision to adopt a less instructive framework was based on the argument that no single mixed methods design typology is likely to provide researchers with sufficient guidance in all aspects of the research process (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006).

However, it is possible that another researcher would have employed a more instructive design typology (*cf:* Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Further, other researchers may have used the same design employed here but to different effect. Thus, it is not possible to state with absolute certainty that the same practical decisions concerning the research would have been repeated by other researchers. Whilst little can be done to change this it is worth highlighting because it demonstrates the inherent complexity of mixed methods research in practice.

12.5.2 Methodological considerations

On reflection it is possible to identify two fundamental methodological issues which arose during the research. The first related to data integration. It is the integration of data that distinguishes mixed methods from mono-method research (O'Cathain *et al.*, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2006). However, in conducting this research it became apparent that integration could refer to both the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods and the integration of quantitative and qualitative data. For example, it is possible to

combine research methods as a means of testing the validity of methods and data. This includes triangulation which is commonly employed to increase the validity of research findings through the use of multiple methods, researchers, or theories (Caracelli and Greene, 1993; Farmer *et al.*, 2006; Moran-Ellis *et al.*, 2006). In contrast, qualitative data may be transformed into quantitative data (and vice versa) for example, through frequency counts, in order that quantitative methods can be applied (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). Here, data is integrated as it enters the realms of the dominant paradigm. Whilst it can be argued that the distinction is slight, each approach essentially addresses different objectives.

Thus, on one hand, the integration of methods allows researchers to explore nuances of contrasting approaches. However, this does not necessarily yield integrated data. On the other hand, the purposeful integration of data facilitates the exploration of two sets of data using a single set of research methods. This was the intention of the present research. However, although the data collection methods employed in this research allowed for a variety of data to be gathered from a range of locations a key challenge was to create a set of methods that allowed for the integration of data during the data analysis phase. These needed to adhere to the underpinning principles of the research i.e. exploratory, pragmatic, and wide ranging. This was achieved through the synthesis of grounded theory methodologies. As such, one might argue that this research develops a unique approach which integrates quantitative and qualitative data at a conceptual level. It is recognised that a lack of researcher experience in conducting this exercise may have impacted the research. In response to potential threats posed by methodological confusion the steps taken during the research process have been carefully documented. However, if the

research was to be repeated the researcher would emphasise that only mixed methods research designs that best address the research problem should be devised.

As a result of the research experience it is likely that the researcher's position on mixing methods has shifted. In this sense, future research employing similar strategies is likely to incorporate an approach that is both more aware and respective of the considerable challenges posed by mixed methods research. However, in practice the use of a mixed methods research strategy appeared to pay dividends. This is because the use of contrasting methods did help to identify certain nuances that would not have been apparent using a mono-method approach. For example, member perceptions concerning the level of conflict in CSNs were revealing but did not necessarily provide a useful angle for investigation beyond the basic findings. This was because the variable was constructed using dichotomous responses. As such, it lacked sensitivity in not providing an opportunity for respondents to divulge other data concerning conflict and the effect this had on participation. However, the concept of tension emerged through qualitative data analysis. Whilst this did not necessarily point explicitly to the existence of conflict it demonstrated undercurrents of dissatisfaction and disagreement that could not be explored in the quantitative data. As such, whilst there was generally less conflict in CSNs than expected it was apparent that this did not mean that CSNs were free of tension or the potential for conflict.

The second methodological issue concerns the use of CAQDAS. CAQDAS programs are useful for a range of tasks within research including coding segments of text, searching for and retrieving data, maintaining links between data and providing a range of search options (Hutchison *et al.*, 2009; MacMillan, 2005). However, there are notable issues in the

practical application of CAQDAS such as NVivo 8 during the research process. In this research it was possible to identify several areas of concern.

Firstly, it is recognised that learning to use the range of functions provided by CAQDAS is time consuming and often does not take place until well into the research process (Johnston, 2006). Whilst training in the use of NVivo 8 was undertaken early on in the research process (during the first three months), it is possible to argue that learning to use CAQDAS functions does not take place until the software is being used on specific research data. This is because it is only at this point that the methodological approach and the CAQDAS system truly come into contact. Thus, regardless of the level of preparation beforehand the researcher undergoes an inevitable learning process. As a result, one might suggest that it is likely that the researcher makes a number of mistakes as the methodological processes and functions of CAQDAS are navigated. Thus, the experiences of other researchers supports the suggestion that learning how best to employ the functions of CAQDAS in practice can be challenging and time consuming (MacMillan, 2005).

Such is the functionality of systems such as NVivo 8 that it is easy to feel the need to experiment with a range of tools (Fielding and Lee, 1998). The issue here is that the researcher is easily distracted from using the most appropriate techniques for the research at hand. Hence, although the researcher was keen to avoid this it is recognised that, in this respect, the functions of NVivo 8 were at times challenging. Thus, although CAQDAS may essentially return the power of analysis to researchers in providing a range of tools and processes (Bringer *et al.*, 2004), there is an awareness that the system offers a myriad of distracting and complex features. As a consequence, there is the potential for elements of doubt to arise concerning whether the most appropriate methods are being employed.

Secondly, it is apparent in practice that there is a need to balance manual and CAQDAS-based analysis procedures. As this research progressed the limitations of employing computer-based methods became increasingly apparent. A core aspect of GTM is the careful line-by-line coding of data (Charmaz, 2008). Whilst this is entirely possible in NVivo 8 there were a number of concerns. Firstly, a computer screen allows only a limited view of the text. Despite the ability to expand NVivo 8 screen layouts so that a large section of text is visible there is the danger that it effectively 'frames' the data. The problem here is that it is not possible to see the physical structure of the data. Whilst the effects of this are unclear it is suggested that the researcher's tactile and perceptual relationship with the data may be affected (Fielding and Lee, 1998). In this sense, the researcher is not as 'connected' with the data as when using manual methods.

A further limitation is that using CAQDAS for every aspect of the data analysis process is that it is extremely time consuming. This is because the researcher must ensure that the correct function is chosen, that the corresponding links and descriptors are established and that sufficient content and descriptors are created. Thus, whilst CAQDAS provides a powerful project management tool (Bringer *et al.*, 2006), it potentially limits the flow of the research. It was noted on more than one occasion that the creative flow i.e. specific and detailed thought processes were interrupted or lost as efforts were made to record these in the software. This was particularly the case when seeking to use memos to record ideas. Memos are fundamental to grounded theorists. They represent written records containing the products of analysis and provide a means of keeping track of substantive codes, theoretical codes, and reflections on what data might mean (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Holton, 2007; Stern, 2007). In practice it was much easier to write memos, annotate

transcripts, and 'doodle' using manual techniques than it was to use NVivo 8. Given the complexity of the data analysis procedures undertaken in this research this was a particularly important aspect. Thus, whilst NVivo 8 provided a space to store and to some extent organise thoughts it became apparent that a manual approach provided greater freedom for ongoing conceptual development.

It is unlikely that the perceived inability to conduct certain data analysis procedures in NVivo 8 was entirely attributable to the level of the researcher's technical ability. The sheer scale of the project and need for rapidity as thought processes unfolded meant that it became untenable to code data and create every memo using NVivo 8 as the first point of call. The initial effect of this was a feeling of concern. It was perceived that the inability to manage the use of NVivo 8 reflected of a basic lack of skill and experience. However, as the research progressed it became apparent that this was more of an inevitable practical limitation of using CAQDAS than any real deficiency on the researcher's behalf. Hence, it is important to recognise that whilst CAQDAS systems provide potentially powerful research tools their capabilities must not be overestimated (MacMillan, 2005). Consequently, it remains apparent that it is down to the researcher to decide how to use the software (Bringer et al., 2004) in mixed methods research.

A further limitation in respect of CAQDAS as a data analysis tool was the risk of becoming embroiled in an approach that was mechanistic and routine. Whilst the code and retrieve cycle is a recognised risk to qualitative researchers (Bringer et al., 2006), it was apparent in practice that CAQDAS increased the likelihood that it would take place. This is because NVivo 8 functionality allows researchers to quickly create and assign codes to data. Whilst this facilitates the data analysis process to a degree it is easy to lack critical awareness over

the specificity and appropriateness of codes being used. To combat this, the majority of coding took place using manual methods. This allowed the researcher the space to critically assess the nature of the content without having a series of ready-to-use codes close at hand. Consequently, it is likely that a greater amount of time was spent on the transcripts than might have been the case if using NVivo 8 as the sole recourse for analysis.

The third core issue concerning the use of CAQDAS relates to the stability of the software programme. As the size of the project expanded there were several instances when the software crashed. This had two principal outcomes. The first was the potential loss of data. Whilst NVivo 8 has an auto-save function this does not necessarily mean that all data is safe from being lost. For example, although the project was set to auto-save every fifteen minutes it is apparent that the speed at which data analysis can take place using NVivo 8 means that considerable work can be achieved. The second outcome was frustration and a decreased level of trust in the software. This frustration undoubtedly influenced thought processes and, subsequently, data analysis. QSR (the creators of NVivo 8) were able to offer an effective and immediate response to concerns over crash-related issues and technicians were quickly able to solve many of the underlying technical problems. However, one problem could not be fixed and is known to affect many other researchers using NVivo 8. This related to the casebook function which allows users to review key information concerning the research participants. This was a particularly important function during the data analysis process because it was necessary to compare and understand key differences between members for example, primary role. However, it is not known what the effect of losing the casebook function was. Certainly, time was spent trying to resolve the issue. Hence, whilst it was possible to print a copy of the casebook if facilities allowed, the inability to use this function was an unanticipated hindrance.

12.5.3 Theoretical considerations

This research was underpinned by an inductive theoretical drive and a pragmatic stance on mixing methods. On reflection it is possible to highlight two considerations which may have further enhanced the research. Firstly, the results demonstrated that collaboration is inherently complex. It is influenced by a range of overlapping and interacting factors. Thus, the inclusion of alternative approaches may have enriched the findings by identifying additional or alternative relationships in the data.

One such approach could involve the exploration of factors that mediate relationships between predictor and outcome variables. For example, Butterfoss *et al.*, (1993) employed participation in committees as a mediating variable to explore the relationship between roles assumed and member satisfaction with committees. Similarly, an unpublished doctoral thesis by Holliday (2008) explores the ways in which variables for example, member satisfaction, help to explain the relationships between primary factors including leadership and decision making and outcomes for example, participation. Furthermore, Chinman and Wandersman (1999) encourage research into the mediating effect of the cost-benefit ratio. This may help to explain the effects of member perceptions concerning the overall costs and benefits. Indeed, research elsewhere demonstrates the potential of the cost-benefit ratio in helping to unearth complex facets of member participation (El Ansari and Phillips, 2004; Prestby *et al.*, 1990), but research investigating its mediating effect is lacking. Thus, adopting such an approach may help to explore additional relationships that increase understanding of collaboration and shed new light on existing data.

A further consideration concerns the evaluation of interventions. The evaluation of health promotion interventions is commonly conducted using measures of cost effectiveness (Hagberg and Lindholm, 2005; Kaplan and Groessl, 2002; Rush et al., 2004; Sevick et al., 2007; Shiell et al., 2002; Sturm, 2005). These tend to focus on outcomes within target populations. For example, quality of life years gained may be employed as a means to assess the relative cost effectiveness of an intervention (Drummond et al., 2005; Hagberg and Lindholm, 2006). However, there is sparse research investigating the costs of delivering community interventions from an economic perspective (c.f. Swenson et al., 2000). Furthermore, measuring the costs of interventions is notoriously difficult. In an effort to address this Gold et al. (2007) used event logs to record a range of activities undertaken by practitioners involved with the planning and implementation of a community intervention. Such an approach might usefully be employed in the present context. Here, event logs may be used to record the activities, and thus economic costs, of participating collaboration for stakeholders. This evidence may provide a useful adjunct to evidence relating to the perceptions of stakeholders participating in collaboration.

Reflecting on stakeholder theory (SHT) (see section 2.2.1, page 20) as a perspective of partnership working it was clear that the results reflected certain aspects. In particular, it was possible to observe members with a high sense of satisfaction and a high level of involvement perceived that the benefits of participation were more than four times the costs (see Figure 18, page 242). This supports the suggestion that if individuals perceive that an exchange relationship is mutually satisfying it is likely that they will increase the type and quality of their contributions (Tekleab and Chiaburu, 2010). However, the results did not support with the theory that individuals tend to seek to maximise benefits and minimise the costs given that the HS group reported significantly more costs than the LS

group. In order to better understand this relationship it could be suggested that a longer term approach to measuring the perceived benefits and costs is adopted. This might, in time, confirm the principles of SET but also provide a better understanding of the relationship between these components over the life course of CSNs. In this respect, it might be useful to explore more fully the ratio between the two as a means of understanding their effects on members over time as relationships and CSNs evolve.

Furthermore, Stakeholder Theory (SHT) (see section 2.2.1, page 20) might provide a useful means of exploring participation from the perspective of the duty to which organisations are bound in practice. The results showed that a large proportion of CSN members were representatives of local government and statutory service organisations. It was suggested that this may have attenuated the effects of the costs of participation in that CSNs were seen as powerful mechanisms to successfully meet externally determined priorities. As such, higher costs were an acceptable outcome of participation. However, it is difficult to determine the importance of the moral dimensions of behaviour outlined in SHT to member participation in CSNs. Although a duty to fulfil strategic objectives was highlighted this did not necessarily imply that members recognised the stakes that other individuals and organisations might have had in CSNs. This is important given that SHT focuses on the rights and responsibilities of organisations and individuals which would appear to have increasing relevance, particularly given the emphasis on big society (Cabinet Office, 2010). Employing SHT as a specific lens through which to observe member participation might provide useful evidence concerning the relevance, and role, of community actors within partnership settings.

Such an approach, one could argue, might prove more useful than that outlined in the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) (see section 2.2.3, page 25), which, essentially, focuses on organisational priorities. Given the emphasis on ecological models of health and the concomitant emphasis on collaboration between *communities* and organisations (Department of Health, 2004a), this would, arguably, provide evidence that had greater relevance to partnership working at the community rather than the organisational level.

12.6   Chapter summary

This chapter has presented conclusions drawn from the findings of the research. In doing so it has outlined key aspects of the research that demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge. In addition, a number of limitations and reflections have been discussed. These elements provide a basis on which it is possible to make a number of recommendations for research and practice. These are presented in Chapter 13.

Chapter 13

Research Implications

13.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the overall implications of the research. It is divided into three sections. The first focuses on the implications of the findings for research. The second focuses on the implications of the findings for practice. A number of suggestions are made which may assist researchers and stakeholders involved with CSNs. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research presented within the context of current government policy and directions.

13.1 Implications for research

This section discusses the implications in relation to mixed methods research designs.

13.1.1 Mixed methods research design

Using a mixed methods approach provided a useful means of exploring data concerning participation in CSNs from a range of stakeholders in a variety of locations. However, the use of different methods in the same study should be approached with caution. When mixing methods researchers should be sensitive to a range of philosophical, technical, and political challenges. It is evident that a number of compromises must be made when executing mixed methods research designs. The implication, therefore, is that researchers must understand why these are necessary and what potential consequences they may have for the research. Thus, one might argue the need to clearly outline the rationale for mixing methods and the methodological decisions made throughout the research process. This might help to establish transparency and trustworthiness by detailing the range of influences, constraints and responses that occur throughout the research process.

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Whilst it is recognised that any methodological approach should only be deployed in so far as it addresses the research questions under consideration it is useful to point out that, in mixed methods research designs, there is an equal need to understand in-depth the characteristics and procedures of each set of methods being used. Without doing so it is likely that research will fail to demonstrate sensitivity to contrasting perspectives or the effects on research. As such, the decision to initiate a mixed methods research design should not be based simply on the preferences of the researcher. If anything, mixed methods research requires a grasp of a wide range of contrasting perspectives in order that decisions are made that maintain the primacy of the research objectives. Hence, mixed methods research should not be used as an excuse to avoid aspects of research with which a researcher feels uncomfortable, for example quantitative data analysis, but instead as an opportunity to engage in a debate which enhances the research. In light of this, researchers should select design typologies that allow for the exploration of alternative methods. Selecting instructive typologies may limit the creative potential inherent in mixed methods research.

13.1.2 Research methodology

The selection of the grounded theory methodology used in this research was dictated by the research questions. It is recognised that other approaches have been employed in research investigating collaboration including action research (Huxham, 2003; Rapport *et al.*, 2008; Ross *et al.*, 2001), ethnography, (Holtom, 2001), and critical realism (Dickinson, 2006). By implication, therefore, the findings in this research offer only one perspective of collaboration. As such, they provide a particular insight into collaboration in the substantive area of sport and physical activity which may be added to by further investigation employing contrasting methodologies.

13.1.3 Significance of context

This research has highlighted the significance of context to collaboration in CSNs. Contextual factors provide sets of conditions with which factors react and interact during the process of participation. Hence, it might be argued that research which fails to appreciate how contextual factors influence collaboration is likely to be weakened. It is important, therefore, to recognise that any approach to understanding collaboration will need to take this complexity of into account. Such approaches might employ longitudinal designs to investigate the nature of changes in context and their effects on participation long-term.

13.1.4 Theoretical relationships

Many of the results of this research supported existing research in the field of collaboration for sport and physical activity and the broader field of health promotion. However, it is possible to identify a number of potential areas of interest for future research. Firstly, further exploring the concept of synergy may enhance understanding of its relationship with participation. This has been applied in public health settings but, at present, the current research represents the first specific application of this construct within the sport and physical activity setting. As such, additional research might usefully reveal aspects relating to synergy which help practitioners to tap into the potential of partnerships. Thirdly, the application or integration of existing theoretical perspectives, particularly SET and SHT, might help to develop evidence that is highly relevant within the context of contemporary partnership working in which it the increasing roles, and responsibilities, of community actors is promulgate. This might further understanding considering the factors which determine the quality of member participation and which assist practitioners and policy makers in understanding the nature of participation within local contexts.

13.2   Implications for practice

This section discusses the implications in relation to mixed methods research designs.

13.2.1 Temporal dimensions

Collaboration is a process. It is essentially temporary and evolving (Gray, 1989). The findings demonstrated that participation is contingent on member perceptions regarding value. Value is not always present or apparent. As such, members vary the pace and intensity of their involvement. Consequently, CSNs develop at different rates according to a range of contextual factors. The implication is that CSNs are subject to a range of factors which impact their development, structures, and processes. As such, CSNs take time to develop. Members naturally vary in their level of involvement and status as members. Consequently, it is important that this is recognised. Structures and processes that create static relationships should be avoided. Forcing or pushing CSN development without an appreciation of these factors may hinder the overall process of collaboration.

13.2.2 CSNs and the bigger picture

CSNs are only one component of a much broader system of governance. The results suggested that CSNs must often compete for the attention of stakeholders who have a range of other professional and personal commitments. As such, it is important that their role in the broader tapestry of local strategies is clear and understood. This requires careful and ongoing negotiation. Linking CSNs to other local strategies may raise their profile, increase support, and help to develop projects that are sensitive to the needs of those at which they are targeted. Despite their potential however, CSNs must be cautious of over-emphasising their role. Pressuring stakeholders to participate when this may not in fact be

appropriate to their needs may weaken collaborative activities and relationships within CSNs.

13.2.3 Member roles and skills

Members undertook a variety of roles and tasks in CSNs. However, members were not always comfortable or confident in doing so. In particular, those in Chair positions reported that CSNs required them to spend considerable time on organisation and management. In contrast, other CSN members perceived that the ability of other members to fulfil their roles was not always apparent. Hence, it is important that members are supported when taking on specific roles for example, leadership in CSNs. The development of core groups or use of full or part time dedicated staff may help to share responsibilities and increase CSN effectiveness. Furthermore, CSPAPs have a particularly important supporting role. As strategic devices CSNs were commonly equated with Sport England and, as such, CSPAPs were seen as key local partners. As a consequence there was an expectation that some form of guidance or support should have been available. Therefore, although CSN guidance encourages local authority representatives to take ownership of CSNs it is apparent that CSPAPs must maintain a core supporting role. Ultimately, this may help CSPAPs to demonstrate their usefulness as a community resource.

It is also apparent that roles undertaken within members' organisational domains may not necessarily translate into CSNs. Hence, leaders and managers in other contexts may not necessarily be the most appropriate for CSNs. Skills and experience from organisations outside of local governance may be more useful. However, the local authority bias in CSNs may discourage stakeholders with other skills and experience from coming forward. Consequently, there is the danger that CSNs are developed in the image of existing

organisational structures without sufficient consideration of features that are most appropriate. To counter this threat it is important that CSNs develop processes that evaluate the relevance of structures and processes and allow the necessary changes to take place. This must recognise the value of a range of resources and their significance to CSNs.

13.2.4 Concluding remarks

This research employed a mixed research design to investigate the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of stakeholders participating in CSNs in England. It did so in order to establish evidence concerning factors affecting participation in partnership approaches for the promotion of sport and physical activity. It has made an original contribution to knowledge by combining participant interviews and measures of partnership factors used in previous public health-based research. This has demonstrated that participation in CSNs can be explained by a process of searching for value which involves the complex interaction of a range of overlapping factors. The implications of the research are relevant to research and practice.

It is evident that:

- To understand the inherent complexity of partnership working research must explore a range of factors relating to the processes, outcomes, and contexts in which it takes place.
- The significance of partnership approaches is likely to increase in response to structural changes at national and local levels driven by social, political, and economic demands.

▪ Given the continuing significance of partnership approaches within public health, the contribution of sport and physical activity and the focus on community settings the usefulness of this research is likely to extend beyond the boundaries of CSNs as specific partnership arrangements. As such, the research will have relevance for other bodies working in partnership for the promotion of sport and physical activity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key research exploring partnership working in sport and physical activity

Author/s, year	Study setting	Methodology / approach	Key results	Conclusions / implications
Alexander, T., Thilbault, L. & Frisby, W. (2008).	Inter-organisational relationships (IOR) between sport and non-sport organisations (N = 2).	Case study; stages of IOR development (formation, management, outcomes).	Motives for IOR varied including legitimacy and greater efficiency.	Organisational compatibility offsets differences in values and motives. Consultation, communication skills and resources are essential to IOR.
Babiak, K. (2009).	IOR between non-profit, public and private organisational representatives (N = 28).	Case study. Compares and contrasts criteria for effectiveness identified by public, non-profit, and commercial sector partners at community, network, and organisation level.	Measures of effectiveness -1. Community level: contribution that IOR made to the community. 2. Network level: serve target clientele effectively and economic viability. 3. Organisation level: to ensure relationships attains goals and interactions contribute to organisation and network as a whole.	IORs must be able to quantify and track their accomplishments and address emerging problems. Difficulties in assessing organisational IOR effectiveness because of the number of stakeholders, the diversity of their interests, and nature of the network's performance management system.
Babiak, K. (2007).	IOR between non-profit, public and private organisational representatives (N = 28)	Determinants of: legitimacy, stability, necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity and efficiency.	Organisations form partnerships for multiple motives.	Interdependence and interpersonal networks necessary for IOR. Need to explore contextual conditions.
Babiak, K. & Thilbault, L. (2009).	IOR between non-profit, public and private organisational representatives (N = 28).	Explored benefits, challenges, expectations and contextual factors.	Partners bring with them contrasting perceptions and expectations of partnership. Partners often compete for resources, legitimacy or power. Evolving objectives complicate relationships and leads to tension and confusion.	Dyadic partnerships are more likely to achieve objectives than those with multiple partners. Greater understanding of partner relationships can improve decision making and effectiveness. Competition for resources draws attention to exchange issues and may improve functioning.

Appendix A continued

Author/s, year	Study setting	Methodology / framework	Key results	Conclusions / implications
Babiak, K. & Thilbault, L. (2008).	IOR between non-profit, public and private organisational representatives (*N* = 28).	Case study. Informant interviews and document analysis investigating implementation of management strategies.	Complexity increases exponentially when multiple organisations are added to. This increases tension in IOR. Lack of role clarity and imbalances in authority impeded effectiveness. Monitoring and reporting helped to sustain activity. Perceived imbalances in the value of member contributions and sharing of risk were a concern. Positive history increased trust. Partners often competed for financial / other resources and lacked skills to manage complex relationships.	Formal *and* informal processes are critical to IOR. Trust is crucial to overcoming tensions as a result of competing agendas and suspicion. Incongruous objectives increase tension and misunderstanding. IOR management is complex and challenging. It is essential that managers understand experience and history of IOR and consult regularly. Partners must develop skills and competencies to ensure effective relationships.
Casey *et al*. (2009).	Programme managers, officers and agency representatives (*N* = 11) in partnerships between health, sports and recreation sectors.	Case study - stratified sampling approach. VicHealth framework used to help interpret the findings.	Programmes that were led by sports and recreation bodies were more likely to result in higher levels of program implementation in the short term.	Physical activity programmes that require the engagement of non-sport bodies require additional time for engagement and consolidation of partnerships.
Casey *et al*. (2007).	Sustainability of sport and recreation health promotion scheme in Regional Sports Assemblies (*N* = 9).	Sustainability checklist including: organisational setting, broader community environment, and program design and implementation) guided data collection and analysis.	Organisational setting and broader community environment supported program institutionalisation whilst the design and implementation of the program worked against institutionalisation.	In the absence of funding several factors supporting the institutionalisation include: alignment with community opinion, promotion of physical activity - not sport, stakeholders involvement in development and staff training.
Frisby *et al*. (2004).	Management within city-based leisure services departments (*N* = 10).	Theoretical framework exploring contextual factors, complexity, organisational dynamics and consequences of under-managed partnerships.	Managers had to respond to increasing number and range of partnerships. Poor managerial structures and processes led to under-management. Managers generally lacked capacities to manage effectively.	Attention should be focused on managing existing partnerships rather than initiating new partnerships. Partnership plans outlining roles, expectations, policies and reporting might help build management capacities.

Appendix A continued

Author/s, year	Study setting	Methodology / framework	Key results	Conclusions / implications
Kempster (2009).	Professional consultation to review the future development of a CSN.	Telephone interviews exploring CSN structure, membership, terms of Reference, branding, strategic engagement.	Lack of clarity, shared objectives, vision and overall group culture of the group had failed to foster a positive partnership approach.	CSNs need a shared purpose. Partners must take responsibility for their representatives. Meetings need to be effective and productive. Appropriate monitoring systems are essential and partners must be able to make useful contributions.
Lindsey (2009).	Collaboration between agencies involved in sport and physical activity for young people in two urban areas.	Case study approach with agency representatives (N = 17). Framework incorporating collaborative advantage and policy networks.	Interdependence of agencies recognised as shift away from New Public Management approaches. Local responses to increasing fragmentation varied according context, including instability and conflict but also a transition to stable partnerships.	The external context and internal structure are influential in specific collaborations. Also significant are internal collaborative processes and the capacities that individuals and organisations bring to them.
Lindsey (2006).	Partnerships within New Opportunities for PE and Sport programme.	Case studies (N = 10). Policy network approach exploring how nature of local authority partnerships influences the processes that take place within them.	Partnerships are shaped by external context, for example regulatory demands. Extent to which partners, and the interaction between them, influence the policy process differs according to the form of partnership.	In addition to constraints of policy processes, interaction between individual partners (e.g. expertise, power, values) is likely to influence policy outcomes
Parent & Harvey (2009)	Partnerships between community, health, public, sport and physical activity agencies.	3-part model for sport and community-based initiatives including the formation, management and evaluation.	3-part feedback loop allows evaluation data to refine antecedents (e.g. projects) and the management of partnerships.	Understanding realities of partnership working might help to develop models that reflect accurately their true complexity.
Phillpots *et al.* (2010).	Role of County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) in delivering grassroots sport policy in the UK.	Interviews with key actors (N = 10). Adopt Bevir and Rhodes's (2003) 'decentring approach' to UK policy	The decentred approach fails to account for the sport policy sector in which County Sport Partnerships operate - CSPs exist in a tightly regulated policy context where the work of stakeholders is heavily regulated by imposed funding mechanisms.	Governance arrangements for CSPs appear top-down and managerial. The purpose of CSPs might have shifted in response to fluctuations in government rather than any locally defined sport agendas.

Appendix A continued

Author/s, year	Study setting	Methodology / framework	Key results	Conclusions / implications
PMP (2006).	Professional evaluation of CSNs in Eastern England (*N* = 2).	Investigated CSN structures, relationships, development and the impact of outcomes.	Formalisation of existing relationships helped to enhance links between partners. A wide range of partners were important to programme success. Volunteer contributions were essential in maintaining partnership momentum. Important to promote the benefits of partnership.	Essential that CSNs adopt Terms of Reference detailing roles and responsibilities. Must set clear objectives and evaluation criteria and work in consultation with key local partners to develop strategies.
Shaw, S. & Allen, J. B. (2006).	Sport development partnership among non-profit organisations (*N* = 3).	Framework by Frisby *et al.* (2004) exploring contextual factors, complexity, organisational dynamics and consequences of under-managed partnerships.	Informal communication was widespread but may have led to greater conflict. Increased intensity of partnership management was instrumental in destabilising trust. Competing agendas posed a threat to partnership stability.	Over-management by one partner may be problematic. Although informal nature of the partnership had some limitations it may also be a strength and of benefit to partnership.
Thibault, L. Frisby, W. & Kikulis, L.M. (1999).	Inter-organisational linkages in sport and leisure.	Explored economic, political, and social pressures affecting departments in sport and leisure services.	Main environmental pressure leading to increase in inter-organizational linkages for three government were economic. The need to involve residents in the decision-making process of local government activities was understood but lack of consistency encouraged greater involvement of powerful actors.	Relying on information from and opinions of interest groups potentially favours powerful, better organized and more vocal interest groups at the expense of others.
Thibault, L., Kikulis, L.M. & Frisby, W. (2004).	Partnerships between local government sport / leisure departments and commercial sector	Narrative on the emergence, and strengthening, of partnerships as a mechanism for public management and consequences for stakeholders.	New Public Management approach widely adopted partnership as a means to deliver public services whilst reducing fiscal burden on the State. There are inherent tensions between service providers and commercially-focused organisations leading to conflict / questions of legitimacy and accountability.	Partnerships between local government departments and commercial sector potentially improve access to better services but goal is often financially motivated i.e. efficiency / revenue generation. Research should focus on strategies to reconcile differences in values and interests. It is important to understand the context of partnership working.

Appendix B: Network survey questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Community Networks for Sport and Physical Activity

QUESTIONNAIRE, 2008

Colin Baker

Email: cmbaker@glos.ac.uk

Phone: 01242 715440

Write to: Unit 2, University of Gloucestershire, Oxstalls Campus,

Longlevens, GL2 9HW

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Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. As a local network member it is designed to record *your* perceptions about the *network* in which you participate. We are keen to understand your perceptions about what the network does, how it functions, and the positive, and less positive, aspects of taking part in network activities.

This questionnaire is completely anonymous. It asks you to use the opportunity to express *your own* beliefs and views about the network activities in which you are participating.

Intended audience

- **NETWORK:** This describes a group of organisations and individuals who share a commitment to achieving a common goal whilst maintaining their own agendas. The network is established to accomplish outcomes that would not be achievable without the contributions of a variety of members. This term network is taken to incorporate local interpretations e.g. partnerships, coalitions, alliances, schemes and other derivatives.

- **MEMBER:** A person with a general interest in network activities and achievements who contributes time and resources including; attending meetings and /or decision making and /or planning processes.

Please only complete this questionnaire if:

1. you are a **member** of a community sport and physical activity network
   <div align="center">

   and
   </div>

2. you have attended ***at least one*** of your local network meetings in the past 12 months.

General instructions

All members of community sport and physical activity networks in England are being invited to participate. The questionnaire is designed to give individuals as much opportunity as possible to respond in a way that reflects their own beliefs and views. The questions have been tested before in previous partnership research. Information on these is available by request from the researcher.

Because networks are at different stages of development and members may have varying levels of involvement the questions have been formulated to accommodate members as much as possible. Please select the response that comes closest to representing your views of the

network. If you cannot honestly answer a question please continue onto the following question. Most questions require a box(s) to be checked. Some require a written response. Where this is the case please write your response as per the instructions in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please remember that the completeness and accuracy of data will be determined by the responses that you provide.

General terms

For clarity, some key terms used throughout the questionnaire are explained below:

- **EMPOWERMENT**: The process of involvement in network activities through which an individual has opportunities to express their needs, concerns and devise strategies for greater control over their decisions.

- **NETWORK LEADERSHIP:** Individuals or a group of individuals in the network elected / chosen to lead network activities in order to facilitate progress towards the network's objectives.

- **ETHICAL**: Promoting the overall interests of the network by acting in ways that result in the greatest total benefit for all members.

Security

This questionnaire has been developed using the latest version of the *QuestBack* (2008) survey platform. This facilitates data capture which is then stored confidentially on a secure server at the University of Gloucestershire. Questionnaire responses are completely anonymous. The type of analysis used in this research guarantees that your identity and that of your network or organisation is never disclosed.

Contact details

If you have any queries or request for further information please contact the researcher, Colin Baker: **cmbaker@glos.ac.uk**. Alternatively write to: Colin Baker, Unit 2, Oxstalls Campus, University of Gloucestershire, GL2 9HW.

<u>Community networks for sport and physical activity - questionnaire start:</u>

A. **INVOLVEMENT IN THE NETWORK** Please answer the following questions:

1. Please state how long the network has been running: (Please tick a response)

☐ Less than 6 months

☐ 6 - 12 months

☐ 1 – 2 years

☐ 2 – 3 years

☐ More than 3 years

2. How long have you been a member of the network? (please specify in months)

☐☐ Months

3. Have you worked with / in any networks or partnerships before? (Please tick a response)

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. How involved have you been in the network? (Please tick a response)
☐ Not very involved

☐ A little involved

☐ Moderately involved

☐ Very involved

☐ Extremely involved

5. On average, in any given month, approximately how many hours of your time do you spend on network related activities? (e.g. network meetings, preparation for activities: please state in hours)

☐☐ Hours per month

B. REPRESENTATION

6. Please circle a response that best suits you:

   A. As a member, I represent an organisation in the network

   B. As a member, I represent myself in the network

   C. As a member, I represent both an organisation *and* myself in the network

   D. Other

C. MEMBERSHIP AND INCLUSION

7. Please choose the response that best describes the organisation/agency you represent: (please circle a response)

   a. I do not represent an organisation
   b. Sport England
   c. Community / neighbourhood group
   d. Volunteer organisation or group
   e. Sporting organisation e.g. a governing body
   f. Sports club
   g. Schools (up to Year 13)
   h. Higher or further education academic institution
   i. School sports development (any age)
   j. Hospital / NHS health services
   k. Local council or local government agency
   l. Youth services
   m. Other statutory organisation (e.g. Police Force)
   n. Older-aged people
   o. Community leisure facility
   p. Parents' organisation
   q. Other

8. In your opinion, does the network have sufficient representation from local groups / organisations to accomplish its objectives? (Please tick a response)

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Don't know

9.   If you answered 'no' above, in your opinion, which type of the following groups / organisations / agencies are NOT well represented? (Circle all that apply):

a.   Sport England
b.   Community / neighbourhood
c.   Volunteer organisation or group
d.   Sporting organisation e.g. a governing body
e.   Sports club
f.   Schools (up to Year 13)
g.   Higher or further education academic institution
h.   School sports development (any age group)
i.   Hospital / NHS / health-related services
j.   Local council or local government agency
k.   Youth services
l.   Other statutory organisation (e.g. Police Force)
m.   Older aged people
n.   Community leisure facility
o.   Parents' organisation
p.   Other

10. Is your network actively recruiting new members? (Please tick a response)

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Don't know

D.   NETWORK MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle a response).

Statement	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
11. Meetings start and stop on time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. The purpose of each task / agenda item is defined and kept in mind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Technical terms / acronyms are clearly defined and understood by all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Routine matters are handled quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Sub-committee and / or other reports are routinely made to the entire network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Materials for meetings are prepared adequately and in advance of meetings (agendas, minutes, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Minutes accurately reflect the meeting's proceedings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Notification of meetings is timely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Members have a good record of attendance at meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Everyone (not just a few) participates in discussions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Statement	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
21. Members stay with the task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Interest is generally high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Members seem well informed and understand what is going on at all times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Meetings have free discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Meetings run smoothly, without interruptions or blocking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. The atmosphere is friendly, cooperative and pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. There is no competing for status or hidden agendas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Network members feel comfortable in speaking out	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. The network uses the resources of all, not just a few	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Meetings work well with my schedule	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Location of meetings is convenient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. I am usually clear about my role as a network member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E. NETWORK LEADERSHIP

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle a response).

The network leadership:	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
33. Has a clear vision	1	2	3	4	5
34. Is respected in the community	1	2	3	4	5
35. Gets things done	1	2	3	4	5
36. Is respected in the network	1	2	3	4	5
37. Adopts an inclusive approach to decision making	1	2	3	4	5
38. Intentionally seeks others' views	1	2	3	4	5

The network leadership:	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
39. Utilizes the skills and talents of most members, not just a few	1	2	3	4	5
40. Creates an appropriate balance of responsibility between the leadership and network members	1	2	3	4	5
41. Advocates strongly for its own opinions and agendas	1	2	3	4	5
42. Builds consensus on key decisions	1	2	3	4	5
43. Works collaboratively with network members	1	2	3	4	5
44. Encourages participation in discussions	1	2	3	4	5
45. Keeps the network focused on tasks and objectives	1	2	3	4	5
46. Is skilful in resolving conflict	1	2	3	4	5
47. Is ethical	1	2	3	4	5

48. Please indicate the number that represents the amount of *conflict* in your network (Please tick response)

☐ 1. Less conflict than I expected

☐ 2. About as much conflict as I expected

☐ 3. More conflict than I expected

F. NETWORK FUNCTIONS

Please indicate whether you perceive that the following are major or minor functions, or not a function of the *network*, or that you don't know: (Please circle a response).

The *functions* of the network are to:	Don't know	Not a function	A minor function	A major function
49. Build networks with other professionals	1	2	3	4
50. Build networks with concerned citizens	1	2	3	4

The *functions* of the network are to:	Don't know	Not a function	A minor function	A major function
51. Conduct strategic planning	1	2	3	4
52. Make decisions about priority needs and problems	1	2	3	4
53. Recommend or make decisions to allocate resources	1	2	3	4
54. Operate particular programmes or activities	1	2	3	4
55. Link with local policy objectives	1	2	3	4
56. Link to national policy objectives	1	2	3	4
57. Develop innovative solutions to local problems	1	2	3	4
58. Raise or identify funds to sustain the network's programmes in the long term	1	2	3	4
59. Increase the capacity of the community to address local problems	1	2	3	4

G. COMMUNICATION

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle a response)   .

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
60. The network makes reports and presentations easily accessible for members	1	2	3	4	5
61. The network has an agreed communication strategy	1	2	3	4	5
62. The network regularly shares progress reports with member organisations and the wider community	1	2	3	4	5
63. The network regularly shares progress reports with member organisations and the wider community	1	2	3	4	5
64. The network regularly shares progress reports with member organisations and the wider community	1	2	3	4	5
65. My network regularly communicates with other networks in the region	1	2	3	4	5
66. There is sufficient communication between the network members	1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
67. Communication between network members is informative	1	2	3	4	5
68. Communication between network members is effective	1	2	3	4	5
69. I am comfortable communicating with the network members	1	2	3	4	5

H. DECISION MAKING

- Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: (Please circle a response).

Statement	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
70. It is easy to get my ideas across to the network leadership if I have suggestion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
71. I feel I have many opportunities for participating in the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
72. Participation in decision making by the network Chair is high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
73. Participation in decision making by the lead staff (core members / executive) is high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
74. Decisions are made by only a small number of members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
75. In general, decision making is influenced by a broad range of members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

76. Please indicate how much influence *you personally* have in the network's decision making: (0 = No influence at all, 100 = A significant amount of influence)

[   ]   (please enter a value between 0 and 100)

77. Please indicate how comfortable you are overall with the network's decision making process (Please circle a response)

(1)Not at all   (2) Somewhat comfortable   (3) Very comfortable

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I.   CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NETWORK

For each of the following, to what extent have you or your organisation *contributed* to the activities of the network? (Please circle a response).

Contribution	Not at all						Quite a lot
78. My time, staff time, volunteers' time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
79. Funding to support joint activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
80. In-kind resources such as publicity, printing, equipment, facilities, etc	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
81. Facilitating access to special / target populations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

J.   PARTICIPATION

Please indicate how many times over the last 6 months *you personally* have done one of the following. (Please circle a response).

Statement	Never	Rarely (1-2 times)	Sometimes (3-4 times)	Often (5+ times)	Not applicable
82. Recruited new members	1	2	3	4	5
83. Served as a spokesperson for the network	1	2	3	4	5
84. Attempted to get outside support for the network on key issues	1	2	3	4	5
85. Worked on implementing activities or events sponsored by the network (other than meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
86. Acquired funding or other resources for the network	1	2	3	4	5

K. BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Please rate the extent to which each of the barriers below present a problem in how your network works: (Please circle a response).

Subject	Major problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
87. Competing priorities among members	1	2	3
88. Network versus organisational fund raising	1	2	3
89. Network versus organisation credit for activities	1	2	3
90. Assumption of leadership by a member	1	2	3
91. Differences in fiscal years	1	2	3
92. Differences in members' philosophies	1	2	3
93. Coordination of activities among members	1	2	3
94. Goal setting	1	2	3
95. Differences in members' service areas	1	2	3
96. Differences in structures of members' organisations	1	2	3
97. Leadership from central bodies	1	2	3
98. Lack of participation by one or more members	1	2	3
99. Availability of funds	1	2	3

THANKYOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED 50% OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

L. PARTICIPATION BENEFITS

To what extent have the following been a benefit of you or your organisation's participation in the network? (Please circle a response)

Statement	Not at all						Quite a lot
100. Getting to know other agencies and their staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
101. Gaining recognition and respect from others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
102. Developing collaborative relationships with other agencies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
103. Getting help from or helping other organisations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
104. Making our community a better place to live	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
105. Helping me or my organisation move towards our goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
106. Learning about community events, services, etc	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
107. Getting access to target populations with whom I / we have previously had little contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
108. Helping to build my or my organisation's capacity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
109. Getting funding for me or my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
110. Increasing my professional skills and knowledge in partnership working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
111. Helping me or my organisation to develop effective action plans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
112. Reducing unnecessary duplication between members' organisations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

M. PARTICIPATION COSTS / DISADVANTAGES

To what extent have the following been a *problem or disadvantage* to your participation or your organisation's participation in the network? (Please circle a response).

Statement	Not at all						Quite a lot
113. The network's activities do not reach my target audience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
114. Me / my organisation doesn't get enough public recognition for work in the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
115. Being involved in implementing the network's activities is a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
116. My skills and time are not well used	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
117. Time spent on the network keeps me from doing my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
118. The financial burden of travelling to network meetings is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
119. The financial burden of participating in network (barring travel) activities is too high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
120. Meeting the criteria for external grants and / or funding is a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

N. TRUST

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (Please circle a response).

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
121. Relationships among network members go beyond individuals to include members' organisations	1	2	3	4	5
122. I am comfortable requesting assistance from the other network members when I feel their input could be of value	1	2	3	4	5
123. I can talk openly and honestly at network meetings	1	2	3	4	5
124. I am comfortable expressing my views even if they might disagree with others	1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
125. I am comfortable bringing new ideas to the network	1	2	3	4	5
126. Network members respect each others' point of view even if they might disagree	1	2	3	4	5
127. My opinion is considered by other members	1	2	3	4	5

O. NETWORK STRATEGY

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (Please circle a response).

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
128. Our network has a clear and shared understanding of the *problems* we are trying to address	1	2	3	4	5
129. There is general agreement with respect to the *mission* of the network	1	2	3	4	5
130. There is general agreement with respect to the *priorities* of the network	1	2	3	4	5
131. Members agree on the *strategies* the network should use in pursuing its priorities	1	2	3	4	5
132. Our action plan defines well the roles, responsibilities and timelines for activities that work towards the network's mission	1	2	3	4	5

P. NETWORK OUTCOMES

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle a response).

133. The network has been responsible for activities or programmes that would *not* otherwise have occurred

Strongly disagree   **Agree strongly**

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

134. The network has accrued benefits to the network members

Strongly disagree   **Agree strongly**

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

135. The network has brought benefits to the community

Strongly disagree   **Agree strongly**

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Q. SUSTAINABILITY

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle a response).

136. The network is essential to the improvement of community participation in sport and physical activity

Strongly disagree   **Strongly agree**

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

137. One or a small number of people or organisations could make significant progress in improving community participation in sport and physical activity *without* the network's involvement (Please circle a response)

Strongly disagree   **Strongly agree**

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

138. I am certain that the network will continue to exist beyond the present funding arrangements

Strongly disagree   **Strongly agree**

           1   2   3   4   5   6   7

R. SYNERGY

Please indicate how well the members are able to do the following by *working together* in the network (Please circle a response).

By *working together* we are able to:	Not well at all	Not so well	Somewhat well	Very well	Extremely well
139. Identify new and creative ways to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
140. Include the views and priorities of the people affected by the network's work	1	2	3	4	5
141. Develop goals that are widely understood and supported among members	1	2	3	4	5
142. Identify how different services and programmes in the community relate to the problems the network is trying to address	1	2	3	4	5
143. Respond to the needs and problems of the community	1	2	3	4	5
144. Implement strategies that are most likely to work in the community	1	2	3	4	5
145. Obtain support from individuals and organisations in the community that can either block the network's plans or help them move forward	1	2	3	4	5
146. Carry out comprehensive activities that connect multiple services, programmes or systems	1	2	3	4	5
147. Communicate to people in the community how the network's actions will address problems that are important to them	1	2	3	4	5

S. SATISFACTION

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Please circle a response).

Statement	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		
148. I am satisfied with how the network operates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
149. I am satisfied with what has been accomplished by the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
150. The network is a worthwhile effort	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
151. The work accomplished by the network has met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
152. I would not like to change anything about the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
153. On the whole I am satisfied with the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

T. SENSE OF OWNERSHIP

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Please circle a response).

Statement	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		
154. I am committed to the work of the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
155. I feel that I have a voice in what the network decides	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
156. I feel a sense of pride in what the network accomplishes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
157. I really care about the future of this network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

U. COMMITMENT

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Please circle a response).

Statement	Not at all					Quite a lot	
158. Have you / your organisation endorsed or adopted the mission and goals of the network?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
159. Do you / your organisation participate in network sponsored activities?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
160. Have you / your organisation publicly endorsed or co-sponsored network activities?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
161. Does the *community* see the network as a resource for influencing sport and physical activity participation in the community?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
162. I feel a strong sense of 'loyalty' to the network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
163. I go to network meetings only because it is part of my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

V. PARTICIPATION BENEFITS AND COSTS / DISADVANTAGES

164. In your overall opinion, how would you compare the benefits with the difficulties of being a member of your network? (Please tick a response).

a. There are many more difficulties than benefits ☐

b. There a few more difficulties than benefits ☐

c. The difficulties and benefits are about the same ☐

d. There are a few more benefits than difficulties ☐

e. There are many more benefits than difficulties ☐

W. EMPOWERMENT

Please indicate to what extent you agree / disagree with the following statements: (Please circle a response).

Statement	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
165. My work is constantly challenging	1	2	3	4	5
166. Recently I have felt more empowered by the network	1	2	3	4	5
167. The network's climate encourages me to experiment to find better ways of doing things	1	2	3	4	5
168. I am pretty much free to do things my way as long as I hit targets / produce work	1	2	3	4	5
169. My ideas as to how to do things better are listened to by the network	1	2	3	4	5
170. I am encouraged to develop new skills that may be useful in the network	1	2	3	4	5
171. The opportunity to manage things in my own way has increased over the past 12 months	1	2	3	4	5

X. PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS

How effective would you rate your network functioning in each of the following areas? (Please circle a response).

Network area	Extremely effective	Effective	Ineffective	Extremely ineffective
172. Communication between members	1	2	3	4
173. Goal setting	1	2	3	4
174. Making decisions	1	2	3	4
175. Focus on community physical activity	1	2	3	4
176. Focus on community sport	1	2	3	4
177. Developing effective community initiatives	1	2	3	4

Network area	Extremely effective	Effective	Ineffective	Extremely ineffective
178. Coordination of network members	1	2	3	4
179. Fundraising	1	2	3	4
180. Advocating for special / priority populations	1	2	3	4

181. Please feel free to add any comments about any aspect of your network which you feel to be significant or of interest to this research:

Y. GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

182. Please indicate your gender: (please circle a response)

- o Male
- o Female

183. Please indicate your race / ethnicity:

- o Caucasian
- o Black / African
- o Asian
- o Indian
- o Caribbean
- o Chinese
- o Other
- o Prefer not to state

184. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- o Yes
- o No

185. Your age: (years)

- o   16 – 19
- o   20 – 24
- o   25 – 29
- o   30 – 34
- o   35 – 39
- o   40 – 44
- o   45 – 49
- o   50 – 54
- o   55 – 59
- o   60 – 64
- o   65 – 69
- o   70 – 74
- o   75 – 79
- o   80 – 84
- o   85+

Z.   GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS

186. Please indicate your *primary* role in the network (please circle one):

    a.   Network member

    b.   Member of core group (network board member / central committee member)

    c.   Network Chair

    d.   Other (please specify) . . . .

187.   Has the network a clear Terms of Reference? (i.e. defined purpose, aims, objectives, methods of delivery, and terms and conditions of membership; please tick a response)

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Don't Know

Please tick a response: Yes   No

188.   Has the network established clear lines of accountability for
        the performance and outcomes of the network?   ☐   ☐

189.   Has the network the *capacity* to undertake evaluation to
        help monitor its progress?   ☐   ☐

190.   Has the network *undertaken* an evaluation(s) to
        monitor its progress?   ☐   ☐

191.   Has the network the *ability* to recognise members'
        contributions to the network?   ☐   ☐

192.   Has the network *undertaken* activity to recognise
        members' contributions to the network?   ☐   ☐

193.   Are there professional staff employed to assist with the
        running of the network? (e.g. coordinators / facilitators)   ☐   ☐

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR THE FINAL QUESTION

194. Please indicate the region in which you work (This is based on areas in which Sport England partnerships work with local partners to develop and implement initiatives for sport and physical activity). **Please tick a response.**

	Bedfordshire & Luton		Leicester and Rutland
	Berkshire		Lincolnshire
	Birmingham		Merseyside
	Black Country		Norfolk
	Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes		North London
	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough		North Yorkshire
	Central London		Northamptonshire
	Cheshire & Warrington		Northumberland
	Cornwall & Scilly Isle		Nottinghamshire
	Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire		Oxfordshire
	Cumbria		Shropshire
	Derbyshire		Somerset
	Devon		South London
	Dorset		South Yorkshire
	Durham		Staffordshire
	East London		Suffolk
	Essex		Surrey
	Gloucestershire		Sussex
	Greater Manchester		Tees Valley
	Hampshire & Isle of Wight		Tyne and Wear
	Herefordshire & Worcestershire		West London
	Hertfordshire		WESTPORT
	Humber		West Yorkshire
	Kent		Wiltshire & Swindon
	Lancashire		

Questionnaire concludes here

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The results will be added to the survey database from which the overall scores will be analysed. During analysis only aggregated scores will be used. At no point will individual responses be traceable to their source.

As part of our dissemination strategy we would like to inform participants of the results of this research once completed. If you are interested in receiving information please provide an email address below. This is completely voluntary and these details will not be used for any other purpose than to send information regarding the research and will not be available to, or passed onto, any third parties under any circumstances.

Name:

Email address: . . . .

Alternative address (if no email): . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

Appendix C: Tests of normality for main components

Component	N	Normal Parameters		Most Extreme Differences			Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Absolute	Positive	Negative		
Management	170	113.46	22.65	0.08	0.06	-0.08	1.07	0.21
Leadership	169	57.62	8.78	0.13	0.06	-0.13	1.65	0.01
Function	167	38.80	4.52	0.17	0.13	-0.17	2.15	0.00
Communication	168	32.98	5.62	0.10	0.08	-0.10	1.30	0.07
Decision making	168	31.63	4.89	0.10	0.08	-0.10	1.33	0.06
Contributions	168	19.58	6.03	0.10	0.08	-0.10	1.24	0.09
Participation	168	12.46	4.51	0.11	0.11	-0.08	1.37	0.05
Barriers	164	30.99	5.15	0.11	0.06	-0.11	1.41	0.04
Benefits	164	65.01	15.36	0.06	0.05	-0.06	0.82	0.52[†]
Costs	163	20.26	8.81	0.08	0.08	-0.08	1.05	0.22
Trust	163	27.64	4.49	0.17	0.13	-0.17	2.22	0.00
Strategy	163	19.72	3.14	0.22	0.16	-0.22	2.85	0.00
Outcomes	163	16.48	3.58	0.14	0.10	-0.14	1.75	0.00
Sustainability	163	13.99	2.89	0.12	0.09	-0.12	1.47	0.03
Synergy	163	30.60	6.13	0.11	0.08	-0.11	1.43	0.03
Satisfaction	164	28.36	8.01	0.11	0.05	-0.11	1.35	0.05
Sense of ownership	160	22.19	5.15	0.14	0.13	-0.14	1.74	0.00
Commitment	160	28.76	6.46	0.09	0.05	-0.09	1.09	0.19
Empowerment	161	24.34	4.26	0.10	0.07	-0.10	1.28	0.08
Perceived effectiveness	163	26.15	4.13	0.14	0.12	-0.14	1.82	0.00

Note: [†] Value indicates distribution of scores is not normal.

Appendix D: Voluntary informed consent form

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Care
Oxstalls Lane
Gloucester
GL2 9HW

Participant Voluntary Informed Consent Form

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for this research. It is being undertaken as part of a PhD at the University of Gloucestershire. The following information provides an outline of the research and provides information about its purpose and your participation.

Research Title:

Collaboration in the context of Community Networks for Sport and Physical Activity

Research purpose:

To develop a greater understanding of community network members' perceptions of the processes of participation and the effects these processes on participation.

Why have I been asked to participate?

As an existing member of a community network for sport and physical activity you may be able to provide valuable information concerning the processes of participation.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part is entirely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate you are free to withdraw from the research at any time without stating a reason. There will be no consequences as a result of your withdrawal and any information you provide will be erased or destroyed.

What about anonymity?

Your identity will never be revealed to others in the network, your employer, or third parties and you will remain completely anonymous within the research. Details of your participation will

remain confidential at all times and will never be passed on to other staff, university employees or other third parties.

What am I being asked to do?

Consenting participants will be asked to be interviewed regarding their experiences in the networks. These will last approximately one hour. Questions will relate only to your experiences and opinions and seek to provide you with the opportunity to talk freely about you participation. Answers will be audio taped, transcribed in full, and returned to you to ensure an accurate account is developed.

What are the benefits of taking part?

Given the short history of Community Sports Networks there is limited understanding of their role in bringing together local partners to address the needs of communities. By taking part you will contribute new and valuable evidence that may help facilitate partnership working between local agencies involved in the provision of sport and physical activity.

What about my rights?

The research has been approved by the University of Gloucestershire ethics committee. As such it is conducted in accordance with laws on data protection, human rights, libel laws and data dissemination, storage, and publication.

The following declarations seek to ensure that you understand the nature of your participation in the research and that you agree to take part based on this understanding:

Please tick

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in this Participant Voluntary Informed Consent Form and have had the opportunity to seek clarification on any issues over which I have concern.

2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving notice, reason, and without harm to my legal rights in any way whatsoever.

3. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped for the purpose of providing an accurate account of what was said for data analysis procedures and that comments may be quoted within the research findings.

4. I understand that a full and complete interview transcript will be returned to me for verification prior to inclusion in the main analysis phase.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant signature: . . . .

Print name. . . . .

Date: . . . .

Researcher details: Colin Baker
                        Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Care
                        Oxstalls Lane
                        Gloucester
                        GL2 9HW

                        01242 715540 / cmbaker@glos.ac.uk

Appendix E: Sample interview transcript

1   CB: Can you tell me if a network has been established in your area?

2   R: It, has, I work for Casbridge council therefore I was instrumental in setting up the network in

3   Casbridge

4   CB: How long have you been running?

5   R: We set it up around September 2007. We had a stakeholder event which we used to launch

6   the network, so it kicked off around then

7   CB: And how many stakeholders were there at the event?

8   R: About 45, we had about 45-50 there, different community groups, clubs, governing bodies,

9   partners that we work with, interested parties – schools, county sports partnership, those sorts

10   of people

11   R: CB: So can you tell me about your role in the network?

12   I sort of set it up and Chair it. I'm in charge of sport, play and healthy lifestyles for the borough

13   council. So sport and physical activity are a key part of that. When we started up the network,

14   er, the sport development post was vacant so it came down to me to do all the ground work. So,

15   it was a case of pulling the people together, identifying who the key partners were to get it off

16   the ground with a view to supporting the initial action plan and submitting the proposal to sport

17   England. Erm, and as things have rolled out it's been me linking people together, handing over

18   pieces of work to other people now, people are picking up on different pieces of work,

19   coordinating delivery, and the role I've got is about keeping the network together and keeping

20   people informed...

21   CB: Quite an instrumental role then...

22   R: Yeah, not a lot of choice in that really. Sport England were expecting bids to come in from a

23   number of authorities. I put a bid forward and then the post became vacant but I'd already

24   made the commitment to do it so yeah, it was either go back on that commitment or put the

25   work in and pick up on the sport development role so that's what I did. It wasn't just me, that

26   makes me sound like it was, Nathan from the county sports partnership was also instrumental in

27   identifying key partners, erm, got them all together. We had ideas in our minds about the sort of

28   projects we already wanted to develop

29   CB: Yeah

30   R: Erm, so it was a case of pulling together the key partners that would help us deliver those

31   projects

32   So being involved in that capacity, can you describe what it's like to be involved in the network?

33   I guess it's no different from the day-to-day job really. The role I've got is very much about

34   partnerships, we work closely with the PCT, the school sports partnership, the football club,

35   obviously the national governing bodies, erm, the youth service, extended service. So all the

36   network was, was really a formalisation of those links Ok, but by doing it in a structured way as

37   part of a structured group we were able to put in the funding bids to deliver projects that

38   previously were not happening

39   CB: So, building on those relationships?

40   R: Yeah, like I said we already had those links with the partners but we tended to link with them

41   on a one-to-one basis, we'd never really pulled them together to have a bigger discussion. It

42   always tended to be a discussion with an individual partner whereas now we've joined up those

43   partners, they're working together, we can identify where we can support each other with

44   different things

45   CB: Mmm

46   R: If I'm honest the money from Sport England was a driver in doing it

47   CB: Right

R: One was the opportunity to bring people together to share what they were doing, to share what the gaps were, to share what they could offer. And having members around the table to have those discussions was useful in itself. But knowing there was a funding pot to tap into to get projects off the ground that weren't happening, to get partners talking together about what they'd love to see happening, the sort of help they needed, and being able to pull in funding around those gaps where it was needed, the money was a key part of it. But there is a benefit that's more general

CB: So, in terms of your role and what you do, how does that make you feel?

Like I said we were already working with those partners. I'm not sure we've developed any fresh or new links with people we weren't working with before. I think the vast majority of the people engaged with the network are those people we were working with before, but we're now able to do things with them that we weren't able to do before. Things like sending sport coaches into youth clubs – before we might have been able to do that a few times but that would never be ongoing

CB: Yeah

R: And developing a sports outreach programme in the parks, we would do it for a couple of months in the holidays but never keep it going all year. To set up the running network, the schools programmes, there's thing we can do that we couldn't do previously because of budgetary constraints. Now we have additional money or we've been able to help the partners get money so, yeah, the funding side of it has certainly helped to things happen

CB: So you're saying you've been quite heavily involved both now and then. How do you think that compares with the other networks?

R: Erm, I don't really know too much about the network in the other districts. I know Hingley have done a fair bit and it's been led by Fin as a PDM but it's a PDM looking at a community angle. But I think it's something a bit more natural in Casbridge where it's the borough council that's taken the lead because we are the ones who are responsible for community participation. Erm, I think it's what Sport England envisaged, where the partners would come together in a local area, but the borough council would provide some sort of leadership for that to pull the partners together and identify what needs to be done. I personally think it should be led by the borough council and it's a way of them working with local partners in the locality. I guess where my involvement differs to other in the Casbridge group is that because of the role that I have, and sort of setting up the network and having a role as Chair I'm sort of more involved than some of the other members. Their engagement maybe tends to come and go, it's more about being able to get something off the ground. Some of them may only be interested in one of the projects and not be interested in any of the other five. But then again, some partners are actively involved in all of them, thinking about the Youth Service, they were interested in only one aspect but they've been able to contribute to areas that are harder to reach so they've given us a different angle on projects which has been able to help shape other things, so partners' involvement has not quite been what we'd expected. People have brought different things to the table....

CB: I guess that's to do with the variety of partners, their different skills

R: Yeah, I think they have different areas of expertise. If you think about the youth service you have people that work day-to-day with young people, in areas of priority. They form relationships with sort of 13, 14, 15 year-old kids in ways that we're probably never going to do.

CB: Yeah

R: We might go and see them 2 or 3 times over the summer but to be able to spend time and forge relationships to change mindsets if they were disengaged in sport would have taken years. But by working alongside a youth worker who has that experience, you can actually get people involved in ways that you couldn't do if you just turned up as an outsider...

CB: You're building relationships?

98   R: Yeah, to be able to relationships with partners who already have those links, whether it's the
99   youth service or football club, we're a able to do a variety of things

Appendix F: Example Interview schedules

Schedule 1.1

		Prompts / probes
Verify participant		
1	Has a CSPAN been established in the district in which you work?	-
2	Can you tell me the District in which you work	-
3	How long have you been a member of the network?	-
Introductory questions		
4	Can you tell me about your role in the network?	Duties/responsibilities
5	Can you describe what it's like to be involved with the network?	Key aspects
6	How does that make you feel?	Why/how?
7	How does your involvement compare with that of other members?	Contrasts/exceptions
Experiences		
8	Can you tell me about your experiences in the network?	General/specific
9	Have these experiences affected you in any way?	Good/bad etc
10	What factors do you think might have influenced to these experiences?	External / internal
11	Why do you think that might be?	Interaction effects
12	Could anything have been done differently to change your experiences?	Reflection – learning, knowledge
Motivation		
13	Can you tell me why you participate in the network?	individual/org
14	Are there things that are important to you in the network?	What /how?
15	How do these make you feel?	Why? Impact
Attitudes		
16	What is your overall opinion of the network?	Generally
17	Why is that?	Explore reasons
18	Can you tell me what it's like participating in the network?	Individual/org
19	Can you describe things that you **don't** like about participating in the network?	Why is that?
20	Can you describe things that you **do** like about participating in the network?	Why is that?
21	Are there things that would improve the network?	Explore factors
Network activity/stability		
22	What is your opinion on the strength of the network?	Why/how
23	Can you describe the current level of network activity?	What, low/int/high
24	Can you tell me about the network's activities or programs?	Number highlighted
25	Have these had any effect in the community?	Look for impacts / effects
Background information		
26	How long have you been involved in the network	
27	On a scale of low, intermediate and high, how would you describe your overall level of involvement?	
28	Is there anything of interest that you would like to add that I haven't asked about?	
29	Age	
30	Who do you represent in the network (organisation/self)?	

Appendix F continued

Schedule 1.7

Involvement		
1	Can you tell me the District in which you work	
2	How long have you been a member of the network?	Seen improvements?
3	Can you tell me about your role in the network?	What does that involve, why, how take that role?
4	Can you describe what your relationship with the network?	Contributions / commitment / expectations
5	How does your involvement compare with that of other network members?	insider / outsider / joining – what influences process?
6	Has the network had any effects on your organisation / area of work?	How and why / not
Experiences		
8	Can you tell me about your experiences in the network?	Expectations? –how feel?
9	Could anything have been done differently to change your experiences?	How and why
Motivation		
10	Can you tell me why you participate in the network?	
11	Are there things that are important to you in the network	Explore non- £ - social
12	Was there a point at which you made a conscious decision regarding the level of involvement?	What led to that?
13	How did you make that decision?	Why, circumstances.
14	Are there things that would change your position or feelings?	Challenges and answers
Attitudes		
15	Can you tell me what it's like participating in the network?	Generally
16	Can you explain the network's objectives	Awareness, endorsement
17	Can you describe these in relation to those of your organisation?	Convergence? effects
18	Can you describe things that you **don't** like about participating in the network?	Concept of risk?, focus,
19	How does that make you feel?	direction, processes
20	Can you describe things that you **do** like about participating in the network?	
21	How does that make you feel?	
22	What is your overall opinion of the network?	People and personalities
23	Are there things that would improve the network?	for you / for the network – what would this mean?
Stability / 'fit'		
20	Where do you see the network within the broader local agenda?	significance? future?
21	Can you describe the current level of network activity?	Seasons / other commitment
22	Can you tell me about the network's activities or programs?	Communication
23	Can you tell me about the effect these have had in the community?	Outcomes effects
24	Can you describe how the network works in terms of attracting new members?	Synergy – power of members
Background information		
25	How would you describe your overall level of involvement?	
26	Is there anything of interest that you would like to add that I haven't asked about?	
27	Age	
28	Who do you represent in the network?	

Appendix G: Example free-text responses
(presented verbatim)

1. The LSA has recently changed leadership and is now making positive progress after a period of limited success. it is early days and there are still to be outcomes realised. Lack of funds seems a problem at present. I am not clear if the funding via sport unlimited was through the CSARA. The CSARA members compete on Children's Activities but in other areas work well. The community awareness of the CSARA is not known but I am not sure this is as important as the outcomes it produces i.e. the community don't need another logo but some results.

2. It is an emerging network and as such there is no elected leadership. Whether this is the reason or not Sport England and the CSP do not use the network as the 1st point of contact, they use existing contacts PDM & CLOG. This leave the network disempowered specifically regarding a new funding stream. Staff lower down the local authority really get it, but the CSN needs to be promoted throughout whole organisations better. The aims and objectives have not been narrowed down meaning they cannot easily be used to prioritise.

3. As a LA we seem to be an easy target at from other members. A decision regarding funding applications can be difficult. The Local Sports Partnership Manager seems to have the final say, why? let the local SPAA group make that decision. Not enough partnership, everyone seems to go off and do their own thing. No support from members for SPAA events, road show etc. Many network members are keen to focus on their own needs in terms of sports facilities which make it difficult to identify common projects/ agendas for the network over a large rural area.

Appendix H: Profile of responses by county of origin

Member County of origin	N	(%)	Rank (region)	Rank (CSP)	Region	Areas included
Leicester and Rutland	21	12.28	1	1	East Midlands	Derbyshire, Derby City, Leicestershire, Leicester City, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.
Lincolnshire	11	6.43		2		
Derbyshire	7	4.09		3		
Nottinghamshire	2	1.17		4		
Cumulative %	**41**	**23.98**				
Gloucestershire	26	15.20	2	1	South West	Bath & North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.
WESPORT	2	1.17		2		
Cornwall & Scilly Isles	1	0.58		3		
Wiltshire & Swindon	1	0.58		4		
Cumulative %	**30**	**17.54**				
Essex	10	5.85	3	1	East	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea, Suffolk, Thurrock.
Suffolk	8	4.68		2		
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	3	1.75		3		
Bedfordshire & Luton	2	1.17		4		
Hertfordshire	2	1.17		5		
Norfolk	1	0.58		6		
Cumulative %	**26**	**15.20**				

Appendix H continued

Member County of origin	N	(%)	Rank (region)	Rank (CSP)	Region	Areas included
Hampshire & Isle of Wight	11	6.43	4	1	South East	Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Brighton & Hove, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Portsmouth, Reading, Southampton, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, West Berkshire, Wokingham.
Kent	4	2.34		2		
Oxfordshire	3	1.75		3		
Surrey	2	1.17		4		
Sussex	2	1.17		5		
Berkshire	1	0.58		6		
Cumulative %	**23**	**13.45**				
Lancashire	10	5.85	5	1	North West	Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral.
Cheshire & Warrington	1	0.58		2		
Greater Manchester	1	0.58		3		
Merseyside	1	0.58		4		
Cumulative	**13**	**7.60**				
Northumberland	4	2.34	6	1	North	Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.
Durham	3	1.75		2		
Tyne and Wear	3	1.75		3		
Tees Valley	2	1.17		4		
Cumulative	**12**	**7.02**				

Appendix H continued

Member County of origin	N	(%)	Rank (region)	Rank (CSP)	Region	Areas included
Central London	5	2.92	7	1	London	Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.
East London	2	1.17		2		
West London	2	1.17		3		
South London	1	0.58		4		
Cumulative	**10**	**5.85**				
North Yorkshire	5	2.92	8	1	North East	Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York
South Yorkshire	1	0.58		2		
Cumulative %	**6**	**3.51**				
Black Country	2	1.17	9	1	West Midlands	Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford & Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcester
Staffordshire	2	1.17		2		
Cumulative %	**4**	**2.34**				

Appendix I: Profile of respondents by nature of representation and organisational type

Type of representation* (N = 171)	N	(%)
Represent an organisation	162	94.7
Represent self	2	1.2
Represent other	7	4.1
Representation by sector (N = 171)		
Local council or government agency	72	42.1
Hospitals / NHS / Health services	14	8.2
Community leisure facility	14	8.2
School sports development	13	7.6
Other	13	7.6
Sports club	11	6.4
Higher / further education	9	5.3
Schools (up to year 13)	7	4.1
Sporting organisation (e.g. governing body)	5	2.9
Volunteer organisation or group	4	2.3
Community / neighbourhood group	3	1.8
Youth services	2	1.2
I do not represent organisation	2	1.2
Sport England	1	0.6
Other statutory organisation (e.g. police)	1	0.6

Appendix J: Previous experience of partnerships / networks

Representation	Previous experience % (N)	No previous experience % (N)
I do not represent an organisation	0.8 (1.0)	2.4 (1.0)
Sport England	0.8 (1.0)	-
Community / neighbourhood group	1.6 (2.0)	2.4 (1.0)
Volunteer organisation or group	3.1 (4.0)	-
Sporting organisation e.g. a governing body	3.9 (5.0)	-
Sports club	6.2 (8.0)	7.1 (3.0)
Schools (up to Year 13)	3.9 (5.0)	4.8 (2.0)
Higher / further education institution	2.3 (3.0)	14.3 (6.0)
School sports development (any age)	7.8 (10.0)	7.1 (3.0)
Hospital / NHS / health services	8.5 (11.0)	7.1 (3.0)
Local council or local government agency	45.7 (59.0)	31.0 (13.0)
Youth services	1.6 (2.0)	-
Other statutory organisation	0.8 (1.0)	-
Community leisure facility	6.2 (8.0)	14.3 (6.0)
Other	7.0 (9.0)	9.5 (4.0)
Total	100.0 (129)	100.0 (42)

Appendix K: Examples of cross-tabulations

(Examples based on core CSN processes)

Satisfaction by management

Satisfaction * Management grp Crosstabulation

			Management grp		
			low	high	Total
Satisfaction	Low	Count	65	24	89
		Expected Count	44.0	45.0	89.0
		% within Satisfaction	73.0%	27.0%	100.0%
		% within Management grp	80.2%	28.9%	54.3%
		% of Total	39.6%	14.6%	54.3%
	High	Count	16	59	75
		Expected Count	37.0	38.0	75.0
		% within Satisfaction	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%
		% within Management grp	19.8%	71.1%	45.7%
		% of Total	9.8%	36.0%	45.7%
Total		Count	81	83	164
		Expected Count	81.0	83.0	164.0
		% within Satisfaction	49.4%	50.6%	100.0%
		% within Management grp	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	49.4%	50.6%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.523[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	41.479	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	45.817	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	43.258	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	164				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37.04.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.515	.067	7.708	.000
	N of Valid Cases	164			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Satisfaction by leadership

Satisfaction * Leadership grp Crosstabulation

			Leadership grp		
			low	high	Total
Satisfaction	Low	Count	66	23	89
		Expected Count	45.0	44.0	89.0
		% within Satisfaction	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
		% within Leadership grp	79.5%	28.4%	54.3%
		% of Total	40.2%	14.0%	54.3%
	High	Count	17	58	75
		Expected Count	38.0	37.0	75.0
		% within Satisfaction	22.7%	77.3%	100.0%
		% within Leadership grp	20.5%	71.6%	45.7%
		% of Total	10.4%	35.4%	45.7%
	Total	Count	83	81	164
		Expected Count	83.0	81.0	164.0
		% within Satisfaction	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%
		% within Leadership grp	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.171[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	41.135	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	45.335	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	42.907	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	164				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37.04.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.513	.067	7.644	.000
	N of Valid Cases	164			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Satisfaction by decision making

Satisfaction * Decision making grp Crosstabulation

| | | | Decision making grp | | |
			low	high	Total
Satisfaction	Low	Count	59	29	88
		Expected Count	45.3	42.7	88.0
		% within Satisfaction	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%
		% within Decision making grp	70.2%	36.7%	54.0%
		% of Total	36.2%	17.8%	54.0%
	High	Count	25	50	75
		Expected Count	38.7	36.3	75.0
		% within Satisfaction	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Decision making grp	29.8%	63.3%	46.0%
		% of Total	15.3%	30.7%	46.0%
Total		Count	84	79	163
		Expected Count	84.0	79.0	163.0
		% within Satisfaction	51.5%	48.5%	100.0%
		% within Decision making grp	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	51.5%	48.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.425[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	17.100	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	18.777	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.312	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	163				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.35.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.336	.074	4.549	.000
	N of Valid Cases	163			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Satisfaction by communication

Satisfaction * Communication grp Crosstabulation

			Communication grp		
			low	high	Total
Satisfaction	Low	Count	65	23	88
		Expected Count	45.3	42.7	88.0
		% within Satisfaction	73.9%	26.1%	100.0%
		% within Communication grp	77.4%	29.1%	54.0%
		% of Total	39.9%	14.1%	54.0%
	High	Count	19	56	75
		Expected Count	38.7	36.3	75.0
		% within Satisfaction	25.3%	74.7%	100.0%
		% within Communication grp	22.6%	70.9%	46.0%
		% of Total	11.7%	34.4%	46.0%
	Total	Count	84	79	163
		Expected Count	84.0	79.0	163.0
		% within Satisfaction	51.5%	48.5%	100.0%
		% within Communication grp	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	51.5%	48.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.181[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	36.263	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	39.809	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	37.947	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	163				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.35.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.484	.069	7.039	.000
	N of Valid Cases	163			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Appendix L: Collinearity statistics for regression models

Component	Model 1 Involvement		Model 2 Satisfaction		Model 3 Commitment		Model 4 Ownership	
	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF
Barriers	0.61	1.65	0.61	1.65	0.61	1.65	0.61	1.65
Benefits	0.36	2.77	0.36	2.77	0.36	2.77	0.36	2.77
Commitment	0.33	2.99	0.33	2.99	0.33	2.99	0.33	2.99
Communication	0.45	2.24	0.45	2.24	0.45	2.24	0.45	2.24
Contributions	0.51	1.97	0.51	1.97	0.51	1.97	0.51	1.97
Costs	0.57	1.75	0.57	1.75	0.57	1.75	0.57	1.75
Decision making	0.52	1.91	0.52	1.91	0.52	1.91	0.52	1.91
Effectiveness	0.45	2.20	0.45	2.20	0.45	2.20	0.45	2.20
Empowerment	0.56	1.79	0.56	1.79	0.56	1.79	0.56	1.79
Function	0.70	1.42	0.70	1.42	0.70	1.42	0.70	1.42
Leadership	0.58	1.72	0.58	1.72	0.58	1.72	0.58	1.72
Management	0.47	2.12	0.47	2.12	0.47	2.12	0.47	2.12
Outcomes	0.40	2.52	0.40	2.52	0.40	2.52	0.40	2.52
Participation	0.52	1.93	0.52	1.93	0.52	1.93	0.52	1.93
Satisfaction	0.22	4.55	0.22	4.55	0.22	4.55	0.22	4.55
Sense of ownership	0.24	4.13	0.24	4.13	0.24	4.13	0.24	4.13
Strategy	0.50	1.99	0.50	1.99	0.50	1.99	0.50	1.99
Sustainability	0.51	1.96	0.51	1.96	0.51	1.96	0.51	1.96
Synergy	0.29	3.49	0.29	3.49	0.29	3.49	0.29	3.49
Trust	0.55	1.82	0.55	1.82	0.55	1.82	0.55	1.82

Notes: All tolerance values in this research exceeded 0.1. All VIF values in the present research were less than 10. These values indicated that multicollinearity was not biasing the regression models (Field, 2009).