FROM TRACKSUITS TO TARGETS:

A GRAMSCIAN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY UPON COMMUNITY SPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE

By

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Abstract

The role and influence of politics upon sporting participation and provision in the UK has been well rehearsed (see, for example, Henry, 2001; Grix, 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Parnell et al., 2018). Utilising Gramsci's (1971) seminal work on hegemony as a conceptual lens, this thesis advances debates around the sport/politics interface. It does so by examining the impact of political ideology, specifically neoliberalism, upon community sport across macro (government/political ideology), meso (policy development) and micro (delivery) levels, In so doing, the interconnectedness between each is empirically explored. In particular, the thesis addresses the following question: How (and/or to what extent) does political ideology influence sport policy development and impact community sport practice?

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with community sport development workers and policymakers, therefore spanning all levels of community sport, from policymaking to delivery at the grassroots. The research also utilised an online collaboration tool called Padlet in order to access collaborative constructed participant responses regarding the management and delivery of community sport.

Empirical findings highlight a sector that is reluctant to speak out about an increasingly managerialist and marketised regime that does not always support the aims or intended outcomes of community sport development within diverse communities. Participants discussed the ideological conditions in which community sport operates and how this has resulted in several unintended consequences such as fragmentation of the market, job insecurity, deskilling of the workforce, non-existent quality assurance mechanisms and a competitive, rather than collaborative, culture.

A new evidence-based framework for community sport - the Community Sport Development Framework (CSDF) - is introduced. The CSDF highlights the intersectionality and interconnectedness between practitioners, policy, governance, organisations and the community. It brings strategic direction, delivery methods and target groups to the fore, whilst placing the community at the heart of the process.

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.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed: Kate Mori

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Glossary and Abbreviations

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development A strengths-based approach to community development which highlights assets, resources, skills and connections that already exist within a community.
The Big Society	A term to describe a political ideology that integrates free market economics with communitarianism and volunteerism.
CCPR	Central Council for Physical Recreation
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
Communitarianism	An ideology that emphasises the responsibility of the individual to the community and the social importance of the family unit.
CSD	Community Sport Development
CSDW	Community Sport Development Workers
CSPs	County Sports Partnerships
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Deficit Model	A deficit model of CSD that emphasises a community's 'needs' and problems.
Hegemony	The dominance of one group over another, supported by legitimating norms and ideas.
Ideology	A system of ideals and beliefs that form the basis of economic and political theory and policy.
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation The index of multiple deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. It considers seven domains; income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills training, crime, barriers to housing and services, living environment.
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body A non-departmental public body has a role in the processes of national government but is not a government department or part of one, and therefore operates at 'arm's length' from ministers.

NGBs	National Governing Bodies of Sport
Neoliberalism	A modified form of liberalism tending to favour free-market capitalism.
New Managerialism	The adoption by public sector organisations of organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector.
Organic Intellectuals	A term used by Gramsci to refer to non-traditional intellectuals and academics that have the capacity to challenge dominant structures.
Padlet	An online discussion and collaboration tool.
PATs	Policy Action Teams
Praxis	The process by which a theory or idea is applied and practiced.
Sport England	Sport England is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) under the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Established by Royal Charter in 1996, they aim to give everyone in England the chance to benefit from sport and physical activity.
Sport for All	A term originally used by the Great Britain Sports Council in 1972, to refer to specific and often underrepresented 'target groups' within the community.
SSPs	School Sports Partnerships
War of Maneuver	A term used by Gramsci to describe open, physical conflict and war.
War of Position	A term used by Gramsci to describe resistance to domination with culture, rather than physical conflict and war as its foundation.

Chapter One: Introduction

A socio-political examination of community sport

This thesis examines the impact of political ideology upon community sport development policy and practice. A Gramscian lens is utilised to critique how the hegemonic pervasiveness of neoliberalism subtly drives community sport development (CSD) practice and may result in community sport development workers (CSDW) promoting strategies and delivering initiatives that are not in their, or their communities, best interests. In this respect, an increasing emphasis on a top-down, target driven approach is largely at odds with the values of community development i.e., community empowerment, social justice, collective action and working and learning together (National Occupational Standards for Community Development, 2015) and unpacking this paradox is a central focus of this thesis.

Although the role and influence of politics per se upon sport has been well researched (Henry, 2001; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; King, 2014; Widdop et al., 2018; Parnell et al., 2019) there are few authors that have specifically examined neoliberalism's influence across the macro, meso and micro levels of CSD. Grix et al. (2018), in reviewing the methods of articles submitted to the International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics (IJSPP) over the last 10 years, highlight that qualitative methods have dominated, and they issue a call for more mixed methods research (MMR) across the study of sports policy and politics. In this respect, this thesis forms part of the qualitative majority, but in interweaving Gramsci's reflections on hegemony alongside a critique of neoliberalism, it goes some way to answering Grix et al.'s (2018) subsequent call to use sport as a case to contribute to key debates, theoretical developments and refining methods in mainstream disciplines. This thesis is unique in that it empirically critiques the impact of neoliberal ideology from sports policy development to community sport practice and examines the interrelationships and interconnectedness across these realms.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to outline in full the community sport development landscape and due to its increased fragmentation impossible to do so. However, the following section aims to provide a brief overview of key players

within the CSD sector as a means to contextualise the narrative that follows.

Sport England

Sport England was established by Royal Charter in 1996 and classified as an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) operating at arm's length from ministers. It sits under the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), from which it receives grant-in-aid.

Sport England has two statutory functions; to distribute funds raised by the national lottery under the provisions of the National Lottery Act 1993, and the protection of playing fields, through its role as a statutory consultee on planning applications that affect playing fields. Its role is to build the foundations of a community sport system by working with national governing bodies of sport, and other funded partners, to grow the number of people doing sport and sustain participation levels. Sport England states that it wants everyone in England regardless of their age, background or level of ability to feel able to take part in sport and physical activity (Sport England, 2020). They aim to do this by providing expertise, insight and funding that will help improve the nation's long term physical and mental health (Sport England, 2020).

County Sports Partnerships

County Sports Partnerships operate as quasi-governmental strategic bodies that were established with long-term funding from Sport England to coordinate the delivery of community sport from National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to public and private sector partners (Sport England, 2004). Introduced as part of New Labour's modernisation of sport agenda, CSPs were tasked with securing greater efficiency and effectiveness of community sport via local consultation and partnerships (Baker et al., 2016).

County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) have managed to retain their place in the sporting landscape, with their role specified as workforce development, strategic leadership, insight and influence, and raising awareness of the benefits of sport and physical activity to increase participation among the most inactive (Community Sport Partnership Network, 2017). However, the number of CSPs has gradually reduced over the years from 49 in 2015 to 44 in 2017 to 43 in 2018.

Local Authority Sport Development

Local authority sport development, once the bastion of community sport, has witnessed severe funding cuts over the years. For example, between 2010 and 2014 local authority sport experienced a higher reduction than median for all service areas, with a 40% funding reduction nationally (National Audit Office, 2014 p32). This reduction of funding for local authority services is set to continue and in 2019/20, the Councils' Revenue Support Grant will be cut by £1.3 billion, meaning that between 2010 and 2020, local councils will have experienced a funding reduction of 60p out of every £1 provided by government (Local Government Association, 2018). Empirical evidence from this research shows that most CSDW believed that local authority sport development, within its current format, would cease to exist by 2025. Instead, they believed that in its place would be a plethora of social enterprises, all potentially competing for the same 'market'.

Street Games

Established in 2007, StreetGames embraces a model whereby delivery of their initiatives is in partnership with the StreetGames Alliance of around 1,000 Locally Trusted Organisations (LTOs). Working in disadvantaged communities across the UK, these LTOs are often social enterprises and charities and as such StreetGames is not a delivery agent, but rather utilises community organisations to deliver under the StreetGames brand (StreetGames, 2019). StreetGames promotes a more relaxed and informal style of participation in sport and one that aims to appeal to a more diverse population.

National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs)

National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) are tasked with planning and promoting sport-specific related activities, overseeing rules and regulations and developing talent and participation pathways (Baker et al., 2016; Sport England, 2019b). The sports strategy of 2012 (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012) specifically tasked NGBs with increasing participation within their respective sports and the implications of this are discussed throughout this thesis. Suffice to say, NGBs generally felt ill prepared and positioned to deliver fully on this remit (Harris & Houlihan, 2016).

The organisations outlined above are the key players within community sport that participants referred to during discussions. However, as highlighted, it is

not an exhaustive list due to an evolving and increasingly fragmented CSD landscape, the implications of which, participants were keen to discuss.

The problem with community sport development

Government funding for community sport has often been legitimised as a means of encouraging a fitter and healthier population (Siedentop, 2002; Warburton et al., 2006), a way in which to promote community cohesion and social inclusion (Smith & Waddington, 2004; Tonts, 2005; Morgan & Parker, 2017; Parker et al., 2019), and as a contributor to crime reduction (Hartmann & Massoglia, 2007; Nichols, 2007; Parker et al., 2013), amongst other social objectives. This instrumental use of community sport has spanned political parties and has been strengthened further in recent sport policy which emphasises the role of sport in achieving physical and mental wellbeing as well as social and community development (HM Government, 2015). Yet, amidst such legitimisation of community sport, there remains a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries of community sport development (CSD), methods of delivery and who is best positioned to deliver CSD initiatives. It is within this landscape that the organisations outlined above are working to achieve key sport policy targets (HM Government, 2015), but as discussed throughout this thesis, the fragmentation, overlap and duplication of CSD initiatives can be problematic.

It is generally accepted that community sport is focused primarily on increasing participation in sport (Harris & Houlihan, 2016), however, this thesis highlights a tension between sport development focused on identifying and developing sporting talent and sport development used as a 'hook' to achieve social ends. Although the aims and method of utilising sport to develop sporting talent or achieve social objectives can be vastly different, both are perceived as falling within the community sport realm (Coalter, 2007; Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Robson et al., 2013).

The differentiation between the development *of* sport to enhance performance in sport, and development *through* sport, i.e., activity that is designed to use sport as a means to achieve other social, economic and political objectives, has been an increasingly prominent point of contention for academics and policymakers alike (Levermore & Beacom, 2009). Contributing to this discussion was the Coalition Government's sport policy (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012), that

focused on NGBs as a delivery mechanism for increasing sports participation in those aged 14 and above. As Harris and Houlihan (2016) have argued, this was problematic for community sport as NGBs had traditionally focused on talent identification and promotion and a more holistic participation remit did not sit well with the vast majority.

Although NGBs have traditionally been involved in encouraging sporting participation, the aim of this has ultimately been to enhance the club structure and to promote performance. The NGB remit via the coalition's sport policy (Department for Culture. Media and Sport, 2012) embodied a community sport agenda, which led to examples of CSD occurring in socio- economically deprived areas with 'hard-to-reach' groups yet delivered by NGBs focused on the promotion of the aforementioned club structure. This lack of alignment between policy and delivery was to render the achievement of objectives surrounding increased participation highly problematic.

If increasing participation is the key aim of CSD as alluded to by Harris and Houlihan (2016), then this does not seem to have materialised either, given that decreasing levels of sport participation among hard-to-reach groups in England have been identified as a continuing trend (Ramchandani, 2018; Widdop et al, 2018). Not only have social policy interventions been characterised as what Pawson (2004) has termed, 'ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes', the roles and responsibilities of CSDW have also proven notoriously difficult to define (Bloyce & Smith, 2009; Mackintosh, 2012).

Due to an increased focus on achieving social objectives via sport, CSD has been situated within diverse professional contexts, such as the criminal justice system, mental health services, NHS trusts and youth work. The remit and scope of the community sport profession has therefore diversified away from sport development as a means of promoting excellence in high performance environments and has led to CSDW requiring a wider skill set. In this sense, it could be argued that the widening role of sport (to achieve social objectives) has not been facilitated by increased professional development opportunities for CSDW, who may now find themselves in environments that are somewhat different to their anticipated career destinations. Indeed, such eventualities can leave CSDW ill prepared for the roles in which they find themselves (Pitchford & Collins, 2010; Mackintosh, 2012) and because of this, the community sport sector

has seen the emergence of membership organisations and charities that aim to offer a 'voice' and support for the community sport sector. Among these organisations is *Sported*, which aims to promote sport for development, which they define as, 'the intentional use of sport and physical activity as a tool to bring about positive change in the lives of people and communities' (Sported, 2018). Sported has a membership of over 3,000 community sport and youth centres across the UK, highlighting the breadth of the community sport sector and the contexts in which it operates. Beyond this there is also the Sport for Development Coalition, the Alliance of Sport for the Desistance of Crime, and the Sport and Recreation Alliance, all of which have an interest and membership base situated within CSD. The United Kingdom Sports Development Network (UKSDN) adopts a 'looser' approach to membership via word-of-mouth recommendation as opposed to public promotion or an online presence, and the UKSDN also has an interest in sport for social good, with both its 2018 and 2019 conferences adopting a focus on community sport development.

Foregrounding the research

The purpose of this section is to highlight my own autobiographical evolution and in doing so make explicit the motivations and influences behind this research. I now work in higher education as a Quality and Standards Specialist, with a sector-wide advisory role. I progressed in to this role from a Dean of Teaching and Learning position and before that lecturing, course leadership, and subject group leadership roles. Before entering higher education in 2005, I worked within CSD for over 14 years. During this time, I was involved with sport policy development, via my role as Research Manager for Sport England, through to the grassroots delivery of sport and physical activity for the Probation Service, NHS Trusts and cardiac rehabilitation services. This experience led me to believe that those devising sport policy had limited knowledge of the reality of grassroots sports development and that those working in sport development contexts had limited understanding of the community dynamics of the areas in which they worked and, beyond this, the myriad of issues facing the target groups they were tasked to engage. During my academic career I became increasingly interested in broader community development literature and how this might be applied within a sporting context to enhance community participation and engagement. Perhaps not surprisingly, these interests influenced the initial design of the present study. My

initial plan was to interview CSDW and community development workers (CDW) to establish the day-to-day practice and influences upon these professions. Practice within both of these realms would then be compared and 'lessons learned' would be established for both parties. However, the iterative nature of the study meant that as I progressed to the fieldwork stage the research evolved from a comparative of CSDW and CDW contexts and influences on practice, to a primary focus on CSDW.

The first phase of research with CSDW established that their understanding of sport policy and its impact on their practice was, in the majority of cases, somewhat superficial. Beyond that, CSDW tended to conceptualise 'community' purely from a geographical perspective, influenced by sport policy which favoured funding applications from the most deprived neighbourhoods as classified by the indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). In this respect policy was influential in how CSDW conceptualised 'community' as it had driven them to focus on a geographical definition and possibly discount other definitions. This progressed the research to a more central focus on policy and political ideology and although this was an original feature of the research it gained more prominence as the research progressed. It also seemed increasingly important to speak with sport policymakers and therefore the research shifted from a comparative of CSDW and CDW practice to research situated purely within a sporting realm but which spanned policy to practice. Therefore, the thesis has addressed the following overarching research questions;

- How does political ideology, specifically neoliberalism, impact on sport policy development?
- How does political ideology, specifically neoliberalism, impact on community sport practice?

Central to these two questions is a critique of neoliberalism, sport policy and CSD practice. In turn, a Gramscian theoretical lens is applied in order to provide a more critical and coherent understanding of the CSD landscape.

It is acknowledged that a wealth of literature exists surrounding sport policy evaluation and analysis, sporting governance, networked governance, delivery mechanisms and CSD (King, 2009; Grix, 2010; Grix & Phillpots, 2010; Phillpots,

Grix & Quarmby 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey 2013) and for this reason the thesis does not venture in to these spheres. Instead, the focus is on the macro influences of political ideology on policy development and the subsequent impact on practice. Fischer (2003) discusses a reframing of the understanding of public policy and analysis to that of a post empiricist method. That is, an epistemological orientation that seeks to move beyond an objectivist conception of reality by embracing the subjective foundations of social reality. In so doing, Fischer (2003) brings a social constructionist approach to the world of policy study and analysis and acknowledges that social and political life is developed through discursive practices. A sentiment that underpins a key philosophical assumption of this thesis.

The research context

The empirical component of the research consisted of three phases. Phase One comprised interviews with CSDW located within two counties in the South West of England. The original research design featured CSDW and CDW in one county, to ensure that any external political drivers that professionals within these environments encountered were similar. However, as the research evolved it became less crucial to control the environment as it became more focused on the process of CSDW in relation to the macro level driver of political ideology and meso level driver of sport policy.

Whilst the research findings remained confidential, it became clear over time that some participants were likely to have worked with each other and the tensions between various factions of local authorities, NGBs and social enterprises became increasingly apparent.

Phase Two of the research featured sport policymakers who were predominantly based in London, some as senior civil servants in government, others at the head offices of their respective organisations. It became clear as the fieldwork progressed that these respondents comprised a small, tight-knit group and several participants referred to each other (unwittingly). In Phase Three an online virtual ‘bulletin’ board called Padlet was utilised. Padlet provides an online space for collaboration, reflection and the sharing of ideas, links and pictures within a secure environment. The aim of using an online platform was to open

the research out nationally and enable online discussion among CSDW. Subsequently, participants within this phase spanned the SW, Midlands and London.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter two establishes the theoretical lens through which the research is observed. This has been termed a socio-political lens in that it utilises a cultural Marxist perspective, specifically the work of Gramsci, to critique political ideology and its subsequent impact on sport policy and practice. This moves on in chapter three to a specific critique of neoliberalism, which is argued is a covert driver of sport policy and practice. Neoliberalism's impact on community sport policy and practice is further examined and a chronological development of sport policy offered and critiqued.

Chapter four offers definitions of community and discusses how the term 'community' may be seen as somewhat loaded, emphasising community as a positive and aspirational goal for society, and promoting a 'feel good' factor (Bauman, 2001, 2007). The reality of this 'feel good' factor has been critiqued as paradoxical in that communities can be as equally exclusionary as inclusionary (Koch, 2018). This paradox is discussed in relation to sport policy, in which 'community' is very much framed from a positive perspective and often observed as a 'fix' for societal problems (Coalter, 2007; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Collins 2014).

Chapter five provides methodological background. This chapter introduces the philosophical assumptions that guided the study and highlights the research strategy and methods. The relationship between a social constructivist ontology through an interpretivist epistemology is subsequently contextualised within the research design and chosen methods. An innovative method was adopted for Phase Three of the research that of online qualitative research utilising Padlet and this is discussed. The research participants across all three phases of the study are introduced and sampling, data analysis, ethical considerations and delimitations outlined.

Chapter six outlines discussions with CSDW that occurred during Phase One of the research. Findings highlight that there were contradictions for CSDW in relation to how government uses sport as a means of developing communities, whilst at the same time creating the conditions that fracture and dislocate such communities in the first place. Further discussion is offered around how political ideology and sport policy drive CSD practice.

Chapter seven offers a voice to policymakers and highlights that instead of championing those from a sporting background, the focus of recent policy ideas had switched towards encouraging people from the business community into sports leadership roles. As the emphasis shifts towards business principles and the primacy of the market, those with business skills can be viewed as being of most use to the sporting sector. Furthermore, Government may encourage sporting organisations to seek diversified funding streams, yet in doing so they retain some control of the sector and how it is structured. Policymakers that disagreed with a neoliberal ideology often felt silenced and highlighted a personal cost to speaking out, which may contribute to perceptions that the voice of dissent and the voice that questions was seen by participants to be lacking within key sporting organisations.

In chapter eight we return to sport at the grassroots level and the working lives of CSDW, this time through the medium of Padlet. Here we examine the role of leisure facilities within community sport development. The fragmentation of community sport and the unintended consequences of the marketisation of community sport are also discussed. This leads to a proposed conceptual framework for CSD that locates the community at the heart of CSD and utilises policy paradigms to incorporate a cross macro, meso and micro analysis of CSD, or ‘nested’ paradigm (Kuhn, 1974; Hall, 1993; Nicholls & Teasdale, 2017). This Community Sport Development Framework (CSDF) is presented in chapter nine, alongside a critique of existing sport development models and community development models. Finally, chapter ten attempts to synthesise empirical data and literature and offers recommendations for practice and further research.

Summary

The instrumental use of sport to meet social objectives has brought complexity to

CSD and expanded its role and remit away from the sports sector in to other professional environments such as the criminal justice system, mental health services and youth work (Smith et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2017; Baumer & Meek, 2019). This has brought definitional dilemmas to a world that had traditionally been focused on increasing participation in sport and the development of sporting excellence. Although the differentiation between the development *of* sport to enhance performance in sport, and development *through* sport has become an increasingly dominant discussion within academic texts (Levermore & Beacom, 2009) the empirical work within this thesis highlights that there is a lack of clarity regarding which organisations are best served to deliver a sport for social good remit. Beyond this, the research suggests that CSD driven by centrally devised and quantitatively monitored targets, can often overlook the needs of the community and have a detrimental effect on encouraging participation in sport.

A critical sociological lens has been adopted drawing specifically on Gramsci's work on the state and civil society (Gramsci, 1971) to critique neoliberalism and sport policy and practice. Gramsci's work serves to illuminate and critique the hegemonic acceptance of a neoliberal influence within CSD. In utilising a Gramscian lens and applying this in an objective way to CSD, this thesis progresses knowledge within this area and furthermore answers the call to more specifically apply theory to practice (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Grix et al., 2018). Beyond this, the thesis highlights how a disconnect between sport policy objectives, associated key performance indicators (KPIs) and CSD delivery mechanisms may be a contributory factor to flat lining and reduced participation among hard to reach groups.

Chapter Two: Positioning the thesis via a socio-political lens

Introduction

In broad terms the community sports development field can be located against a range of existing theoretical work i.e., Gramsci (1971), Alinsky (1989), Freire (1996), Putnam (2000) and Bourdieu (2010) (among others). The critical tradition in sociological thought argues for the politicisation, radicalisation and empowerment of disenfranchised or marginalised communities (Gramsci, 1971; Alinsky 1989; Freire, 1996) finding a more subtle cultural approach in the work of Bourdieu (2010). The liberal tradition cites the need to foster civic and cultural engagement in order to combat the sense of alienation, fragmentation and individuation that characterises social interaction in late capitalism (see, for example, Putnam, 2000). These traditions are contrasted with the neo-conservative assertion of the need to revive traditional values and cultures that have been suffocated by the expansion of central state activity, surveillance and regulation in the post war period (Etzioni 1995, Blond, 2010). Therefore, we have a range of sociological theories and traditions that can help us better understand community sport and locate it within a political realm.

This thesis is specifically influenced by the critical tradition of sociological thought, particularly, a critical Marxist perspective which drives an analysis of the perceived coercive and persuasive power of the state, versus the perceived autonomy of individual agency. Althusser (2014) and Poulantzas and Martin (2008) suggest that the culture in which an individual is located shapes their thoughts and behaviours and inculcates the key beliefs of the dominant ideology thereby over-riding notions of individual agency. Cultural Marxist perspectives highlight the complex interrelationship between power and politics, and how this impacts on individuals and society (Gramsci, 1971; Williams & Higgins, 2001; Hall et al., 2017). It is this structure and agency interrelationship that is a key debate within much sociological thought. Within community sport this is concerned with an examination of how the state, via political ideology and sport policy, drives practice, in contrast to the autonomy and power of CSDW to determine practice within these realms.

The aim of this chapter is to critique socio-political literature and subsequently

apply this theoretical lens to CSD. We start with structural and cultural Marxist perspectives and apply these to CSD as a means to illuminate practice within this environment.

A critique of power, be that personal or institutional, lies at the heart of critical sociology and throughout this thesis we look specifically to the work of Gramsci (1971), as a theoretical lens via which to interpret community sport politics, policy and practice. Prior to this, a critique of structural and cultural Marxist perspectives is offered in order to lay the foundations for a Gramscian critical analysis of community sport. Before moving to this critique, we address the complex interrelationship of structure and agency as this is fundamental to this thesis.

Bridging the structure/agency divide within sociology

The relationship between individuals and society, or between human action and social structure, is a key theme for social theorists (Elliott, 2014). Macro analyses emphasise how structural forces such as central government and social institutions shape attitudes and behaviours, whereas at the micro level, theorists are more interested in individual agency and behaviours and how these may influence broader societal mores (Ritzer, 2005). It could be argued that such polarisation has created an artificial delineator in sociology and one that has drawn criticism with regards to how structure and agency can, if at all, be synthesised (Turner, 1998; Ritzer, 2005).

Within sport studies, a macro (structural) analyses of politics and policy on sport development has been a popular avenue of investigation for some (Houlihan & Green, 2009; Grix, 2010; Harris & Houlihan, 2014) whilst others have opted for a micro analyses of individual behaviour and agency (Featherstone, 2000; Wheaton, 2004; Morgan, 2018). Although these authors approach their work from different perspectives, there is a degree of crossover. In Turner's (1998) view, micro and macro processes establish parameters for each other, that is, they set limits on what can occur. This study is concerned with how sport policy affects practice thereby embodying a macro (structuralist) analysis via an investigation of how government ideology influences policy, and subsequently how such policy impacts on governance and those working within community sport. However, it

is also concerned with the micro level and how political ideology impacts directly on those devising sport policy as well as examining how community sport development workers (CSDW) interpret such policy and in doing so exert their individual agency. Therefore, this thesis is intentionally located against a range of theoretical and conceptual ideas in order to navigate the multifarious structural issues in play. Indeed, to remain doggedly entrenched in one particular macro or micro sociological theoretical tradition would seem counterproductive and could be argued that this places the emphasis on the theory rather than the subject being studied (Raub & Voss, 2017; Stebbins, 2017; Berger et al., 2018). As Barrett et al. (2018) argue, theorising has often become an end in itself, dissociated from its original purpose and detached from empirical inquiry and evidence (theoreticism). A degree of reflexivity has been adopted throughout the writing of the thesis to ensure that theory is utilised as a lens through which to interpret and locate community sport policy and practice, whilst being mindful not to saturate the subject matter from a theoretical perspective.

Structural Marxism: Theories of Reproduction

The influence of Marx on socio-political literature cannot be underestimated. Concerned with the dynamics of a changing society, his work originally served to critique how inequalities in wealth and power were generated and reproduced through structural mechanisms, which he referred to as base and superstructure (Marx, 1867). The idea of base and superstructure has been influential in sociological thought, however, there has been some debate regarding what Marx was referring to by this term. In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* of 1859, Marx stated that, "the economic structure of society forms the 'real basis' on which rises a legal and political superstructure". It is generally accepted that when Marx referred to the base, this was the economic structure, with legal, political, and cultural entities representing the superstructure (Rigby, 1998). The post-1956 new left went on to argue that even the terms 'base and superstructure' were simply a metaphor, not to be taken too seriously (Hall, 2010). However, there is consensus among Marxist scholars that the state functions to support the long-term interests of the capitalist class and is predominantly a mechanism for regulating class conflict, smoothing any potential tensions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and in so doing ensuring quelling resistance to the capitalist system (Marx, 1867; Turner, 1998). This thesis

examines the impact of such political superstructures (such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Sport England and sport policy) upon CSDW and the practice of community sport. It also seeks to explore whether widespread changes in community sport funding and governance have been resisted by those working within such environments. In turn, it examines how neoliberal ideology can be viewed as the base on which such superstructures have arisen.

Neoliberalism as an economic and political ideology is located at the intersection of sociological theorising with some theorists referring to ideology specifically as a means by which social structures are reproduced by way of oppressive means (Eagleton, 2007; Althusser, 2014). Althusser (2014) refers to what he calls the ideological state apparatus (ISA) proposing that one of the consequences of oppressive (and repressive) social forces is that personal values are often influenced by ideological practice. Althusser's concept of the ISA highlights how the dominant classes may exert influence through unseen ideological power (Althusser, 2014; Cuff et al., 2016). Others highlight how ideology influences people not only via policy, law and state institutions but also via personal relations within key institutions such as education, religion and families (see Gramsci, 1971; Alinsky, 1989; Freire, 1996). Hence, instead of direct repression, people willingly acquiesce in relation to the general consensus for fear of bucking the trend of conformity. To this end, they are complicit in creating a structure and culture which may not work in their favour, but instead serves to benefit the ruling class. This is an important focus of structural Marxism, that inequality is reproduced by such ideological forces (Turner, 1998). Reflecting on this, we will observe throughout the thesis how CSDW often feel complicit in promoting policy agendas and ideas that may not always work in their (or their community's) best interests, yet which are driven by key institutions and organisations involved in sport development.

One of the key criticisms of structuralist approaches is that they fail to recognise individual agency and identity, instead perceiving individuals as predominantly shaped, and controlled, by social factors and forces. As Giroux (1983 p.259) argues, "By downplaying the importance of human agency and the notion of resistance, structural theories offer little hope for challenging the repressive features of political ideology". Indeed, structuralist approaches have

long been regarded as somewhat deterministic in this respect (Rigby, 1998). This criticism is also levelled at Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, which was influential in shaping Althusser's thoughts regarding the ISA (Giroux, 1983). Both Gramsci and Althusser focus on how the ruling elite ensure that systems that are of direct benefit to them are continuously reproduced (Gramsci, 1971; Althusser, 2014; Schwarzmantel, 2015).

Gramsci refocused the traditional Marxist emphasis on the domination of subordinated classes, by introducing the idea of ideological persuasion (Gramsci, 1971). In so doing he brought into question the notion of consent, suggesting that individuals' perspectives and values are heavily influenced via social institutions. For him, dominant attitudes are internalised and accepted as common sense, and thereby legitimised in the minds of people (Gramsci, 1971; Ledwith, 2011). In this way, through ideological persuasion, the ruling classes, legitimise their own power and achieve consensus from the population for their continued political administration. This concept of hegemony is utilised throughout this thesis to examine how political ideology has influenced community sport and it is to hegemony's underpinning roots that we now turn.

Critiquing Cultural Marxism

Cultural Marxism as a term is something of a 'catch all' which has been variously referred to as critical theory, postmodernism, deconstructionism, and/or a social liberal perspective (Cuff et al., 2016). This is unhelpful when trying to establish its underpinning tenets. In sum, it is a broad concept which has at its core an interest in how culture creates and sustains inequalities (Avineri, 1968). It is generally accepted that cultural Marxism has its roots within the neo-Marxist philosophy of the Frankfurt School where an interdisciplinary approach was championed utilising sociology, economics, politics and psychoanalysis to examine how political power might imprint itself upon the internal world of the individual (Elliott, 2014). Cultural Marxists maintain that all human behaviour is a result of culture and highlight that subconscious influences on people are created by the culture in which they exist (Weiner & Katznelson, 1981).

Formed in the interwar period (1918 – 1939), The Frankfurt School was an important influence behind the various left-wing movements which started in the late 1960s. Adorno and Horkheimer were influential members of the Frankfurt

School and while in exile in the United States tried to understand the right-wing socio-political ideology that was fast gaining ground in Europe. According to Adorno and Horkheimer (2016), contemporary society overpowers the individual through a standardised, monotonous mass culture, leaving little room for authentic individualism. It was society's intolerance of 'difference' that Adorno and Horkheimer were keen to examine and critique. Given the era in which The Frankfurt School came to prominence, and the fact that several of its members were Jewish, it is perhaps not surprising that this was a key focus for them.

Cultural Marxism and Sport

It was in the 1970s under Stuart Hall's leadership that the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University, became influential in expanding the reach of cultural Marxism into new areas such as media, sport, and leisure studies. The CCCS brought to the fore the study of subcultures, popular culture and utilised elements of cultural Marxism in order to underpin its work. For example, work on subcultures, demonstrated how culture came to constitute distinct forms of identity and group membership highlighting the oppositional nature of youth (Hebdige 1979; Hall & Jefferson, 1989). In so doing, CCCS staff sought to promote an interdisciplinary approach and a move away from the entrenchment of analysis wedded to a specific discipline (Kellner, n.d), not dissimilar to that of the Frankfurt School.

With specific reference to sport, cultural Marxist perspectives have since been utilised to analyse notions of identity (Wheaton, 2014), male hegemony (Hargreaves, 1994), social exclusion (Collins, 2003) and, more recently, LGBT communities (Drury et al., 2017). Collectively those involved have examined how contemporary culture influences individual choice and life course focusing on how culture may prove exclusionary for individuals within society. Bairner et. Al (2017) broaden the use of cultural Marxism by critiquing its role in making sport both a product and aspiration of ideological thinking examining patriarchy, power and nationalism through a cultural Marxist lens.

Utilising a Gramscian lens for the study of community sport

A central interest for Gramsci was the way in which dominant groups were able to secure and maintain dominance by means of the consent of subordinate groups (Gramsci, 1971; Fermia, 1981; Strinati, 2004). Significantly, his

reinterpretation of Marx emphasised that the economic climate was not the guiding force behind political change, but simply set the conditions through which such change became possible (Gramsci, 1971). Essentially, Gramsci used the term 'hegemony' to define the process by which an ideology becomes so dominant that it is internalised as 'common sense' by the masses (Gramsci, 1971, Fermia, 1981). Gramsci's concept of hegemony proposes that people are complicit in their own oppression, and readily succumb to and participate in (often unknowingly) a pervasive form of ideological persuasion. On this terrain, personal convictions are shaped to represent prevailing norms through which individuals willingly perceive reality in line with the desires of the ruling classes, with an inability to recognise their own servitude (Gramsci, 1971, Fonseca, 2016).

A key point of interest for Gramsci (1971) was how (and the extent to which) 'consent' was acquired, i.e., that it was not automatically assigned but instead required constant negotiation and re-negotiation via institutional influence such as the law, media, and education (Jones, 2006). Of course, such hegemonic practices do not stand still but move and adapt to accommodate progressive historical circumstances and the demands and actions of a questioning population (Giroux 1983). To date, the concept of a continually evolving socially constructed hegemony has not been considered in relation to community sport and this thesis occupies a unique position in that respect. That said, hegemony as a concept has received attention within the wider sport literature, especially alongside feminist Marxist critiques of sport (Hargreaves, 1994; Carmichael Aitchison, 2003; Burton, 2015) which examine how patriarchy is perpetuated through sporting structures.

Studies concerning hegemonic masculinities are also prevalent among sporting literature, examining the domination within sport of stereotypically masculine traits such as aggression, over-competitiveness and drinking cultures which can serve to both alienate and marginalise those that do not identify with such characteristics (Hart, 2016;Giazitzoglu,2019). More broadly, the focus on sport as an arena for the enactment of power relations and cultural domination became a pronounced focus of sport studies (strongly influenced by the CCCS) throughout the 1970s and 1980s (see Brohm; 1978; Rigauer, 1981; Clarke & Critcher, 1985). Critical Marxist studies of sport, concerning cultural domination and conflict, continued into the 1990s through to the mid-2000s and consolidated themes with a

central question examining the reproductive or transformative capacity of sport (Hargreaves, 1986; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994; Carrington & McDonald, 2008). These latter works took the central tenet that sport was a microcosm of modern-day capitalist society and an integral facet of cultural domination and exploitation. In his classic polemic of sporting culture, Brohm (1978) specifically utilised Althusser's notion of ideological and repressive state apparatus to examine how sport was utilised as part of the dominance and reproduction of existing societal structures and as a tool to promote nationalistic endeavour, for example, via the political exploitation of elite athletes by the nation state.

Since the mid-2000s, the focus on Gramsci (and, to some extent, critical Marxism per se) has waned somewhat as critique has shifted towards what Nauright and Wiggins (2014, p.693) have termed "a postmodernism mishmash". However, the conceptual application of hegemony, and also neoliberalism, has gained prominence within sport for development and international community literature (Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012; Darnell et al., 2019), but is not without its critics (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). Lindsey and Grattan (2012), discuss how studies that suggest utilising hegemony as specific theoretical frameworks can drive singular and abstracted accounts of developments. At the heart of such critique is a concern that much sport-for-development research has been conducted by researchers from the Global North with data collection undertaken either within the Global North (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010) or examining interventions within the Global South that were conceptualised in the Global North (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). Therefore, critics highlight that the hegemonic theoretical lens has not always been empirically grounded and applied to practice and as authors have suggested, can become overly abstract and theoretical (Long, 2001; Coalter, 2010). This study addresses such concerns by reflecting on empirical evidence and utilising the full extent of Gramsci's position on hegemony, not just the more popular Gramscian reflections surrounding oppression through ideological persuasion. Gramsci had far more to offer academic critique than a singular focus on oppression through ideological persuasion. The theoretical lens utilised for this study draws on the breadth of Gramsci's work including, for example, the role of organic intellectuals, the nature of civil society and political society and the 'war of position' as related to civil hegemony and a 'slow burn revolution' (Gramsci, 1971; Schwarzmantel, 2015). In so doing, the aim is to reinvigorate the application of

Gramsci's foundational ideas as a useful and appropriate method by which to examine community sport policy and practice within the context of modern-day neoliberal ideology.

Summary

At the heart of structural and cultural Marxism lies a critique of how society is structured and controlled and how power is gained and retained. Within a critical Marxist construct reproduction of conditions that promote benefits for the ruling elite can be achieved ideologically through persuasion rather than coercion. The ruling classes' views and perspectives of how society should be structured therefore become so dominant in society that they are internalised as common sense, and alternative views potentially discounted. This is evidenced within this thesis by those working in a grassroots setting accepting the neoliberal discourse of key performance indicators, targets, outputs and outcomes as a natural part of their work, when in fact this language has been driven from a governmental level.

Gramsci's (1971) concept of ideological persuasion and hegemony is also illuminating when explaining and exploring the continued dominance of capitalist structures and neoliberal ideology. Social commentators have highlighted how the continued dominance of capitalism is often at great cost to society both socially and environmentally (Piketty, 2014; Dorling, 2018). Gramsci's concept of hegemony offers a useful lens through which to explore rising inequalities occurring as a result of the longevity of capitalist systems throughout the western world. A Gramscian lens offers a critique of how the political elite, through cultural and ideological persuasion, manage to create an acceptance from the public of conditions that may not be favourable for them, the environment or broader society, yet serve to most benefit those that are in power. This subtle, yet powerful, persuasion is the bedrock of hegemony. This will be explored further throughout the thesis and applied to both CSD policy and practice. Neoliberalism as a hegemonic political ideology will be introduced and critiqued within the following chapter. It will be argued that the sport policy environment is heavily influenced by neoliberalism and that this is the covert driver of community sport policy and practice.

Chapter Three: Neoliberalism - the covert driver of community sport policy and practice

Introduction

This chapter introduces and critiques neoliberalism as the dominant political ideology within the modern era and examines its influence on community sport policy and practice. Although a neoliberal influence may have been recognised in global sport institutions and corporate sport (Andrews & Silk, 2012; 2018), as well as high performance sport (John & McDonald, 2019; Sturm & Rinehart, 2019), it is argued that the effect of neoliberalism within community sport policy and practice has not been fully recognised or empirically evidenced. Where neoliberalism is discussed it is often secondary to a primary focus on governmentality and power, often utilising a Foucauldian lens. Costas-Batlle et al., (2017) offer an example of this whereby a Foucauldian lens has been utilised to investigate the effect of neoliberalism upon a sport charity. They conclude that neoliberal governmentality though in some instances beneficial, ultimately does more harm than good in that it has driven a need to constantly set goals, adhere to procedures, and monitor outcomes in order to survive within the marketplace. Findings that resonate with discussion throughout this thesis. They argue that whilst there is value in charities identifying tangible outputs and outcomes, an over-emphasis on quantification and competition discourages charities from creating holistic frameworks entirely suited to the psychosocial development of young people, which they believe is largely immeasurable (Costas-Batlle et al., 2017). Caution is needed given this is an auto ethnographic study and therefore reliant on the personal reflection of one individual, however it raises some pertinent discussion regarding the impact of neoliberal ideology at the grassroots.

Introducing Ideology

According to Steger and Roy (2010) ideologies are systems of shared beliefs that guide and shape people's actions and can be located at both a political and economic level (Peck, 2013). Political ideologies are usually identified in terms of a spectrum running from left to right, which is said to have been drawn from where different parties sat in the French national assembly (Spicker, 2014; Leach, 2015). This left – right conceptualisation is not without its problems as it suggests that all political ideologies will be located somewhere upon this 'scale', with the left

being seen as more revolutionary, the centre being seen as reformist and the right being observed as reactionary and opposed to change (Freeden, 2003 Adams et al., 2006). However, in reality, this is not so as within all political parties there are factions that are perceived to align to the left, right or centre. For example, One Nation conservatives are perceived as being to the left of the Conservative Party's ideology, yet they still sit within a party situated to the right.

Ideologies by their very nature embed a range of assumptions, be that about the distribution of power between central and local government, the extent of equality within society or the organisation of work and industrial relations (Bloor, 2010; Leach, 2015). All of this shapes our thinking about not only how the world is but, perhaps more importantly, how the world should be. The juxtaposition of ideology and Gramsci's (1971) thoughts on hegemony is located at this intersection of where the world is and where the world should be. Gramsci was concerned with an ideology that through subtle acts of persuasion, held the potential to manipulate the worldview of the mass population (Gramsci, 1971). In relation to this thesis the persuasive language used within sport policy is of particular interest and how terminology within policy documents is accepted and becomes mainstream within practice. In this respect ideologies are powerful as they not only inform the thinking of politicians but also of the broader population (Steger & Roy, 2010).

While ideologies are essentially action oriented and prescriptive, such prescription ultimately is determined by assumptions about society and human behaviour (Heywood, 2017). Within classical Marxist thought ideology involves two key assertions. The first is that beliefs and ideas are socially determined. The second is that such beliefs and ideas are necessarily flawed or distorted in specific ways, and consequently the ways in which people perceive the world are normally false (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). For classical Marxists, the only escape from false consciousness is through a practical critique of the conditions producing such consciousness. In this respect, this thesis is instructive as it starts to examine the lived experience of both policymakers and CSDW. In so doing, it starts to unpack perceptions of reality in both realms, leading to a critique of the conditions producing such consciousness through a Gramscian lens. A key ideology influencing the beliefs and ideas of both sport policymakers and CSDW has been that of neoliberalism. We now turn to critique the history and

assumptions that underpin one of the key ideologies of the 21st century.

Neoliberalism: The Dominant Ideology

Neoliberalism as a specific ideology is rooted in the principles of classic liberal economic and political theory (Hall, 2011; Heywood, 2017) which, in turn, can be traced back to the rise of the commercial-consumer society within the eighteenth century (Hall, 2010). Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) is accepted as the foundation of neoliberal ideals and was subsequently interpreted and extended by the Austrian economist Friedrick Hayek and American economist, Milton Friedman. Both Hayek and Friedman espoused the free market as a means to achieve social order and progress, and Friedman extended the market model to both political and sociocultural arenas (Hall, 2011). Hayek and Friedman's neoliberal ideals started to gain prominence in British politics from the late 1950s (Cahill et. al., 2018) and became increasingly influential after the fall of the Heath government in 1974. Neoliberalism offered an alternative to the collectivist (Keynesian) model by focusing on the primacy of individuals and their aspirations (Leggett, 2017).

Linking to our discussion of Gramsci, neoliberalism is often interpreted as a hegemonic ideology (Giroux, 2016; Heywood, 2017). It has also been defined as a mode of governance (Ferguson, 2010; Dean, 2012) and a means of regulating and rescaling the state through an economic policy paradigm (Klein, 2007; Crouch, 2011). Steger and Roy (2010) suggest that one way to conceptualise neoliberalism is to think of it as three intertwined manifestations - an ideology, a mode of governance and a policy package.

Against a backdrop of social unrest in the UK throughout the 1970s, conditions were set for the first major phase of neoliberal politics - rolling back the state (Leggett, 2017). Margaret Thatcher is most widely associated with this phase of neoliberalism and the ensuing emphasis on a free market economy. According to Clarke (2004), the British populous embraced Thatcherism, due to the presentation of a narrative that individuals found both enticing and convincing. This was articulated in the image of a share-owning and property-owning democracy, and the presentation of entrepreneurship, and associated riches, as being within reach of all.

Neoliberal ideology influenced Thatcher's focus on controlling social spending and increasing efficiencies within the public sector. In this respect ideology

impacted on governance as Thatcher imported managerial methods from the private sector, with the aim of persuading public service providers to focus more sharply on the quality and cost of the services provided to 'consumers' (Glennerster, 2017). The introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) was a prime example of such ideology. Introduced in the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, CCT was extended to sport and leisure facilities and services in 1989, by Parliamentary Order (Competition in Sports and Leisure Facilities). Compulsory competitive tendering required local authorities to put leisure services out to tender and, in effect, become the clients of contractors who managed their services (Henry, 2001; Houlihan & White, 2002; King 2013). Even though policies during this era were not overtly interventionist, government directed the outcomes of extending public services to free market forces. In this respect, although viewed as a 'laissez-faire' approach it was in essence, still heavily interventionist.

Giroux (2016) is highly critical of neoliberalism as an ideology, believing it to be a savage form of free market fundamentalism that fosters a deep distrust of public values, goods and institutions., He is not alone in condemning the role of the free market as a means of (re)structuring social relations. Hall (2011) states that the 'market' has become the model of social relations and exchange value., He argues that ideology plays a pivotal role in disseminating, legitimising and reinvigorating a regime of power, profit and privilege. Harvey (2007,p.119) is also damning of what he terms 'neoliberalisation' with its seductive rhetoric of freedom comprising, "a benevolent mask full of wonderful-sounding words like freedom, liberty, choice, and rights, to hide the grim realities of the restoration or reconstitution of naked class power". In contrast, Ben-Ami (2010) is critical of the 'growth sceptics' who view neoliberalism as problematic. In his book, *Ferraris for All* he cites examples where the growth of markets has been beneficial for all sectors of society. However, this text is somewhat superficial at times, focusing solely on examples of how people have profited from consumerism and a focus on increased consumption, while ignoring the inequalities that this has also created (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; Piketty, 2014). In this respect, scant regard is given to how increased consumption affects the environment and how such wealth is often unevenly distributed (Stiglitz, 2016; Dorling, 2018). However, it could be argued that Ben-Ami (2010) does offer a useful counter- argument to critics of neoliberalism stating that the free market and economic growth has

increased the prospects and lives of millions of people.

Political ideology drives policy development and governance, and as such, has often transcended government administrations (Freeden, 2003; King, 2009; Freeden, 2018). The interrelationship between ideology and sport policy has been identified through a critique of the importance of ideology to the welfarist agenda of Labour sport policies in the 1960s through to the introduction of market forces to local authority sport in the late 1970s (Henry, 2001; King, 2009 Horne, Tomlinson & Whannel, 2013).

King's findings from his work (2013) for the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) parallels empirical findings from this thesis by highlighting increased fragmentation of the community sport sector and how 'Sport for All' as a policy objective and a set of specific practices had become increasingly difficult for local authorities to deliver. In this respect the welfarist model, whereby the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity was seen as a 'right' gave way to a business model in the 1980s and 90s which often marginalised the 'Sport for All' agenda (Lentell, 1993) in favour of income generation and a narrow range of competitive sports rather than the inclusive philosophy of Sport for All. The impact of the business model can be observed within empirical findings throughout this thesis which highlights a move to focus on groups which are most likely to enable CSDW to achieve their targets and an instrumental approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Public policy can be defined as "a statement by government of what it intends to do, or not to do, such as a law, regulation, ruling, decision or order or a combination of these" (Birkland, 2005 p139). The increased instrumental use of sport since the 1970s (Houlihan & White, 2002; Coalter, 2007; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013) has provided a rationale for government involvement and sport policy development, highlighting the importance of sport to health, crime reduction and community cohesion (among others). Areas which Rittel and Webber (1973) term 'wicked problems' in that they are difficult to define and often context specific, which makes identifying appropriate actions equally difficult and complex. Such conceptual challenges have contributed to criticism that the community sport sector has failed to provide an evidence base for sport's

impact across these domains and demonstrated an inability to 'fix' societal problems due to poorly defined aims and monitoring and evaluation processes (Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2007).

Many models of policy development assume a clear sequence from recognition of a 'problem' through to implementation and then monitoring and evaluation (Dorey, 2014). Policy making in this context has a clear beginning, middle and end and is sequentially and neatly progressed through to completion or until the 'problem' is solved. This so called 'stagist' approach (Cairney, 2012) has been criticised for portraying policy development as a linear process and also of oversimplifying a complex set of actions that ultimately result in policy formation (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1993).

Allied to discussions about sport policy is that of sport policy analysis around which the literature is wide-ranging and has grown in scope and significance as a consequence of earlier critiques (see Houlihan, 2005). Policy analysis can be concerned with analysis *of* policy, that is, the study of policy and processes involved in devising policy, or analysis *for* policy which is concerned with making a positive contribution to future policy development (Spicker, 2008; Henry & Ko, 2014). Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) highlight how meso level policy analysis frameworks (i.e., those intended to analyse policy at sectoral or subsystem level) have their roots in assumptions at macro level which include assumptions about the distribution and/or redistribution of power and wealth. Such assumptions will be driven by political ideology. It is worth noting at this stage that neoliberalism as a broader political and economic ideology has underpinned both Conservative and Labour sport policies but has been utilised and nuanced in ways that align with each political parties' aims. This trend will be examined later in due course.

There is a plethora of literature within the realms of sport policy analysis (King, 2009; Grix, 2010; Phillpots, Grix & Quarmby 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey 2013, Grix & Phillpots, 2014) and it is important to acknowledge that the process of operationalisation, that is translating aims into specific measures, has been a focus within this literature and one that is instructional for this thesis. That said, this thesis most naturally aligns and shares a paradigmatic underpinning with interpretivist policy analysis (Fischer et al., 2007; Yanow, 2007;Wagenaar, 2015 Bevir & Rhodes, 2018). The use of qualitative methods in policy research has

become increasingly recognised, as authors have stressed that policy development is both context specific and influenced by individuals' experiences, education and background (Fischer et al., 2007; Yanow, 2007; Wagenaar, 2015; Bevir & Rhodes, 2018).

Fischer (2003) discusses a reframing of the understanding of public policy and analysis to that of a post empiricist method. That is, an epistemological orientation that seeks to move beyond an objectivist conception of reality by embracing the subjective foundations of social reality. In so doing, Fischer (2003) brings a social constructionist approach to the world of policy study and analysis and acknowledges that social and political life is developed through discursive practices.

Neoliberalism's Influence on Community Sport

Political ideology influences sport policy and ultimately the focus and delivery of community sport programmes (Bramham & Henry, 1985; Grix, 2016; Bairner et al., 2017). Subsequently, those involved with the delivery of community sport are tasked with ensuring that the outcomes of such policies are achieved, managed and implemented (Bolton, Fleming, & Elias, 2008; Harris & Houlihan, 2016). This emphasis on a top down, target driven approach is largely at odds with the values of community development i.e., community empowerment, social justice, collective action and working and learning together (National Occupational Standards for Community Development, 2015). Unpacking this paradox is a central focus of this thesis.

Although some authors have noted a shift away from a hierarchical government model to that of governance through networks and a decentred approach (Rhodes, 1997; Bevir & Rhodes, 2018), others highlight that instead of less state interference and a dispersal of power to para-statal bodies within sport, there has been a strengthening of direct state control over policy delivery (Grix, 2010; Phillpots & Grix, 2014). This has been achieved via mechanisms such as central government specified targets, for example Public Service Agreement targets (PSA), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring and evaluation protocols as evidenced within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015).

Discussing the shift towards an emphasis on partnership working during the New Labour era, Harris and Houlihan (2016) highlight that by their very nature,

externally imposed partnerships are reflective of power relationships defined by central government, who control both the governance arrangements and the delivery outcomes of local sport delivery agencies. Exacerbating central control is the focus on evidence-based policy driven by centrally devised monitoring and evaluation protocols.

Smith and Leech (2010), Phillpotts et al., (2010), and Harris and Houlihan (2016) all highlight how centralised sport policy, characterised by a preference for evidence-based policy making and practice, led to inadequate outcome-based evaluation measures of both School Sports Partnerships (SSPs) and CSPs. Rather than providing a useful and informative evaluation of services, the centralised monitoring and evaluation procedures in place for SSPs and CSPs were perceived by those working in these environments as being designed to ensure that they were 'hitting targets' and 'jumping through hoops' to meet the government's objectives and evidence more politically favoured quantitative targets. The focus on quantitative targets also led some SSPs to prioritise certain policy goals over others (for example to focus on the two hours of PE target) to ensure that they met or were seen to be meeting goals that were perceived to be more politically salient (Smith & Leech, 2010).

An overreliance on quantitative measures has led some commentators to argue that the fixation on so called 'scientific certainty' has resulted in turning evidence-based policy into 'policy-based evidence' (Sharman & Holmes 2010; Sanderson, 2011) and rather than informing future policy development, programme evaluation moves towards a 'tick-box' exercise to justify and validate current sport policy. Publicly funded organisations delivering community sport programmes therefore face the reality of having to participate in an evaluative system, driven by centralised policy that may not truly reflect the value of their services, and more detrimentally, may shape their services as they focus on the achievement of imposed targets.

Facilitating the continuation of such centralised control was the 2016 review of CSPs (Reed, 2016). This independent study was conducted by Andy Reed, Director at the *Sports Think Tank* and Member of Parliament (Labour) for the key marginal constituency of Loughborough from 1997 to 2010. The study aimed to

review the work of CSPs and how they deliver for their communities and the government. In the opening paragraph Reed frames himself as "single-minded in my forward-looking approach, working with the single lens of the new sport strategy and what CSPs can do to help deliver your (government) objectives" (Reed, 2016 p2). In contextualising the report in such a manner Reed ensures political salience and that central government control is retained, via emphasising CSPs role in delivering the objectives of the latest sport strategy. The report does acknowledge that CSPs are locally led cross sector partnerships and although, from Reed's perspective, CSPs will need to consistently deliver nationally contracted outcomes, he states that some also have the potential to play a wider and varied role based on local needs and in collaboration with local partners. The soft focus on local needs within Reed's recommendations is somewhat surprising given that this is a review of CSPs, which, by their very nature, should be delivering on behalf of their communities. Instead, the review emphasises the importance of insight and market intelligence, performance management, governance and efficiency and legal structures of CSPs, all of which very much align to and promote neoliberal philosophical ideals (Steger & Roy, 2010). Ideals which are also evident within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) through a focus on differentiated funding streams and consumer choice and monitoring of sport development via high level outcomes and KPIs. The high-level outcome measure for evidencing sport's contribution to community development being 'increased levels of social trust' (HM Government, 2015 p75). Four years after the strategy was devised, guidance on how this outcome will be measured has yet to be determined. However, it is likely to focus on a quantitative social return of investment (SROI) metric, identifying the financial value of services where outcomes and impact are difficult to measure (King, 2013).

Even though ideology may seem some distance away from the day-to-day delivery and management of community sport, the discussion thus far has served to highlight how it essentially drives both targets and outcome measures. How ideology drives community sport practice and the role that neoliberalism plays within this has lacked substantial critique within sport development literature. Silk and Andrews (2012) offer a critique of sport and the neoliberal conjuncture, highlighting how sport, as a component of popular culture, influences agency,

identity and citizenship within a neoliberal context. However, Silk and Andrews (2012) fail to locate CSD within their study of sport and the neoliberal conjecture. In this respect this thesis moves discussion forwards through locating the influence of neoliberal thinking as the contextual setting for CSD policy and practice.

Examining sport policy developments 1960 – present day

As we have seen, policy as a driver for community sport practice is highly influential. Table 1 highlights the key sport policies since 1960 and the political party and department responsible for producing these policies. These policies and the political landscape in which they were devised will be the focus for the remainder of this chapter.

Table 1: Key Sport Policy documents 1960 – present day

Title	Organisation	Year
Volunteering in an Active Nation	Sport England	2016
Coaching in an Active Nation	Sport England	2016
Towards an Active Nation: 2016- 2021	Sport England	2016
Sporting Future	HM Government	2015
Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sport strategy	DCMS	2012
Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011	Sport England	2008
Shaping Places through Sport	Sport England	2008
2012 Legacy Action Plan, Before, During and After: Making the Most of the London 2012 Games	DCMS	2008
Playing to Win	DCMS	2008
Review of National Sport Effort and Resources	Sport England	2005
The Sport England Delivery System	Sport England	2005

The Framework for Sport in England	Sport England	2004
Game Plan: A Strategy for delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity objectives	Cabinet Office	2002
A Sporting Future for All	DCMS	2000
The Sport England Lottery Fund Strategy 1999 - 2009	Sport England	1999
England the Sporting Nation	English Sports Council	1997
Sport: Raising the Game	Department of National Heritage	1995
Sport in the Nineties: New Horizons	Sports Council	1993
Sport and Active Recreation	Department of Education and Science	1991
Sport in the Community: Into the 90s A Strategy for Sport 1988 – 1993	Sports Council	1988
Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years	Sports Council	1982
Sport For All	Sports Council	1981
Sport and Recreation (White Paper) (Hung parliament/minority Labour government)	Department of the Environment	1975
Sport and the Community: The Report of the Wolfenden Committee on Sport	CCPR	1960

Sport policy in the 1960s and 1970s

The evolution of the welfare state from the early 1950s strongly influenced community sport development, and its role in delivering welfare outcomes (Coalter, 2007). During the 1960s the preferred mode of improving welfare was a professionalised public service that was deemed to bring subject expertise, neutrality and local knowledge to overcome social problems within locales (Houlihan and White, 2002). During this time, the report of the Wolfenden

committee (1960) (The Wolfenden Report) had a lasting impact on sport development. The Committee was given a broad remit;

> To examine the factors affecting the development of games, sport and outdoor activities in the UK and to make recommendations to the CCPR as to any practical measures which should be taken by statutory or voluntary bodies in order that these activities may play their full part in promoting the general welfare of the community
>
> (Wolfenden Report, 1960 p1).

The underpinning themes of the Wolfenden Report highlighted the welfare of the community and via its recommendation for a Sports Development Council (SDC) set in place an arm's length non-governmental structure for public funding of sport. This could be viewed as a pivotal moment for community sport as it moved away from being purely within the domain of civil society towards being a central pillar of government social welfare issues (Houlihan & Lindsay, 2013) which continues to this day. The Wolfenden Report focused particularly on young people and the need to ensure more readily available sports facilities and coaching. It also highlighted the contribution that sport could make in alleviating wide-ranging social issues such as criminal behaviour and health inequalities (Bloyce & Smith, 2010). In so doing it was one of the first sport policy documents to highlight a more instrumental use for sport, achieving this through a promotion of sport for sport and a need to raise participation levels. The Report identified how there is often a drop-off in sports participation when leaving school and this focus on the so-called 'Wolfenden Gap' has punctuated numerous sport policies ever since.

It was not until a Labour government was elected in 1964 that the Advisory Sports Council (ASC) was established. The ASC was tasked with advising government on standards of provision for sports facilities for the community, co-ordination of the use of community resources, the development of training and coaching and priorities in sports development (Houlihan & White, 2002). Although wide ranging in its remit there was a very strong focus on community sport and it could be argued that the ASC set in place a more instrumental use of sport as a means to achieve broader social objectives. The ASC established several Regional Sports Councils in England, and Councils for Scotland and Wales – all of which were advisory councils to the ASC. Increased public funding for sport

during this time meant that there was more funding available for distribution via the ASC and this led to the appointment of paid NGB development officers within the regions to develop sport (Coghlan & Webb, 1990; Bloyce & Smith, 2010), roles which until then had been primarily the remit of volunteers.

The acceptance of sport and leisure as aspects of welfare provision and the role sport played in the quality of life in communities was further emphasised by The Council of Europe's (CoE) European Sport for All Charter In 1975, and publication in the same year of the White Paper on Sport and Recreation. Article 1 of the CoE Charter stating that, 'Every individual shall have the right to participate in sport' (CoE, 1975) and the White Paper identifying local government as a key player in the planning and coordination of recreational development (DoE, 1975 p16). Such policy developments occurred within a political paradigm that until the mid-1970s emphasised a commitment to Keynesian economics and the belief in the positive value of state provision (Henry, 2001; Houlihan & White, 2002). Indeed, the influence of egalitarianism and the welfare discourse on the newly created Great Britain Sports Council in 1972 can be seen in the underpinning values of its 'Sport for All' campaign (Green, 2006).

Whereas the left viewed the state as a source of resource for the community, this started to change with the election of a Conservative government in 1979. The Conservatives at this time began to move away from Keynesian to neoliberal ideals, proposing that welfarism had undermined self-reliance and promoted self-seeking welfare professions whose primary interest was to secure further government expenditure (Minford, 1984; Houlihan & White, 2002).

Thatcher set in place a series of fundamental reforms both within local government and the NHS that not only affected the remainder of her tenure, but also affected her Labour and Conservative successors that followed. The shift towards neoliberal, free- market economic policies was particularly evident during Thatcher's reign (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013) as government policies emphasised a reduction in the role of government, alongside support for the private sector within public services delivery. Even a Labour government with a sizeable majority did not attempt to renationalise privatised industries and as such some of the policies and direction established during this era have been irreversible (Leach, 2015; Heywood, 2017).

Sport during this time was viewed as on the periphery of governmental concerns (Oakley & Green, 2001) and lacked status within central government and national public spending (Gilroy & Clarke, 1997). Governmental intervention during the Thatcher years was often reactive rather than preventive, with one example being the establishment of the Action Sport programmes in response to the inner-city riots of the early 1980s (Hargreaves, 1986; Houlihan & White, 2002; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013). Action Sport programmes were intended to alleviate social problems in deprived areas but critics point to them being a 'quick fix' that focused on the symptoms rather than the causes of deprivation and a form of 'benign policing' (Coalter, 1986; Green, 2006). Houlihan & Lindsey (2013) note that during Thatcher's era it became the norm for government to specify projects which the Sports Council should fund, highlighting increased centralised control via quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations (QUANGOs) which was somewhat contradictory to the governmental rhetoric of 'rolling back the state' and also the supposed non-governmental nature of the Sports Council (Henry, 2001; Green, 2009).

Sport policy in the 1980s and 1990s

As highlighted, the Conservative government of the 1970s and 1980s embarked on a process of 'rolling back the state', dramatically reducing the role and capacity of local government. However, this was at times somewhat contradictory as the control of public sector services was increasingly centralised. According to Rhodes (1997) such a 'hollowing out' of the state introduced a transfer of traditional state functions to organisations in the private or voluntary sectors, and a growing number of arm's-length public agencies.

During the early 1980s, the egalitarian underpinnings of earlier governments had not totally disappeared. The Conservative Government of 1981 chose to further a 'Sport for All' philosophy by focusing the campaign, originally started by the GB Sports Council in 1972, to specific underrepresented 'target groups' within the community. The campaign, championed by the GB Sports Council, ran throughout the 1980s and the groups targeted included the disabled, women and the unemployed. Target groups have continued to be a key narrative within policy developments and it could be argued that the Sport for All campaign has been influential in this continued focus. For example, the Labour Government's sport strategy (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002) emphasised increasing

participation in sport and physical activity for those from lower socio-economic groups, young people (up to 24), women (16+) and older people. The rationale for these target groups promoted a need to encourage a more active lifestyle amongst those who had traditionally been less active than the general population (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002). Sedentary people within this policy were viewed as being at a particular health risk and having the most to gain from relatively small increases in activity. Fast forward to the Conservative sport strategy (HM Government, 2015 p19) and the narrative is somewhat familiar, with a focus on those who are least active, for example, those from lower socio-economic groups, women and disabled people.

The current sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) utilises these target groups combined with a framework of five outcomes (physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, economic development) to frame a focus for sport moving forwards. The continued focus on target groups within sport policy and across all political administrations is clear. Less clear is whether the actions of successive governments promote access for specified target groups, and this will be discussed later in this chapter.

Aligned to a neoliberal ideology, an emerging narrative within sport policy from the early 1980s was that of individual choice. By way of example, the Sports Council strategy document *New Horizons* (Sports Council, 1991 p.8) placed an emphasis on ensuring that individuals 'have the opportunity to choose, as of right, the level, frequency and variety of activity to suit their individual aptitudes and desires'. The current sport strategy progresses this narrative through a focus on individual development as one of the specified outcomes of the Framework for a New Sport Strategy (HM Government, 2015 p18). The key action specified to ensure the individual development outcome target is met is documented as 'actions that meet the needs of the customer and enable them to engage in sport and physical activity' (HM Government, 2015 p.8). It continues to highlight that individuals will have different needs and require an offer which is tailored to those needs, as what works for one individual will not work for another. At a surface level, this can be interpreted as a logical statement and one that would be difficult to contest. However, what is explicit is the language utilised within the strategy that conceptualises participants as customers and draws on a neoliberal underpinning of a free market economy.

As we have seen, an increased focus on the free market economy manifested itself via the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) for leisure services in the late 1980s, the rationale being that the free market would offer increased economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the three Es), and these three words became the mantra for the sports sector during this era. The sporting offer of local authorities, which was previously seen in a social or political context, was increasingly conceptualised within an economic context and for local authorities this shift highlighted a transition from local government as provider to enabler (Aitchison, 1997). The pseudo-privatisation of sport and local authority services proved unpopular with critics (Nichols & Taylor, 1995; Patterson & Pinch, 1995; Aitchison, 1997) who highlighted the lack of effective competition and extensive state retained regulation.

Thatcher's focus on controlling social/public spending and increasing efficiency imported managerial methods from the private sector, with the aim of persuading public service providers to focus more sharply on the quality and cost of the services provided to 'consumers' (Timmins, 2001; Glennerster, 2007). The 1988 Act directed the competitive position of local authorities' own workers to be organised into direct service organisations (DSOs), all of which were subject to a series of restrictions. Under CCT a distinct relationship was introduced that directed DSOs to establish a client-contractor split in which services were put out to tender and the operation of sport and leisure services became subject to predetermined costs rather than the cost of carrying out the work. Patterson & Pinch (1995) stated that the 1988 legislation disadvantaged local authority DSOs by means of financial targets, specified rates of return, and accounting controls which were not applicable to private sector companies. If the contract to provide sporting services was lost by the local authority, and the DSO, or part of it, disbanded, it then became very difficult for the authority to tender for future contracts. This having the potential to impact not just on service operation during this era but for many years to come.

Given that Directors of Sport and Chief Leisure Officers were under pressure to increase income and reduce expenditure (CCT legislation required a 5% return on capital employed too) many moved towards a business model, involving an emphasis on marketing, ''user pays'' and deficit minimisation (King, 2013). The

shift towards an economic model during this era has been seen as exclusionary for some groups and their access to sporting services. Collins (2014, p.26) highlighted that, "CCT almost certainly held down or reduced usage by poor and underrepresented groups like people with a disability, ethnic minorities and one parent families for whom such public services were intended". Furthermore, many local authorities failed to identify these populations within their tender documents which left the 'sport for all' agenda marginalised and on the periphery of a sports offer that was moving towards a more commercial entity (Lentell, 1993; Collins,1997). More recently, King (2013) found the legacy of this era still prevalent within community sport with funding and allocation of resources indicating a generally negative picture for Sport for All and representing an increased retreat from the welfare model. Although the Thatcher years have been interpreted by some as less interventionist, Jessop (2013) argues that neoliberal ideology has proved no less interventionist than the Keynesian welfare state, but instead intervenes in different ways to achieve different ends.

John Major's One Nation Conservatism roots underpinned a shift in focus away from pure economic determinism and towards the power of sport and its potential contribution towards personal wellbeing (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). The competitive element of sport was positively emphasised, particularly through the publication of *Sport: Raising the Game* by the Department of National Heritage in 1995 which moved the focus away from Sport for All and target groups to high performance sport and school sport (Department of National Heritage, 1995). A focus on competitive sport, rather than on physical education and physical activity, was strongly articulated. As a consequence the role of NGBs became increasingly significant and their growing prominence emphasised the continued marginalisation of local authority sports development (Houlihan and White, 2002).

New Labour's rise to power in 1997 continued the focus on school sport, with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sporting Future for All strategy (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000) confirming that school sport, and sport for young people outside of school, was central to New Labour's conceptualisation of sport. New Labour sought to combine the social democratic principles of greater equality with the dynamism of market-led approaches and in so doing tried to distance themselves from the centralised bureaucratic hierarchy (and perceived outdated socialist ideals) of old Labour and the

market emphasis of the previous Conservative government (Giddens,1998). In simple terms, the ‘Third Way’ rejected the ‘old left’ and the ‘new right’ and sought to establish a middle way based on a mix of the perceived strengths of both (Giddens, 1998; Stevens & Green, 2002). This so called ‘Third Way’ promised to be distinctive by providing an alternative to what had gone before. In so doing, New Labour was instrumental in shifting the focus from sport for sport to sport for social good (Devine, 2013; Mackintosh & Liddle, 2015) and sport achieved a more clearly articulated and prominent role in social policy (Coalter, 2007; Bloyce & Smith, 2010).

Sport policy in the 21st century

Central to the ‘Third Way’ was a firm belief in the value of community and a commitment to equality of opportunity (Giddens,1998) and this flowed through to New Labour’s sport strategy, Game Plan (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002). This strategy evidenced the shift from development of sport to development through sport and articulated the growing relationship between social and economic policy, and what authors have referred to as the ‘social investment state’ (Morel et al., 2012). The social investment state model views spending on passive welfare such as unemployment benefits as ‘bad’ (Perkins, 2008) and instead seeks to move beyond redistributive social welfare to one that encourages people to actively participate in society through initiatives such as return to work schemes (Palme, 2006). This agenda marked a shift in sport policy from the traditional welfare model of developing sport in the community, to developing communities through sport (Coalter, 2007).

The strengthening of focus on the instrumental use of sport to achieve social objectives was bolstered by the creation of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in July 1997. A result of the renaming of the Department of National Heritage, the DCMS helped to legitimise sport policy at cabinet level. Influential also during this time was the establishment of Policy Action Teams (PATs). Policy Action Teams were established to inform policy that would underpin social inclusion by focusing on regeneration, lifelong learning and healthier and safer communities. The Policy Action Team for sport and the arts (PAT 10) was one of 18 teams established after the publication of ‘Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal’ (Cabinet Office, 1998). The report

of the Policy Action Team (PAT) 10, 'Sport and The Arts: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit' (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999) determined how increasing access to sport and the arts had the potential to contribute positively to social and economic problems and demonstrated the prevalence of thinking that sport could be utilised to solve 'wicked problems' (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Social exclusion was conceptualised as being a shorthand label for a combination of problems linked to unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, a high crime environment, bad health and family breakdown (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999). A recommendation of the report was that, "the principles of the community development approach should underpin local authority culture/leisure strategies" (PAT 10 p50), while Sport England was asked to recognise that, "using sport to combat social exclusion and promote community development are among its basic policy aims" (ibid p60).

Until 2010, New Labour's focus on the Third Way and an emphasis on social inclusion was central to sport policy. The vocabulary of government during this time emphasised modernisation, cooperation and partnerships (Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). National Governing Bodies of sport came under increased scrutiny with New Labour offering a modernising partnership in which cooperative governing bodies would gain more responsibility and those who failed to perform against agreed targets would have their funding arrangements 'reviewed' (DCMS, 2000). The contradictions and tensions within New Labour's policies between freedom and autonomy versus control and conformity were evident throughout their tenure. For example, within Game Plan (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002) the strategy highlighted that there should be less micro-management and more freedom to deliver against agreed targets (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002), yet in reality these targets were often imposed. There was a desire to modernise local government services and 'evidence based' policy became an increasingly important part of this process (McDonald, 2005; Pawson, 2006). A target driven approach became central to community sport development, spurred on by the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) which was a statutory requirement of local authorities and included targets for local authorities relating to sports participation, volunteering and facility

provision (Bloyce & Smith, 2010). This was further emphasised in Sport England's strategy (Sport England, 2004) which created a conceptual framework for sport, systematically documenting priorities for affecting change in participation, performance and sports' contribution to social objectives and introduced a clear focus on not just delivering sport but measuring the impact and outcomes of public investment.

The publication of the Sport England Delivery System (Sport England, 2006) specifically put in place Community Sport Networks (CSNs) which were defined as "alliances of local providers hosted by a lead organisation such as a local authority, which worked with a mix of partners from a mix of sectors" (Hylton,, 2013; p81). This would evolve the work of the newly created 49 County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) operating at the strategic level within communities across England. These agencies were set to be the strategic link between government and local community sport implementation. It has since been recognised that there were limitations and fragilities with such a partnership-based approach and evidence to suggest that gaps remained in CSD practice (Mackintosh, 2011; Phillpotts, Grix, & Quarmby, 2010; Harris & Houlihan, 2014; Harris & Houlihan, 2016).

Within the Third Way paradigm, the community rather than the individual or the state became the primary focus (Jarvie, 2003). More participative forms of governance were emphasised such as multi-agency partnerships in which communities were strongly represented as stakeholders and local 'experts' encouraged (Powell & Exworthy, 2002). Participative forms of governance placed social inclusion at the heart of government policy and gave increased emphasis to using sport as a 'tool' to engage those at the margins of society. Schemes such as *Positive Futures*, *Street Games*, *Playing for Success*, *Positive Activities for Young People, Splash*, and a plethora of other local and national schemes were established during the Blairite years. At the heart of such schemes was a continued focus on social inclusion and social/personal development through sport, rather than the development of sporting ability per se (Playing for Success, 2009; Positive Futures, 2009; Street Games, 2009). These schemes emphasised a 'sport for good' rather than, 'sport for sport' approach and an elevated role was given to sport as a contributor to social inclusion issues and

community cohesion.

Neoliberal ideology during this time, according to Crouch (2011), was masked by a subtle shift to focusing on the 'social entrepreneur' emphasising the Third Way's new centrist rhetoric around 'community' and a pledge to govern for everyone (Goes, 2004). According to Hoye et al., (2010) third-way policies represented a shift away from direct government service provision to 'whole of government' partnerships with private and third-sector agencies. During this time New Labour placed an emphasis on the third sector and social enterprises as opposed to for-profit organisations in relation to public sector delivery (Alcock, 2010). The importance of the third sector for New Labour led to them, in 2006, establishing the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) within the Cabinet Office and the appointment of a Minister for the Third Sector. Social enterprise was seen to exemplify the Third Way through promising a combination of social justice and market dynamism with ethical values at the centre of business goals (Teasdale, 2011). The promotion of social enterprise as a means of delivering community sport continued beyond New Labour and this is evidenced within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) which positively emphasises diversified funding and delivery.

In 2005, with a successful bid to host the Olympic Games the focus substantially shifted to more coaching and more competitive sport for all young people in DCMS's, Playing to Win: A New Era for Sport publication (2008) and Sport England's Strategy 2008 – 2011. National Governing Bodies of sport were placed at the heart of government's aims to grow participation in competitive sport and develop opportunities and structures for such competition (DCMS, 2008). Sport England's strategy (2008 – 2011) operationalised the Playing to Win policy, ensuring that the focus was clearly on competitive sport in the build up to hosting the Olympics and reflected a shift in emphasis and role for NGBs as they were 'commissioned' by Sport England to deliver on the key outcomes of the Playing to Win strategy (DCMS, 2008). A focus on outcomes and target setting was just one example of how this strategy (Sport England, 2008) reinforced an acceptance of governmentalisation and new public management and further strengthened neoliberal ideals within the sport sector (Green, 2009; Grix, 2009; Lindsey, 2009).

Sport policy 2010 - 2014

In 2010 following three successive General Election defeats, the Conservative Party, under the leadership of David Cameron (2005 – 2016), embarked on a modernisation programme whereby it embraced a series of more inclusive and socially oriented ideological principles (Williams, 2017). In seeking to restore a more liberal Conservative base there was also some realignment with Benjamin Disraeli's 'One Nation' narrative that sought a paternalistic approach to mending 'Broken Britain' and a fragmented society. Under the Coalition government, New Labour's focus on social exclusion evolved to focus more specifically on social justice as a means of requiring equal opportunities for all, with an underpinning belief that the state crowds out social action. In this respect, the mantra was 'small state, big society' (Nicholls & Teasdale, 2017). An overbearing state was seen as both financially and socially problematic as the focus shifted to deficit reduction. The social justice discourse framed Britain's 'broken-society' as an individual level problem exacerbated by an overbearing 'nanny state' (Bochel & Powell, 2016) and to this end, the Conservative-led coalition sought to further reduce the size of the state and cut public expenditure, positioning the politics of austerity at the heart of its approach. Public sector cuts highlighted significant differences in how much authorities spent on individual services within a broad service area (National Audit Office, 2014). For example, from 2010 to 2014 local authority recreation and sport experienced a higher reduction than median for all service areas, with a 40% funding reduction nationally (National Audit Office, 2014 p32).

According to Beech and Lee (2015), the link between Thatcherism and the ideology of the Conservative-led coalition was neoliberalism, with David Cameron advocating for economic liberalism and his Liberal Democrat counterpart Nick Clegg (and the so-called Orange Book Liberals) seen as championing a smaller state, market forces, lower taxes and entrepreneurship (Beech & Lee 2015; Dorey & Garnett 2016). However, other authors have highlighted the role that Cameron played in 'detoxifying' the image and ideas of the Conservative Party as one too closely associated with Thatcherism (Leach, 2015) and in so doing modernising the Conservative Party to appeal to a broader electorate. In adopting social justice as a social policy focus, the Conservatives encroached on Labour's ideological ground of fairness and tackling poverty (Pautz, 2012) and the progressive Conservative movement was emphasised. However, in office the

rhetoric of compassionate conservatism and social conservatism was decidedly lacking with commentators arguing that Cameron's account of progressive conservatism was part of a change of image, not substantively of policy or ideology (Pautz, 2012).

David Cameron envisaged a 'Big Society' in which people felt motivated to help both themselves and their communities rather than being reliant on the state (Cameron, 2010). Essentially the Big Society agenda was 'anti-state' but instead of the inadequacies of state provision being solved by the market, Cameron drew on One Nation Conservatism allowing the inadequacies of the state to be solved by communities themselves (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). To this end, the Coalition Government's focus on communities through the 'Big Society' and localism agendas (The Cabinet Office 2010) sought to shift responsibility from state to individual and communities and in so doing, recalibrate the economy away from New Labour's 'Big State' in order to make markets work better (Taylor-Gooby & Stoker, 2011).

Underpinning Big Society policy was a desire to give communities more autonomy through the devolution of power from the centre to local government (Cabinet Office, 2010). In so doing, government hoped to encourage people to take a more active role in their communities. This was based on a more Hayek-inspired policy discourse that government inhibited community action and that further opening up of public services to the private sector would bring innovations and solutions to social issues. Communities were tasked with solving their own problems and the primacy of the market remained intact. The Big Society remit promoted that social enterprises and third sector organisations should have less state interference and instead be driven purely by market forces (Macmillan, 2013). Neoliberalist ideals were evident through the promotion of support for the creation and expansion of co-operatives, social enterprises and the establishment of a Big Society Bank with the aim of providing new finance for such initiatives. In turn, more emphasis was placed on the role of volunteers in sport as a means to achieve community involvement, but also, importantly as a means of lessening the financial burden of staffing costs for the public sector and broader sporting organisations (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2011). As an example of this, the report commissioned by the DCMS and written by TNS

BRMB titled, 'Encouraging Involvement in Big Society: Cultural and Sporting Perspective' (2011) focused entirely on volunteering. Devine (2013) discusses that devolving social, cultural, and therefore sporting, provision solely or primarily to civil society and the voluntary sector is likely to result in the take up of opportunities primarily by those with the power and resources to do so and serve to exclude the under-represented. Therefore, although the language of the Big Society may centre on community the result is instead a society that is defined within the neoliberal terms of consumers.

The Coalition Government's, 'Creating a Sporting Habit for Life: A New Youth Sport Strategy' (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012) was the driver for community sport development practice during this era and promoted, "a more rigorous, targeted and results-orientated way of thinking about grassroots sport, which focuses all our energies into reaching out to young people more effectively" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012 p1). The strategy placed an emphasis on the 14 – 25-year-old age bracket, echoing discussion within The Wolfenden Report (1960), regarding how this age range were highly likely to drop out of sport as they transitioned from school to university and/or the workplace. Within this policy NGBs were tasked to spend around 60 per cent of their funding on activities that promoted sport as a habit for life amongst young people, further highlighting that the government would, "ensure that sports are completely focused on what they have to achieve, with payment by results – including the withdrawal of funding from governing bodies that fail to deliver agreed objectives" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012, p4). Emphasising neoliberal ideals of performance management, this centralised means of control for NGBs to deliver against the participation target was to prove highly problematic, promoting a 'gaming mentality' and organisational focus on a narrow range of targets. This served to promote individualism rather than collective effort or any scoping of community need (Harris & Houlihan, 2016).

Sport policy 2015 onwards

As with the Big Society agenda, Theresa May's 'Shared Society' still advocated a much-reduced central state but shifted the focus from social justice to a more aspirational sounding, social mobility agenda (Williams, 2017). In recent times, the Conservatives have worked hard to de-emphasise the role that

ideology plays within their politics. Indeed, in closing the Conservative party conference in 2016, May spoke of it being the “time to reject the ideological templates provided by the socialist left and the libertarian right and to embrace a new centre ground in which government steps up – and not back – to act on behalf of us all” . Her speech centred on social mobility, restoring fairness and supporting “those who do the ‘right thing, and “make a contribution”. However, this failed to convince the voting public at the ballot box in June 2017, resulting in a hung parliament. Instead, Labour’s Manifesto ‘For the Many Not the Few’ struck a chord with voters who felt increasingly marginalised by failing public services and had grown tired of the austerity rhetoric. The Conservatives progressive modernisation programme continues as it tries to shift the focus away from its neoliberalist associations and Thatcherite politics to that of a postliberlist era with an emphasis on community and communitarian values (Pabst, 2017) that promotes stability, tradition and consensus.

In alignment with the progressive focus on social justice and latterly social mobility, the Government’s Sporting Future strategy, published in December 2015, focused on sport for social good and targeting inactive and low participation groups, with specific mention given to those from lower socio-economic groups, women and disabled people (HM Government 2015, p19). Outcomes were emphasised and focused on five key areas: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. This shifted the focus for community sport and CSDW in England to that of outcomes as opposed to outputs. However, four years on from the strategy being written there is still no consensus around how these outcomes will be measured. Beyond this, decreasing levels of sport participation among hard-to-reach groups in England have been identified as a continuing trend (Widdop et al., 2017; Ramchandani, 2018). At a societal level, Widdop et al. (2018) highlight that as a result of austerity measures, spending cuts have impinged directly (and disproportionately) on the poor, sick and disabled. Indeed, evidence suggests that the inequalities that existed 50 years ago exist today and if anything, since austerity, the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer (Dorling 2014).

The Sporting Future strategy (HM Government, 2015) emphasised the importance

of a diversified funding model for sporting organisations and a clear message that Sport England and UK Sport would reduce the percentage of income that sporting organisations received from a single public sector body, whilst encouraging such organisations to increase the overall level of non-public investment they receive. Whilst focusing on diversified funding models the strategy also recognised the 'crucial role' that local authorities play in delivering sport and physical activity opportunities (HM Government, 2015). However, according to Parnell et. al (2015) with local authority sport and leisure teams increasingly squeezed through austerity measures, there is a widening black hole in capacity, and more importantly leadership, to play this crucial role. Therefore, the rhetoric and reality in practice, are not aligned.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance's (SRA) 2017 Manifesto for Sport heralded a warning for any incoming political party, that to ensure deliverable outcomes from the current sport strategy the scale of funding would need to match the scale of the ambition and that the sector cannot be expected to simply do more with less (SRA, 2017).

Summary

Community sport is tasked with achieving a plethora of outcomes, from community cohesion to increased health benefits to ensuring pathways into elite sport (Coalter, 2007; King, 2009; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). The determination by Government of such outcomes is heavily influenced by political ideology and embedded in practice via policy, outcome measures and KPIs that seek to ensure these outcomes are met. Although focus is often at the micro and meso level of the management and governance of community sport (Grix, 2009), the macro level influence of ideology upon the profession cannot be underestimated.

Neoliberal ideology has at its heart a focus on the free market economy and this has driven community sport towards differing modes of delivery, for example, social enterprise, and a reduced emphasis on the public sector. Partnership working across public and private sector is encouraged, and the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) places an explicit emphasis on a mixed economy of funding and organisations delivering sport. Within the strategy the private sector is encouraged to embrace the delivery of sport and a Social Impact

Fund (SIF) for investment into sport, pooling public, philanthropic and commercial capital is championed. Much of this activity is underpinned by neoliberal assumptions that the free market will provide greater choice and freedom for consumers, in this instance, of sporting activities. However, whether this is the case is questionable and as some authors have highlighted such a focus can prove exclusionary for those on the margins of society (Devine, 2013; Collins, 2014).

In relation to sport, the outcomes successive governments have aimed to achieve has often remained constant, for example, focusing on getting those who participate the least in sport to get involved. However, what has differed is the process by which these outcomes might be achieved. For example, during the New Labour administrations there was a focus on getting people more physically active (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002) and this focus remains within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015). It could be argued that the outcomes are essentially the same across both of these strategies. However, New Labour looked to increase physical activity levels through investment in local authority sport, delivered via partnerships, whereas the latest sport strategy highlights the importance of local authorities but champions delivery through diversified structures underpinned by private sector financing.

Social enterprises are an interesting example of profit driven organisations which are increasingly involved, and driving, the delivery of community sport. What is often misunderstood is that a social enterprise is still a commercial entity, but there is a requirement for profits (once salaries have been accommodated) to be reinvested back in to the business. Social enterprises were championed during both the New Labour and coalition administrations and are still favoured under the Conservative government (HM Government, 2015; Sport England 2016). Social enterprise has been termed neoliberalism by stealth, but paradoxically has also been presented as a means by which neoliberal ideals are challenged (Nicholls & Teasdale, 2016). Therefore, the pervasive nature of neoliberalism as a macro level driver of community sport cannot be underestimated, as each political party adapts the ideological concept to meet its own ends and ensures that delivery mechanisms help drive and support such ideology.

Whilst strategies seek to achieve different political goals, an economic neoliberal agenda has driven sport, since the mid-1970s, regardless of political party involvement. Although the current Conservative government has issued a clarion call via their 2017 Manifesto and also at their political party conferences that ideology should not be the focus, it is difficult to see how this so-called era of postliberalism (Pabst, 2017) will evolve without ideology at its core.

In the next chapter we move on from a consideration of the influence of political ideology on community sport to a discussion of the broader definitions of community. It will be argued that in order to facilitate community sport development practitioners need an understanding of both the definitions and interpretations of 'community' and how this can help inform CSD practice.

Chapter Four: Locating 'community' at the heart of community sport development

The definitional dilemma of community sport

The instrumental use of community sport to achieve social objectives has spanned all political parties and is strengthened further within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015). However, considering such legitimisation of community sport, there remains a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries of community sport development (CSD), what it is and what it entails. As both Coalter (2007) and Hylton (2013) highlight, community sport development spans a wide spectrum from the identification and development of sporting talent, to the use of sport as a 'hook' to engage hard-to-reach groups. The differentiation between the development *of* sport to enhance participation and performance in sport as an end in itself, and development *through* sport, i.e., as an activity that is designed to use sport as a means to achieve a range of other social, economic and political ends has been an increasingly dominant discussion within academic texts (Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). It could be argued that there remains a lack of clarity regarding what community sports development actually entails and this has not been helped by policy, which in previous years has placed the remit for increasing participation in sport by those who are physically inactive as that of NGBs (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012). This is problematic because NGBs have a historical focus on developing club sport and improving sporting performance and have often lacked the skills and confidence to work beyond this remit (as evidenced within this thesis). However, as the sport for social good movement has gained momentum through institutions such as the Alliance of Sport and the United Kingdom Sports Development Network (UKSDN), both organisations that have been developed and grown organically by those working and researching community sport, the potential for strengthening the focus and definition of community sport increases.

In this section we move away from sport per se and start to explore wider definitions of community. It is argued that before sport can contribute to community cohesion and development, those operating within these domains need an understanding of the complexities of working within diverse communities. It is proposed that unless those working within community sport understand the

definitions and associated meanings of the term 'community' then it may remain difficult to fully understand sport's role in terms of the development of such communities.

Introducing Communities

As suggested in the work of several sociologists, such as Ferdinand Tonnies (1887), Max Weber (1947) and Robert Nisbet (1953), the argument that there has been a so- called decline in community is not new but is instead observed as being rooted in the decline of the institutions of the Middle Ages. The break-up of the medieval guilds and corporations, the commercialisation of agriculture that came with the emergence of capitalism, industrialisation and the decline in the autonomy of the cities following the rise of the modern centralised state, have all gradually led to a disenchantment with community (Delanty, 2018).

Tonnies seminal work on community (1887) argues that within modernity, society replaces community as the primary focus for social relations. Community (Gemeinschaft) is 'living', while society (Gesselschaft) is 'mechanical'. The former is more rooted in locality and is 'natural' while the latter is more a 'rational' 'mental' product and one that is sustained by relations of exchange. Both Tonnies (1887) and Durkheim (2013) emphasised the emotional aspects of local life, arguing that common experiences, shared values and mutuality were key features that distinguish Gemeinschaft (community) from Gesselschaft (society). Tonnies (1887) contrasted community with the public, commercial sphere of society, while Durkheim (2013) argued that community represented a form of 'organic solidarity', based on resemblance and shared fate. The work of Tonnies (1887) and Durkheim (2013) underpinned much of the research that would follow and inspired a whole research field known as community studies (Gilchrist, 2009).

Communities are dynamic, evolving and contradictory. On the one hand they offer a sense of security, belonging and acceptance, yet at the same time they can contribute to feelings of exclusion, isolation and loneliness. It is this paradox that makes the study of 'community' complex and which has received scant regard within the sport development literature. The aim of the present chapter is to deconstruct how we might define community in a modern-day sense and how our interpretations and definitions might shape the communities to which we belong.

In so doing we will start to locate the community at the heart of community sport development.

The Quest for Community

The use of the term 'community' generally invokes a feeling of positivity, a 'feel good factor', an 'inner glow'. For many people, feeling that they are part of a community is an important aspect of their lives, contributing towards their social wellbeing and enabling them to feel connected to others through shared characteristics and bonds (Gilchrist, 2009; Blackshaw, 2010). The word 'community' brings with it images of an ideal past, when people had time for each other and placed a value on being part of their local community (Etzioni, 1995). However, some believe this sense of 'community spirit' has been lost, and that modernity has destroyed community (Bauman, 2001, 2007; Putnam, 2001; Delanty, 2018). On each side of the political spectrum there is evidence of a fear of social disintegration and a call for a revival of community (Giddens, 1994), with 'community' being interpreted as a positive and aspirational goal. As Bauman (2001, p.1) states; 'It feels good, whatever the word may mean, it is good to 'have a community', to be in a community'. It would seem that, the quest to feel a 'sense of belonging' is important for many, not just from a societal (collective) but also from a personal (individual) perspective. Looking at sport policy over time, we can see that interest in community and community development has become increasingly prevalent (The Sports Council, 1982; 1988; Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000; 2002; 2012; HM Government, 2015) and this is made explicit within the latest sport strategy via specific social and community development outcome objectives (HM Government, 2015).

However, there is an element of cynicism surrounding the positivity of the term 'community'. Some scholars, discuss how in the past there was a need to be part of a community, rather than it being a choice. According to Suttles (1972), most so-called 'traditional' communities can be seen to have come out of economic necessity rather than social needs.

Warburton (2009) describes community as an aspiration, rather than a reality to be discovered or returned to, whereas Taylor (2011) argues that 'community'

often implies the way we should live, which can be constraining to personal freedom. For some authors, the definition of community in political discourse is seen as an overly optimistic, emotive and unrealistic representation of modern-day society (Bauman, 2001, 2007; Brent, 2004; Dixon et al., 2005). Yet for many, 'community' is seen as "a complex matrix of intense competition between contesting groups, often class-based, struggling for a slice of the social and financial cake" (Robson, 2000, p132). Naive interpretations of community that assume unity and reciprocity are seen to be created by outsiders who seek homogeneity and harmony where there is complexity and conflict (Berner & Phillips, 2005). In fact, many authors claim that not only is community more complex than first imagined, but an over- emphasis on the positive misses the fact that numerous communities are experienced as discriminatory and exclusionary. For this reason, Guijt and Shah (1998) warn that too strong a belief in the 'community cohesion myth' can mean that many voices go unheard and that those with power (and the ability to advocate for themselves) gain public favour. This discussion has implications for community sport development at a number of levels. With current sport policy seeking to positively promote the role of sport within social and community development (HM Government, 2015) there is a danger that prominent voices within a community may dominate and drive the sporting agenda. This agenda may be one which is beneficial to their own needs rather than the broader needs of the community.

Whilst, within sporting contexts at least, notions of community often proffer a 'feel good factor', it has to be recognised that there is a less positive side to such debates. Indeed, whereas for many, community is seen as a forum to bring people together, to celebrate shared interests and to give and receive social support, such tight-knit networks can leave individuals feeling excluded from their own communities. Power structures that benefit only certain members of the community are often perpetuated, and in some instances there is an active desire by people in positions of power within such communities to ensure that others do not benefit (Hall, 1995). In this respect, community sport has the potential to exacerbate such power struggles rather than solve them if CSDW do not have the knowledge of community dynamics or the means to navigate such situations.

Community - Belonging or Exclusion?

Wellman (2018) identifies a sense of security, significance and solidarity as the essentials of 'community'. Yet, according to Meade et al., (2016), if we analyse these essential features, we may find that they are not always or necessarily compatible. For example, security for some may be achieved only by the exclusion of others; the 'belongingness' associated with solidarity may be constituted through the not- belonging of others. Likewise, significance may signify the reproduction of unequal roles and relations. Brent (2004) takes this argument one step further by suggesting that community formation is intrinsically related to the creation of difference. Reflecting on twenty years as a youth work practitioner, he goes on to state that from his own experience community activity creates conflict and division. In his opinion, "though community action is partly based on reassuring ideas of cooperation and mutuality, it is also divisive, dividing the inside from the outside, and producing internal strife between different factions" (p.214). These examples provide stark contrast with the political rhetoric surrounding 'community'. For Blackshaw, (2009) the emphasis on community empowerment, social capital, capacity building and social entrepreneurship by New Labour amounted to little more than combinations of gestures and marketing hype. Similar claims could also be levelled at the current Conservative administration who have promoted a commitment to community as something that is fundamental to conservatism (Conservatives, 2017, p.9), yet situates community development in terms of the increased community wealth and opportunity and the backing of small businesses driven by the Industrial Strategy (Conservatives, 2017; HM Government, 2017).

The latest government initiative in this area is the Civil Society Strategy (HM Government, 2018). It is difficult to know what the impact of such manoeuvres will be in relation to sport however the government's commitment to 'community' is clearly articulated within the term 'civil society', which places an emphasis on organisations that are situated between statutory public services and for-profit/corporate businesses. Such organisations are independent of state control and part of what the strategy refers to as the social sector (HM Government, 2018). It is anticipated that the social sector 'space' for voluntary community and social enterprise organisations will grow and be strengthened via various pathways identified within the strategy, for example the funding of 3,500

Community Organisers (HM Government, 2018). The strong neoliberal undertones of the strategy promote self-sufficiency and self-efficacy and there is a return to a focus on partnership working, emphasising the role of the social sector. The strategy presents a 'feel good' factor surrounding the term civil society and the social sector, however it pays scant regard to those who may not be able to contribute or participate within community activity, for whatever reason, and who may essentially be deemed the most vulnerable within society.

Cain and Yuval-Davis (1990) highlight how those who feel excluded from a community can start to exhibit a grouping conscious of itself and in so doing create a counter- community and culture. In turn, this can lead to the emergence of 'gangs' and other such factions that may not serve the community well, and ironically one that community sport may be tasked with alleviating. Problems that political ideology and policy may well have contributed towards. Therefore, far from generating harmonious social relations, community can create, or at least reinforce, social polarisation and potential conflict; differentiation rather than unity. In addition, there is a tension between those who seek diversity and difference as the essential ingredients of a vibrant community, and a view of cohesion and community that emphasises similarities of life stage, attitudes and circumstances (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). How communities cope with the changing world and diversity of their local populations will always be important. Communities that are not well equipped to embrace modernity, but instead struggle to maintain a predetermined set of ready-made values (regardless of how relevant these may be to community members) run the risk of becoming 'ghettos of exclusivity' which bear little, if any, relevance to modern-day society. Yet it is often these very communities that are put forward as examples of good practice and something to be aspired to and emulated. The perceived strength of so-called 'traditional' values when discussing the benefits of community cannot be underestimated and strike at the heart of one of the most influential theories in relation to community development – that of communitarianism.

Communitarianism – A Return to Values

Geographical places are seen as repositories of distinct 'sets of values' (Clarke, 2017), and values are seen to be at the heart of local communities. This is strongly evidenced in communitarian thinking. The most prominent contributors

to the communitarian perspective are Etzioni (1995), MacIntyre (2007), and Sandel (2010). Etzioni is sometimes identified as a 'political communitarian', MacIntyre and Sandel as 'philosophical communitarians'. The importance of values occupies a pivotal position for communitarians. Etzioni (1995, p.24) defines communities as, "webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values". Within communitarian thinking moral disintegration (the demise of religion, increase in teenage pregnancies, and decline in traditional nuclear families), is seen to have created a moral vacuum. According to Etzioni (1995), the problem is that the demise of traditional values has not been followed by a solid affirmation of new values. Or if new values have been appropriated, then they are not values that are to be encouraged or that will benefit society, but instead centre around individualism, selfishness and personal gain. According to Etzioni (1995, p27) twenty five percent of North Americans say they would abandon their families for money, and seven percent admit freely that they would kill someone if paid enough. The accuracy of these statistics is questionable, but they do raise pertinent questions in relation to commitment to social ties and bonds. Communitarianism in recent years has become a more 'govermentalised' discourse and was particularly influential during New Labour's 'third way' style politics, even though communitarian values of tradition, maintaining the status quo and societal control align more towards the right of the political spectrum. According to Delanty (2018) communitarianism has served as a means of softening the move towards neo-capitalist restructuring.

Communitarianism as an ideology aligns with the onset of neoliberalism and neo- conservatism. In fact Harvey (1989) argues that communitarian approaches constitute a 'masking ideology' by concealing those very capitalist relations, which actually divide communities. Beyond this, there is an implication in much communitarian thinking that 'community' has been lost in disadvantaged areas and that this is precisely why they are disadvantaged. This element of blaming communities for their own demise is further explored by Harvey (2000) who argues that as the 20th century drew to a close power and wealth became evermore synonymous with large corporations which, in turn, exacerbated feelings of isolation and frustration within neighbourhoods. Nor does this situation seem to have improved against the backdrop of austerity, with inequalities deepening and exacerbating increased communal tensions promoted by

contemporary political ideology with a focus on market forces and capitalist structures (Piketty, 2014; Dorling, 2018). This unrelenting focus has led to precarious and exploitative labour processes becoming the norm including zero-hour and short-term employment contracts which may serve to undermine a sense of personal stability and security. Such shifts are also evident within community sport development and have been highlighted as problematic not just for CSDW themselves but also in terms of the impact of community sport schemes (Collins, 2014).

Page (2000) challenges the notion that people in declining neighbourhoods are less 'moral'. Even when they appear so, he argues, there are clear moral codes that prevail, although these may, at times, be at odds with the rest of society. Forrest and Kearns (2001, p.11) concur, arguing that "while theft from business, cars and shoplifting might be seen as acceptable coping strategies, thieving from locals, the community centre or the local school was not". In a similar vein, Hoggett (1997) suggests that strong norms and networks can exist on the most beleaguered (housing) estates, but that these are as likely to be those of gang law and the drugs cartel as those conjured up by communitarians.

Communitarians are interested in a normative theory of political community, but this fails to recognise that other types of communities do exist, often with equally powerful values, norms and networks – but not those that are 'acceptable' to the traditional philosophy of communitarianism. In this respect, communities can be understood as contrived rather than organic or, indeed, authentic – i.e., playing the part even when this depends upon adherence to a negative identity in order to make themselves eligible for increasingly selective or targeted funds (MacGregor, 2001). Alternatively they may be portrayed as a victim of their own circumstance, which is of their own making, when the reality is that deprived communities and communal tensions are often the result of a culture that promotes market forces above all else and one that accepts exclusion and inequality as a natural part of this process (Peck et al., 2017; Dorling, 2018).

A place for Community?

Traditional views of locality-based communities serve to promote their portrayal as spatially bounded areas that act as spaces for friendship, hope,

neighbourliness and place attachment (Harvey, 2000; Clark, 2007). However, the importance and influence of neighbourhood communities has been challenged (Putnam, 2000) and there has been concern that a purely geographical definition of community fails to acknowledge the impact of global forces affecting the formation and experience of community (Clark, 2007; Harvey, 2012). The increasing mobility of contemporary life means that more people are likely to be employed on fixed or short-term contracts and expect to change jobs and careers more frequently. This is likely to necessitate an increased degree of geographic mobility, and impact on spatially- defined communities. Such community 'places' are increasingly home for a transitory population who do not feel strong bonds to a particular geographical area and accept that the space they currently inhabit may not be one for life. Such societal changes, coupled with an increased reliance on out-of-town shopping malls rather than local shops, private cars rather than public transport, and long-distance working, means that we have less and less contact with our neighbours (Blackshaw, 2010). This has the knock-on effect that people potentially no longer see the need to establish strong communal ties and rely less readily on their neighbours for social contact or support. As working life gradually shifted from rural to city living, industrialisation created an urban expansion which called for a different interpretation of community and the city became the natural manifestation of modern community simply because it represented human social order (Knox 1995; Delanty, 2018). However, Harvey (2012) has argued that city life is not conducive to community and that the sheer size and diversity of cities polarises their inhabitants.

Sport's role within cities and communities can be illuminating with regards to the social geographies of place utilisation and numerous studies have investigated sport's role in identity politics and how people utilise sport to integrate and 'belong' within a spatial environment (Norcliffe, 2015; Koch, 2018). However, as Koch (2018) highlights, there is no linear relationship between sports participation and inclusion/exclusion. Playing sport can sometimes facilitate the inclusion of minority groups and those new to geographical areas, but it can equally be conducive to the entrenchment of hostilities between groups and even result in communal violence (Sugden & Bairner, 1995; Bloom & Willard, 2002; Young, 2019). Therefore, the role of sport in community integration has to be carefully

considered and as Koch (2017) states is a prime site for further interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, there are geographical differences in sport participation according to the type of area an individual lives, be that urban or rural, deprived or wealthy, although such patterns become less obvious in relation to 'physical activity' levels (Loucaides et al., 2007; Widdop et al., 2018).

It has been argued that communities are actively constructed by their members, rather than merely arising from local circumstances (Gilchrist, 2009) and the gradual shift away from definitions of community as 'place' has been heavily influenced by the 'community as network' narrative to which we now turn.

Community as Network

Bauman (2008) argues that communities today more closely resemble 'social networks'. According to Bauman, 'networks' have their genesis in the imagination and are sustained only through communication; this is because they are forever being born in the course of interaction between men and women who are individuals first and all the rest after. As a result, they are always individually ascribed and individually focused, which means that they are only kept alive as long as their individual members deem them important. Gilchrist (2009,p.53) discusses the structure of networks, stating that, "true networks have no central organising or control mechanism" and that essential characteristics of networks are a web of lateral connections and avoidance of bureaucratic structures. Within networks, influence operates predominantly through informal connections based on trust, loyalty, reciprocity, civility and sociability (Kaplan, 2018). At its simplest, the term social network has come to be used in two ways; one refers to the number of people that a person knows, regardless of the links between these people. The other, more formal usage refers not only to the number of people an individual is in contact with, but also the extent to which these different people are known to each other (Clarke, 2017). Social networks that have many links are defined as close-knit or dense while those with few links are deemed less-dense or loose-knit. Some authors have focused on exploring the strength (or weakness) of ties in particular networks (Granovetter, 1973; 1983; Putnam, 2000; Scott & Carrington, 2011). Granovetter's seminal work in this area (1973) emphasised that the strength of a tie should be understood as "a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services which

characterise the tie" (Granovetter, 1973, p1361). Granovetter theorised that weak ties between individuals are crucial for creating new opportunities, enabling resource and information diffusion, and for the successful integration of different social groups. Strong ties were typified by close-knit, dense linkages, for example between best friends and family, whereas weak ties were less dense, causal linkages between acquaintances. We can see similarities here and a clear influence upon the work of Putnam in relation to social capital that was to follow some years later (Putnam, 2000). Granovetter (1973) found that weak ties were particularly important in job hunting and securing employment, much more so than strong ties. It was the range of weak ties that was deemed important in helping individuals source 'inside' information and use this to their advantage. Other authors concur with this, highlighting that one of the most important functions of networks is their capacity to support networking - enabling people to share ideas, consolidate relationships, exchange goods and services and co-operate (Putnam, 2000; Gilchrist, 2009).

All social network analysis has the basic aim of illustrating the structure of social interaction in communities by representing individuals as 'points' and treating their social relationships as 'connecting lines' (Scott & Carrington, 2011). Such thinking is echoed in the theory of social capital which Putnam (2000, p.19) frames as, "connections among individuals and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them". Putnam's use of the term social capital is essentially normative, focusing on the importance of relationships of trust in making democracy work. He sees social capital as a moral resource, and in this respect, his work shares a similar outlook to that of Etzioni's communitarianism as well as Granovetter (1973).

Social capital theory recognises that the relationships of everyday life between neighbours, colleagues and friends, even casual acquaintances, have value for the individual and society as a whole (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001; Middleton et al., 2005). Hence, at the heart of both social network analysis theory and social capital theory is a belief that linkages with a broad range of networks, is of benefit to both the individual and society.

By contrast, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) was more critical of

the function of social capital in society because he was concerned with how inequalities in wealth and social power were perpetuated through culture and connections. In other words, those who go into the system with most will tend to come out with most. Gilchrist and Taylor (2016) highlight that networks are essentially private and opaque rather than public and transparent and that they can create their own norms, at odds with the outside world, i.e., illegal activities can take on the aura of normality and members are protected from external sanctions. Pillai et al., (2017) examine what they believe to be the sometimes overlooked negative effects of bonding social capital within organisations. They highlight that strong bonding social capital can lead to inhibited individual learning, groupthink and the blurring of boundaries. All of which, they argue, can have a negative influence upon both the individual and the organisation. Chambers (1983) believes that networks contain patterns of prejudice, preference and power because they are based largely on personal choices that are both tactical and strategic. In essence, this makes hidden power elites difficult to challenge and can lead to networks being beneficial for only a minority of 'privileged' individuals who know how to 'work the system' for their own personal gain.

Individualism and the Rise of the 'Me' Society

Communities are made up of individuals and it is the balance between personal self- interest and group interest that often provides the greatest paradox. (Gilchrist, 2009). Balancing the needs of the 'we' (of community) and the 'I' (of individualism) can promote tensions. In the UK the 1980s encouraged celebration of 'self'. This was the era of entrepreneurial expansion where 'greed was good' and ambition (even at the expense of others) was laudable. The 'self' became a project to be worked on (Bauman, 2001, Featherstone, 2007) and the 'I' became prevalent over the 'we'. It could be argued that an emphasis on individualisation can serve to detach us from a sense of community, and can lead to an over-emphasis on quick, disposable relationships at the expense of more solid, long-lasting and committed connections. Competition to consume the most, to be the best and to achieve to the highest level, places increased pressure on individuals, with the geographic community sometimes becoming as much a symbol of achievement (postcode) as a place to live.

Bauman (2001) believes that one of the main crises of the twenty-first century is a

crisis of identity, i.e., we are all searching for the answer to 'who we are' in society, where we fit, and how we express ourselves. Communities play a significant role in this quest for identity and it is well rehearsed that sport can contribute to this process (Featherstone, 2007). For example, a key rationale for the use of sport within a prison environment is that upon release it can help foster an alternative social network for the person concerned and help contribute to a renewed identity linked to sport (and/or a sporting community) rather than to criminal networks (Meek, 2015). Beyond this, a popular rationale for community sport development within deprived communities is that sport provides a 'hook' for those who may not engage with other services and can therefore act as a 'bridge in' to education and essentially a new form of identity and subsequently inclusion in to society (Coalter, 2007; Collins, 2014). In this respect the importance of the contribution of community sport to the development of both personal and community identity cannot be underestimated.

Summary

Throughout this chapter we have observed how the term 'community' is often presented as a positive and aspirational goal for society by way of the promotion of a 'feel good' factor (Bauman, 2001, 2007). The reality of this has been critiqued as paradoxical in that communities can be as equally exclusionary as they can inclusionary (Koch, 2018). However, this paradox is rarely acknowledged in the political realm where, community sport is predominantly framed from a positive perspective and often observed as a panacea for social ills (Coalter, 2007; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Collins 2014). Within this policy context, CSDW are tasked with working in diverse communities that may feel increasingly alienated by an uncertain social environment which bears all the hallmarks of neoliberal thinking. Ironically, CSDW may also experience this sense of alienation and insecurity as their roles become increasingly marketised and uncertain. This may make engaging communities in sport both challenging and complex.

As explored throughout this thesis the way in which neoliberal political ideology drives policy, and subsequently practice, may mean that achieving community integration and cohesion through sport becomes increasingly difficult. If CSDW are subject to short-term employment contracts of one to three years, this is

unlikely to ascertain trust from the communities within which they work. These communities may well have been at the receiving end of a myriad of social programmes and may themselves have learned how to ‘play the system’, in full knowledge that CSDW are under pressure to achieve throughput targets. In turn, such communities can become familiar with a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ service provision and may become increasingly knowledgeable of their community’s status in achieving funding for such programmes due to high indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) scores.

In order to fully realise sport policy targets linked to social and community development (HM Government, 2015) it is argued that an understanding of the broader definitions of community is essential, alongside an awareness of differential power relations within communities. Such awareness may help contribute towards locating the community at the heart of CSD and ensuring maximum impact of initiatives.

Chapter Five: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter introduces the philosophical assumptions that guided the methodology of the study and highlights the research strategy and methods used. The flow from a social constructivist ontology through an interpretivist epistemology is subsequently contextualised within the research design and chosen methods.

The structure and agency 'problem' (Hay, 2017; Grix, 2019) is conceptualised and positioned within the thesis. That is, the ontological debate concerning whether research is focused on micro-level processes or macro-level processes (Giddens & Sutton, 2017; Grix, 2019) and the influence this may have on the research process itself. Finally, the researcher's influence on the study is discussed.

Ontological Considerations

In determining the ontological positioning of any piece of research, consideration must be given to what constitutes the social and political reality of the world (Hay, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ontology highlights 'what's out there to know'. Therefore,, it provides the foundations for the development of an epistemological position, which is concerned with what and how we can know about a particular social phenomenon (Grix, 2019). In this respect, this research is seated within a constructivist ontology (Berger & Luckmann 1991; Burr 2003). Constructivists suggest that social phenomena are a result of social interactions and because of this are forever evolving (Bryman, 2016). In contrast, an objectivist approach proposes that social phenomena and their meanings exist independently of our knowledge, and that external facts are beyond our influence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

It could be argued that sport policy and strategy are beyond influence, determined by an ideological positioning which drives practice. However, policies are devised by people, who will, in turn, have been influenced by their own knowledge, experiences, and situational circumstances and contexts.

Constructivists study how, and sometimes why, participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations (Charmaz, 2014). Fischer (2003) has been instrumental in bringing this focus on discursive practices in to the world of policy analysis and emphasising the importance of the subjective foundations of social reality.

Reasons for differences in approach to community sport delivery can stem from the fact that at the grassroots level, sport policy is interpreted and delivered by CSDW through social interaction - conversations, networks, partnerships – all of which shape meaning and may influence CSDW professional practice. As Yanow and Shwartz- Shea (2015) highlight, the ‘meaning-making’ activity of human actors is central to understanding significant dimensions of causality which may be obscured in positivist studies. Although policy and strategy provide the structure and parameters for delivery, it is social interaction which influences how community sport is delivered and the causality and dimensions of policy interpretation within practice. Within this research, the very essence of such social interaction is under investigation. From the outset, the study was concerned with examining CSDW and policymakers’ personal opinions regarding the impact of political ideology and (for CSDW) policy on their day to day work.

The ontological and epistemological position of this thesis is strongly aligned to those who have promoted an interpretivist approach to policy analysis (Fischer et al., 2007; Yanow, 2007; Wagenaar, 2015; Bevir & Rhodes, 2018), in that it highlights the importance of social interactions at all levels and how such interactions shape personal values, policy, and ultimately practice. For example, both CSDW and policymakers enter the profession from a variety of backgrounds and with differing experiences and aspirations, constructing their own value set from such experiences (Bloyce & Smith 2010; Pitchford & Collins, 2010; Mackintosh, 2012).

The underpinning constructivist ontology of this thesis lays the foundations for an interpretive epistemological approach. It can be argued that ontology and epistemology are inextricably linked and that an ontological stance implies a particular epistemological stance and vice-versa (Crotty, 1998). The next section demonstrates this relationship and highlights how the constructivist ontological

positioning is developed within the epistemology of the thesis.

Epistemological Considerations

Epistemological discussions in social research methods literature generally highlight two opposing positions – positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2016; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Positivism is linked to an objectivist ontology – whereby knowledge of the social world is acquired by applying methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality (Bryman, 2016). Positivists believe that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it and that social worlds are governed by patterns and regularities, causes and consequences just as is found in the natural world (Denscombe, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). A positivist epistemological position favours empirical evidence and a clear distinction between 'fact' and 'value' (Hughes & Sharrock, 2014; Grix, 2019). In contrast, interpretivism is concerned with understanding social interaction and meaning within a given context (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). Interpretivism focuses predominantly on agency and how people construct their social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) and is therefore strongly aligned to a social constructivist ontology.

Epistemologically, this research adopts an interpretivist approach which is concerned with the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the everyday social realities of the respondents concerned (Grix, 2019). Researchers and participants make assumptions about what is real, based on their knowledge and experiences (Charmaz, 2014), and because of this, data is somewhat subjective and open to interpretation. Interpretivism acknowledges that the researcher's values and understanding of the subject shapes the research undertaken. Making this explicit, seeks to minimise any potential bias that may result from such an approach (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). It is worth noting at this point that I have extensive experience working within community sport development, both at policy making level, and grass roots delivery, hence the interest in conducting this research. I started my career working as a sport and physical activity development coordinator for a large NHS trust in London. Here I delivered sport and physical activity sessions for those with acute and long-term mental health issues, those based within the trust's medium secure unit, cardiac rehabilitation Phase IV and those who had been referred by their

consultant to lose weight for an operation. It was a diverse role that brought me in to contact with a wide range of people and lifestyles. From here I moved in to working for the National Probation Service, using sport as a means to reintegrate offenders back in to the community. I completed my master's qualification and then moved in to a research environment. I managed large scale research projects including the Young People and Sport in England Survey and also the Best Value and Performance Indicators National Survey, among others. This experience of being involved at high levels of research and policy development as well as at the grassroots of CSD, led me to reflect and question the extent to which those involved at government level truly understood the day to day challenges of delivery at a grass roots level and what community sport development entails. It is this experience that led to the interest in conducting empirical work spanning policy to practice. I am mindful, and do have a reflexive awareness, that such experience can skew the way in which questions are asked and findings are interpreted. Throughout the research process I have constantly reflected on how I am conducting interviews and analysing data in light of my practice experience. Authors have acknowledged the presence of a 'double reflexivity' within their work – that being the challenge of writing up, re-presenting and constructing a textual narrative that remains true to participants lived social world (Blackman & Commane, 2012; Johns, 2017) and I too have found this has taken careful consideration and thought to ensure a true account of participants' lived experiences.

In accepting that knowledge is based on the subjective experiences of participants, it is acknowledged that participant perceptions are, in turn, shaped by structures, organisational relations and other conditions (Smith & Sparkes, 2019). In this respect, issues relating to structure and agency are inextricably linked. There has been debate regarding the usefulness of focusing on a philosophical dualism in epistemological thinking, which encourages the researcher to adopt a method-led rather than a question-led approach (Grix, 2019). A method-led approach exacerbates the dichotomous divide between a positivist and interpretivist position, with the end result contributing to a limited understanding and appreciation of the full spectrum of research methods (Grix, 2019). This duality echoes the philosophical split often associated with structure and agency. Some authors emphasise structure and agency as a

‘dualism’, or two separate entities (Archer, 2003), whereas others believe structure and agency form a ‘duality’ and are one and the same (Giddens, 1986). Hay (2017) expands on Giddens (1986) notion of duality by introducing a strategic relational model which emphasises a notion that structure and agency are inextricably linked. Structure and agency do not exist in and of themselves, rather they co-exist through relational interaction (Hay, 2017). The same could be said of positivist and interpretivist epistemologies and how such thinking then influences methods. Some authors highlight that real-world research rarely falls within these ‘neat’ paradigms, and as such, is carried out ‘on the border’ between both. (Robson & McCartan, 2016). On one hand, our experiences in the world are necessarily constrained by the nature of that world; on the other, our understanding of the world is inherently limited to our interpretations of our experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). By examining the influence of sport policy on community sport development practice, this research focused on this relational interaction between structure and agency. Beyond that, it also sought to examine the views of those involved with creating the policy and infrastructure in which community sport development is located. However, the emphasis is on how the actors (CSDW and policy makers) interpret such structural influences (policy, government sport agencies) and the impact they have on community sport development. While positivists and interpretivists appear to have dichotomous epistemological views (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) it can be argued that a continuum exists between objective and subjective viewpoints, the choice of which depends upon the nature of the research question being asked and at which point in the research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Dewey’s pragmatic philosophical thinking is highly relevant to this discussion. He sought to break down the dualism between positivistic and interpretivist traditions (Dewey, 1925). For Dewey (1925) positivistic and interpretivist assertions are equally important claims about the nature of human experience. He emphasised that the research question, rather than the method, should focus the research. Punch (2000, p.5) concurs, stating that whatever method is employed, ‘methods should follow from questions’ not the other way around (see also Bryman, 2016). By starting with the research question, the researcher avoids what Punch terms ‘methodolatry’, that is, a combination of method and idolatry to describe a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the

exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told.

For this study, the research questions were the determinant force within the context of the overall research strategy. They subsequently influenced the ontological and epistemological positioning of the work, as well as the research design and methods. In this respect this work shares the pragmatic philosophic assumptions of Dewey (1925). A pragmatic epistemology was investigated and strongly considered for the thesis, as the emphasis on breaking down barriers between positivist and interpretivist thinking and focusing on a question-led, rather than a method-led approach was important to the author. Although the study is concerned with a micro-level interpretive focus on agency, it also examines the effect of structure upon agency. For example, examining opinions about the impact of policy upon practice elucidates participants' perceptions of the impact of structural forces upon practice. Policy is not devised within a cultural and economic vacuum but is devised by political institutions which adhere to and promote specific ideologies that drive their focus. Such ideological thinking is made explicit through policy, which then drives practice via directed funding. In this respect, notions of structure and agency within this thesis have a strong interrelationship. However, the key focus is on the participants' understandings and interpretations of their lived experiences, and because of this the analytical emphasis was upon establishing and interpreting such experiences.

Research Strategy

The social constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological positioning of this research naturally aligned to a qualitative research method. The aim of the research was to generate rich, in-depth data which would not be possible to access by means of a quantitative method of investigation (Flick, 2018).

Qualitative researchers attempt to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning that participants bring to their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Cresswell, 2013). Cresswell (2013) highlights how we use qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories and hear their voices, whilst trying to minimise the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and respondents.

Qualitative research is not borne of one specific methodological approach but encompasses a range of approaches with epistemologically different perspectives, such as phenomenology, narrative research, grounded theory and ethnography (Cresswell, 2013; Bryman, 2016). This study utilises a grounded theory perspective in that it tries to move beyond simple description to generate a unified theoretical explanation with emergent theory 'grounded' in participant accounts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Approaches to grounded theory have been heavily influenced by Glaser and Strauss (2017), Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2014). The breakdown of the professional relationship between Glaser and Strauss is well documented and has created a rift whereby researchers utilising grounded theory have tended to describe themselves as Strausserian or Glaserian grounded theorists (Urquhart, 2013). Strausserian grounded theorists follow the one coding paradigm and four prescriptive steps of coding presented by Strauss (1987) whereas Glaserian grounded theorists adopt a three stage, less formulaic process of open, selective and theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978). Charmaz (2014) builds on Glaser (1978) and adds axial coding to arrive at a four-stage coding process, which is not as formulaic as Strauss's four step process (Strauss, 1987) and could be perceived as halfway between Glaser and Strauss regarding its approach to coding. Given this discussion, it is unsurprising that grounded theory can seem impenetrable as a method, and criticism regarding the accessibility of this method was levelled at Glaser and Strauss's (2017) original work that is perceived as the foundational text of grounded theory (Urquhart, 2013; Charmaz, 2014).

This study utilises Glaser's three step approach to coding (open, selective, theoretical) and aligns with Charmaz (2014), who views Strauss's (1987) and Strauss and Corbin's (1998) use of complex terms and jargon and conceptual maps as a distraction and an attempt to gain power in their use. Moreover, the study adopts an iterative approach in that each stage of the research process was sequential and findings informed the next stage. An iterative study design is seen as a key feature of grounded theory, along with purposive sampling (Glaser, 1987; Urquhart, 2013).

Phase one consisted of semi-structured individual interviews with CSDW. A

discussion guide was utilised (Appendix 2) but conversation was allowed to expand beyond themes on the discussion guide, if participants so wished. Phase two also utilised semi-structured individual interviews, but this time with those involved in sport policymaking. Themes raised from phase one interviews with CSDW informed the phase two discussion guide (Appendix 4). Semi-structured, individual interviews were chosen to protect anonymity, some participants did know each other and therefore this may have closed down or biased some conversation. Individual interviews gave participants the freedom to speak openly, this was especially important in phase two as questions relating to the influence of politics on policy may have been sensitive topics for some participants. Phase three moved away from semi-structured individual interviews to a group interview environment. Instead of participants being physically present within a group interview, phase three was conducted online, and whilst the internet was the setting for this phase of research, its ontological and epistemological positioning aligned with phases one and two of the research in that it was underpinned by a constructivist-interpretivist philosophy.

Research participants and sampling

Phase One

In the first phase of the research non-probability sampling was utilised with participants purposively selected to ensure they had practical experience of the community sport development sector, rather than simply a strategic and policy remit. Initially, contact details of six CSDW were obtained via word- of -mouth from postgraduate students who I used to teach and were now working in the sector, as well as colleagues I used to work and liaise with in the geographical area. Once these initial contacts had been recruited snowball sampling was utilised in order to reach further respondents working within these environments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In total, 15 participants were interviewed, from departments and organisations including: local authority sport development (*n*= 4) national governing bodies (NGB) of sport (*n* = 4), community sport partnerships (CSP) (*n* = 4) and sporting social enterprises (*n* = 3). All of those interviewed worked within the South West of England. Table 2 offers a profile of those interviewed. Some of the job titles have been changed to protect anonymity and therefore omit the name of the sport that those working within an NGB setting were responsible for developing.

Table 2: Participants: Community sport development workers* Pseudonyms used

NAME*	POSITION	AGE
LOCAL AUTHORITY CSDW		
Wendy	Sport development manager	50
Eddie	Sport development officer	30
Clive	Community sport officer	31
George	Sport development manager	39
NGB CSDW		
Amy	Sport development officer (participation)	29
Oscar	Senior development officer	32
Lee	Sport development coordinator (participation)	27
Maria	Sport development officer	23
CSP CSDW		
Laura	Community sport manager	34
James	Head of community sport	38
Ann	Sport and PA Officer	28
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CSDW		
Eric	Sport development manager	33
Julie	Community sport development worker	25
Isaac	Community sports coach	23
Joseph	Community sport coordinator	26

Phase Two

This phase sought to interview those involved with high level policy decision making. Purposive sampling was again utilised and the researcher's work with Sport England and associated contacts through work at this level helped attract five initial participants. Snowball sampling was utilised and through this a further seven were recruited. Arranging interviews proved problematic due to the busy diaries of both the researcher and participants. Subsequently three interviews from the sample of twelve proved impossible to coordinate and this has left

some gaps at this level, specifically the policymaker who devised the latest sport policy (HM Government, 2015). That said policymakers leading previous sport policies have been interviewed. Table three offers a profile of those interviewed during phase two:

Table 3: High Level Policy Decision Makers * Pseudonyms used

NAME*	POSITION
Alice	Chair of major sporting organisation Head of NGB
Bella	Chief Executive Major national sporting organisation
Isaac	High level civil servant – involved at cabinet level and government departmental level
Jack	'Head of' role at sports NDLB
Alistair	High level civil servant – involved at
William	Chief Executive
Frankie	Sport Consultant
Brian	Politician and member of government
Lauren	High level civil servant – government

Phase Three

The Padlet link was initially sent to CSDW participants who participated in phase one of the research, along with a 'How to Post on Padlet' tutorial, which was sent via Padlet to ensure participants were introduced to the simplicity of posting ideas. These initial participants were asked to recommend further participants who currently worked within community sport and to forward these names to the researcher. In limiting the initial dissemination of the link to phase one participants it was hoped a level of credibility and trustworthiness would be established amongst other participants whom they had recommended to the researcher (snowball sampling), and that the researcher had not met or did not know. The criteria for posting on the Padlet was that participants currently worked in community sport in either a delivery or management capacity. The criteria was kept deliberately broad to capture a wide range of CSDW opinions. A

total of 25 participants were recruited to this stage and given pseudonyms to participate.

Data Collection

Phases One and Two

In phases one and two data were collected via individual, semi-structured interviews that explored participant experiences from their perspective (Urquhart, 2013). The questioning style was open-ended and, where necessary, further probing took place to clarify participant responses (Bryman, 2015). Phase one questioning of CSDW explored a range of issues surrounding their experiences of their profession; their role, the perceived impact of their work in the communities they served, and finally their perceptions of how policy may have influenced their practice (see Appendix 2, Phase One Discussion Guide). Data collection for phase one took place between July 2013 and July 2014.

Phase two questioned those involved in sport policymaking to probe their understanding of community, and perceptions of how policy may impact at a grass roots level. During phase two, participants were also questioned about their experiences of being involved with policy making and their opinions of the latest sport strategies (DCMS, 2015; Sport England 2016) (see Appendix 4, Phase Two Discussion Guide). Data collection for phase two took place between November 2015 and August 2016. Before discussions began and, as far as practicable, all data collection took place at the participant's place of work or a prearranged telephone interview. Lasting between 40-150 minutes, interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim.

Phase Three

Phase three was conducted via Padlet, an online discussion and collaboration tool that has been widely used by teachers and researchers in recent years as a means of engaging students in class discussion and with blended learning activities (Dunbar, 2017; Kelly, 2018; Rajiah, 2018). Padlet was chosen because of its intuitive ease of use and the ability to share multi-media as well as written 'post it' notes on the discussion wall. Padlet does not restrict the length or types of posts, thus offering participants freedom to choose how to express

their opinions. Using Padlet enabled participants to see what other participants had posted and allowed for further development of ideas. This final phase opened discussion out to a group setting, shifting it away from individual interviews. The aim being to expand the reach, discussion and sharing of thoughts to other CSDW, beyond participants interviewed during phases one and two of the research. In this respect, the internet was the setting to enable this opening out of the research, rather than the object of study (Salmons, 2016). Themes from phases one and two were revisited to provide a refined and succinct overview and framing of them on the Padlet wall as a starting point for discussion.

This phase utilised elicited data collection techniques, in that data was elicited from participants in response to the researcher's initial posts (Salmons, 2016). However, once participants had started posting their responses, the conversation was allowed to flow in an unstructured way and was no longer led by the researcher. The aim being to enable a natural progression of ideas, and elicitation of information deemed most important to participants. Because of this, as the Padlet progressed, data collection took on an extant quality, utilising materials developed without the researcher's influence. Therefore, the research design for phase three crossed both extant and elicited data typologies (Salmons 2016).

By default, all Padlets are semi-private. That is, when a new Padlet is created the address or URL is only known to the author and not published publicly. When the address is shared with others via email or social networks, the link becomes semi- private as people who have the link can access it as well. Because of this and the potential for it to be more widely disseminated beyond participants, it was decided that the researcher would act as the central point of contact and pseudonyms would be given, along with a briefing on anonymity and confidentiality. Informed consent forms were separately tailored for participants that had participated within phase one of the research (see Appendix 5) and those that were new participants within the research (see Appendix 6). Participants were briefed to not specifically mention where they worked or post anything that may identify them within this stage of research. They were also informed that the Padlet may be shared with policymakers but that their consent would be sought before doing so.

After sending the link and the 'How to Post on Padlet' tutorial, each participant was contacted and the tutorial and phase three of the research discussed to ensure they were happy with the process and were able to ask any questions they may have about the research.

Of the 25 that were recruited to this phase, it is fair to say that engagement across the 25 was variable, with a core of twelve participants engaging regularly with discussion on the Padlet wall, whilst others contributed intermittently. Only one participant from the core of twelve regular participants was involved with phase one of the research, with other phase one participants choosing to 'lurk' rather than fully participate. The Padlet wall was open for a time limited period, from April 2017 – September 2017 and regular reminders were necessary to ensure participants responded to any questions that had been asked of them from other participants via the Padlet. In this respect the conversations that the Padlet initiated between participants was unforeseen and provided some useful insights that were very much organic in nature and true to the grounded theory ethos of data collection (Glaser, 1987; Urquhart; 2013; Charmaz, 2014).

One of the benefits of Padlet in relation to other forms of qualitative interviewing is that participants can respond to each other's comments and therefore the narrative builds with all participants able to view the discussion unfolding. Given Padlet is a written form of communication, there was less of a tendency for one or two voices to dominate the conversation, as can sometimes occur in group interviews. Prompts were needed on a regular basis as it was easy for participants to miss questions that had been posed to them by others on the Padlet wall. In this respect the administration of the Padlet wall was a labour intense process.

Padlet offers a visual representation of how discussions have evolved with linking arrows between posts showing the interrelationship of discussions (see Appendix 11). This relationship was determined by participants, rather than the researcher, as would have been the case with any other type of qualitative interview. In this respect, the hermeneutic interpretive bias was reduced. Presentation and interpretation of data followed an in vivo process in which reliance on the

participants themselves giving meaning to the data was emphasised.

A limitation of Padlet is that discussion can become stunted as there are often several days between posts and participants responding to one another's question/s. This can interfere with the flow of discussion and can reduce the motivation to participate.

Upon completion of this phase, participants commented that they had enjoyed reading other posts and responding to them but did not want to keep visiting the Padlet wall at regular intervals. Rather, they would have preferred to have all been online at the same time, just the once, participating in a moderated discussion.

Data analysis

Phases One and Two

Data analysis across all three phases utilised Glaser's (1978) process for inductive data analysis (open coding, selective coding and theoretical coding). This approach is based on a constructivist grounded theory approach the aim of which is interpretive understanding (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2014).

Firstly, the transcripts were read in full to gain an overview of the data. Secondly, each transcript was individually coded, line by line (see example in Appendix 7). These initial codes were provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data (Glaser,1978; Charmaz, 2014). Secondly, the open codes were clustered and inductively rationalised into a number of over-arching topics as part of the selective coding process (Glaser, 1987; Charmaz, 2014; Saldana, 2016).. An example of the selective coding tables from phase two is presented in appendix eight. A reflective journal was completed after every interview, in which the researcher's thoughts about the interview were recorded. Notes from this reflective journal were utilised alongside the selective coding across all phases and informed a series of theoretical memos (Urquhart, 2013) which are presented in appendix nine and helped direct the presentation of the research.

Finally, the relationships between selective codes across all phases of research

were examined and situated against the theoretical memos (see Appendix 10: Theoretical Coding/Relationship between Selective Codes). At this stage a pattern started to occur in that selective codes could be categorised as being at the macro, meso or micro level of influence and several interrelationships were evident. In capturing these interrelationships and intersectionality across selective codes a conceptual framework was devised and will be introduced and discussed in chapter nine. Through the design of a conceptual framework, the final stage of theoretical coding has moved beyond solely utilising a grounded theory coding process for data analysis, and has resulted in theory generation, as was the original intention of Glaser and Strauss (2017).

Phase Three

Essentially, the Padlet wall was treated as a transcript and therefore analysed in the same way as phases one and two of the research. Padlet serves to reduce researcher bias in representation of results, as it essentially presents raw data in its original format and in this respect many of the initial and focused codes had already been established by participants, who often gave their posts subject headings (see Appendices nine and ten). Therefore, it was possible to jump to the selective coding stage, rather than start with open coding. A screenshot of some of the discussion on the Padlet wall has been presented in appendix eleven and a printout of the discussion (generated by Padlet) in appendix twelve.

In relation to other qualitative methods that are face to face rather than online, Padlet offers a simplified means of data analysis with reduced researcher interpretation and bias. There is no need to transcribe interviews, as essentially the Padlet wall serves as the transcript. Although the administration of the Padlet wall is time consuming, much time is saved in not having to transcribe discussions.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to being interviewed all research participants were presented with an information sheet outlining the aims of the research and asked to provide voluntary informed consent (see appendices 1 - 4). The research was approved by the University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Committee and was designed in accordance with the ethical guidance offered by the University of

Gloucestershire (2008) and the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2017) concerning the roles and responsibilities of the researcher, and the rights of the research participant. By its nature qualitative research is a dialogic method and influenced by the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Josselson, 2019). Given my background within community sport development it was essential that I did not 'lead' and influence the answers and this required reflexive awareness on my part as previously discussed.

All data was stored within a locked filing cabinet in my home office. All electronic- based media including audio files and emails to and from participants were removed from desktop or networked systems and stored on a portable hard drive kept within my home office. This minimised risks from unsecured networks, computer viruses, data leaching and accidental wiping (BSA, 2017).

Phase three of the thesis presented some complex ethical considerations, in particular the snowball sampling approach that encouraged those initially approached to post on the wall to recruit other CSDW. In this respect, consideration had to be given to the nature of informed consent and anonymity. Participants were free at any stage to withdraw their posts from the wall. In this respect all consent was voluntary, and participants could withdraw their comments from the discussion without penalty or repercussions. As with stages one and two all participants were asked to complete an informed consent form before engaging with the Padlet, to ensure they were fully aware of the method and potential use of data.

As previously mentioned, by their very nature Padlet walls are semi-private and this means that even though the link to the Padlet wall was by invitation only, it was not beyond possibility that the link could be forwarded and therefore accessed by those outside of the research. In utilising pseudonyms, devising a 'How to Post on Padlet' tutorial and fully briefing all participants regarding the nature of Padlet and confidentiality and anonymity issues, it was hoped to minimise the potential for any unforeseen reputational or professional harm to participants. Beyond this, the researcher acted as a central point of contact for any questions regarding the research or Padlet wall.

The Reflexive Researcher

Reflexivity is the recognition that a researcher's background and prior knowledge have an unavoidable influence on the research they are conducting. This means that no researcher can claim to be completely objective (Mays & Pope, 2000). Reflexivity is essentially a process of being self-aware and open about the possible influences of personal assumptions, values and ideas acting to obstruct the reality of participants lived experiences (Hibbert et al., 2010). The following section offers an insight into the researcher's experiences that may have influenced the design of the study and interpretation of data. In offering this insight it is hoped that the reader can make a reasoned judgment regarding the level at which this may have impacted on the study.

Reflexive Musings

Given my early career in a governmental research context it was difficult to accept a purely qualitative focus, when my professional experience has been so strongly focused on a positivist paradigm, whereby surveys and quantification of data was given sovereignty. Therefore my focus on method for phase three of the thesis has shifted several times from conducting a survey (in order to triangulate results from the qualitative phases), to giving participants camcorders to record and offer their own narrative, to a group interview, before finally opting for an online qualitative discussion via Padlet. Due to the consideration of these different approaches to the final stage, I started to read around the philosophical tradition of pragmatism and thought that this may offer a useful epistemological underpinning. I found the work of Dewey, Peirce, and more recently, Rorty informative yet not quite aligned to the interpretivistic nature of the study. I therefore travelled full circle back to my original thinking with regards to ontological and epistemological influences. However, in reading Dewey, Peirce and Rorty's texts, I feel this enhanced and strengthened my rationale for a constructivist–interpretative approach and has enabled me to position and reflect more broadly upon the methodology of the thesis.

I decided to adopt an online qualitative method for phase three after much reflection and discussion with both academic colleagues and those working in industry. I questioned how I would ensure anonymity and then considered if this was essential, as some participants may purposefully not want anonymity and

may wish to share directly their experiences with policymakers. I wanted to ensure that I treated participants with respect and at no time could my research cause harm (reputational or otherwise) to participants. I therefore opted to centrally coordinate invitations to post on the Padlet. This was incredibly time consuming but on reflection I think was the best approach to provide anonymity via pseudonyms and to ensure each participant was fully briefed with regards to the research and the use of Padlet.

I have been fortunate to work at a high level within sport and was directly involved with devising sport policy as part of my role at Sport England. I found my time in this role somewhat disillusioning given that I came from a sports development background and had changed career to move specifically into this environment, returning to university as a mature student to facilitate this move. During my time at Sport England I was surprised by the low regard in which CSDW were held and beyond that, the limited knowledge of sport development from ministers and civil servants responsible for sport. I therefore chose to move back in to working at a grassroots level and this surprised many of my colleagues at the time.

This experience spanning policy making to practice is somewhat unusual and prompted the thinking (alongside an increasing interest in community development) for the basis of this thesis. In some respects, it has been a journey of discovery, not just for participants (hopefully) but also myself as I try and make sense of what at times seems a highly illogical world.

Summary and Delimitations

Within this chapter the rationale for a social constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological positioning of the thesis has been discussed. The research thus followed a qualitative design due to its focus on eliciting meaning and understanding of participants' lived experiences (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The use of Padlet within phase three served to triangulate results and confirmed a number of the findings elicited during phase one, and to a lesser extent phase two.

Judging the 'quality' of qualitative research has proved notoriously difficult, with

some authors advocating criterion-based checklists (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; 2016) and others vehemently opposing them (Smith & Sparkes, 2019). Advocates for criterion based checklists point to the usefulness of guidance in being able to assess and value qualitative research across a range of subjects (Tracy, 2013), whilst others believe that such lists limit creativity and subject qualitative methods to quantitative parameters, producing a closed system of judgement that unnecessarily restricts what constitutes legitimate research (Garratt & Hodkinson, 1998; Seale, 1999). Instead of utilising such tick-box approaches, the quality and construct validity of this research can be found in the transparency of method. The ontological and epistemological positioning are explicit, and a clear rationale given for the choice of method. A reflexive approach was adopted that acknowledged the researcher's experiences as an integral part of the research and one that could not be dislocated from the subject under enquiry, whilst ensuring that participants' voices were paramount. Beyond that, the design of the research and data collection and analysis have been made as explicit as possible to promote replicability.

That said it is acknowledged that this research has been undertaken during a certain timeframe which will of course impact on the results and in that respect represents a snapshot into participants lived experiences during those times. Participants were predominantly based in the south west of England (excluding phase two participants) and this may also have influenced results. However, it is worth highlighting that such geographical containment was purposively planned to ensure consistency of experience regarding political environment and geographical context. That said, as the research progressed the necessity for restricting the geographical area became less important. What was under investigation was the participants' experiences of their day to day world and their interpretation of how sport policy relates to practice at the grassroots. In this respect it was the process of 'doing the job' and participants knowledge of the impact of sport policy upon practice that was under investigation and therefore controlling the environmental context, in hindsight, has not been as important as originally anticipated.

It is accepted that a qualitative study situated within a specific geographical locale is not necessarily representative of the population of CSDW. Beyond this,

interviews with policymakers cannot be assumed to be representative of everyone involved with sport policymaking. Instead, what the research uncovers is attitudes and perceptions of a specific group of people concerning how CSD is operating and the political forces that may impact it on a day to day basis. That said, just because findings may not be representative, they still 'give voice' to participants who may not otherwise be heard.

The second phase of research with policymakers proved problematic at times. Policymakers are busy people and as Dean of Teaching and Learning during this phase of research, I also had a hectic diary. Therefore, three participants that were willing to be involved were not interviewed due to sequential cancellations of meetings and an inability to establish a subsequent time that suited all parties within the allocated timescales for this phase of research. This has meant fewer policymakers have been interviewed than otherwise anticipated. That said, the sport policymaking participants within phase two cross all organisations (from sport to government) and it is hoped that such experience and organisational spread of participants negates the smaller than originally anticipated sample size.

In focusing on the role of political ideology and its impact on CSDW there are several authors that could have been utilised to frame a theoretical lens. One such author is Foucault whose work discusses that power is everywhere, embodied in discourse and is diffuse, rather than concentrated and enacted (Foucault, 1991). This would have been an interesting lens as it would accommodate CSDW through to policymakers and instead of investigating a hierarchical aspect of power would have examined the meaning making attached to the establishment of power relations and how discourse and interaction is influential in gaining and maintaining power. Although the work of Foucault (and others) may have been highly relevant his work was discounted in that several texts apply the work of Foucault to sport (Rail & Harvey, 1995; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Giulianotti, 2016) and on initial reading his work proved unappealing in comparison to Gramsci. The work of Gramsci was a draw in that the concept of hegemony seemed to offer a complementary and highly relevant theoretical lens for a neoliberal ideology. Beyond this, the life history and struggles that Gramsci encountered over his lifetime were illuminating and served

to contextualise and make Gramsci's work resonate.

The next three chapters pass the baton to participants to discuss their experiences of working within a highly diverse and rapidly evolving community sport sector. We start with CSDW – those working at the grassroots of sport and ask about their knowledge of politics, policy and the challenges and benefits of working within an ever-changing environment. In so doing, we start to unpack the drivers behind community sport development.

Chapter Six: Community Sport Development: From Tracksuits to Targets

Introduction

As discussed in chapter three, ideology is defined as shared beliefs that guide and shape people's actions and can be located at both the political and economic level (Steger & Roy, 2010; Peck, 2013). Neoliberalism has been the dominant Western ideology for over half a century and within neoliberalism, discourses of efficiency, accountability, consumerism and choice are emphasised in place of a sense of collective responsibility (DeLissovoy, 2018). The evolution of community sport development from tracksuits, and a focus on practical delivery, to targets, and an emphasis on performance management and participants as consumers, was cemented with the introduction of CCT to sport and leisure services in 1989. This evolution has therefore spanned a 30-year timescale.

The instrumental use of sport to alleviate a multitude of social problems has been evident since the Wolfenden Report of 1960 which highlighted the contribution that sport could make in alleviating wide-ranging social issues such as criminal behaviour and health inequalities (Bloyce & Smith, 2010). However, the nature of this focus has evolved from the traditional welfare model of developing sport in the community, to developing communities through sport and has spanned several political administrations including New Labour's 'Third Way' social investment state model (Morel et al., 2012) to more recently, the Conservatives social mobility agenda (Major & Machin, 2018). The social mobility agenda strengthens the focus on personal responsibility, and places emphasis on outcomes rather that outputs, achieved via diversified funding models. However, Major and Machin (2018) are cynical of this approach and highlight how now, more than ever, social mobility is difficult to attain, and few individuals will achieve upward social mobility in a single generation.

Utilising a Gramscian lens, it can be observed that dominant political ideological beliefs are embedded in practice through the transmittance of neoliberal values and norms, driven via policy. This is achieved through the necessity to meet

specified targets in order to receive funding, and by funding being ring-fenced towards certain target groups. This brings into question the coercive and persuasive power of the state (via policy), in relation to the perceived autonomy of individual agency. Althusser (2014) discusses the ISA (ideological state apparatus) as a means by which personal values are influenced by ideological practice. Instead of direct repression, or as Althusser (2014) terms it, repressive state apparatus (RSA), individuals willingly conform to the general consensus and are therefore complicit in creating a structure and culture which may not work in their (individual) or their communities (collective) favour, but instead serves to benefit the ruling class. Gramsci used the term 'hegemony' to define the process by which an ideology becomes so dominant within society that it is internalised as common sense by the mass of people (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci's concept of hegemony proposes that people are tacit in their own oppression, and readily succumb to and participate in (often unknowingly) a pervasive form of ideological persuasion. From this perspective, personal philosophies of community sport are influenced by prevailing norms and policy, which are in turn devised through the conceptual lens of the ruling class. A hegemonic analysis would highlight that prevailing norms are willingly accepted by CSDW who have an inability to be critically conscious (Freire, 1968), oppose their environment or recognise their own servitude within the political structure (Gramsci, 1971). However, this research highlights that there are subtle nuances within a hegemonic acceptance of prevailing norms and how relational issues of structure and agency manifest in the lived experience of CSDW. With these issues in mind, how aware, we might ask, are CSDW of the political forces affecting their practice, and the pressures and opportunities sport policy exerts? In this chapter these questions are addressed by way of three sub- sections: (i) Politics driving practice, (ii) The dissociation between government priorities and community needs, and (iii) Community sport or show time? The overall aim is to map the terrain over which these issues were experienced and contested within the context of participants' working lives and the ways in which this impacted the everyday delivery of CSD.

Politics Driving Practice

This section draws on discussions with CSDW between July 2013 and July 2014 and highlights how political ideology and policy impacted upon the everyday

delivery of CSD. The Coalition Government's, 'Creating a Sporting Habit for Life: A New Youth Sport Strategy' (DCMS, 2012) was the driver for CSD practice during this era and promoted, "a more rigorous, targeted and results-orientated way of thinking about grassroots sport, which focuses all our energies into reaching out to young people more effectively" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012 p1). The strategy placed an emphasis on the 14 – 25-year-old age bracket, echoing discussion within The Wolfenden Report (1960), regarding how this age range was highly likely to drop out of sport as they transitioned from school to university and/or the workplace. Within this policy, NGBs were tasked to spend around 60 per cent of their funding on activities that promoted sport as a habit for life amongst young people, further highlighting that the government would, "ensure that sports are completely focused on what they have to achieve, with payment by results – including the withdrawal of funding from governing bodies that fail to deliver agreed objectives" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012, p4). Emphasising neoliberal ideals of performance management, this centralised means of control of NGBs and their delivery against the participation agenda was to prove highly problematic in that it encouraged a 'gaming mentality' and narrow focus on organisational objectives to ensure continuation of funding with little or no regard for community need (Harris & Houlihan, 2016).

At the same time local authority sport was witnessing severe cuts as part of a continued focus on austerity and a more Hayek-inspired policy discourse that government inhibited community action and that further opening up of public services to the private sector would bring innovations and solutions to social issues. From 2010 to 2014 local authority recreation and sport experienced a higher reduction than median for all service areas, with a 40% funding reduction nationally (National Audit Office, 2014 p32) and the discussion with CSDW within this chapter starts to unpack how the effects of such cuts were felt at a grassroots level.

Wendy had worked in a local authority setting for over 20 years and had a strong understanding of the political influences on her day to day work. She had moved into sport development at the age of 30 after working in the civil service since leaving school and then returning to university as a mature student to study sports management. Her passion for sport was clear and she was

committed to ensuring that everyone within the locale which she served had an opportunity to participate in sport, regardless of their personal circumstance. She was an equally strong advocate for the role of physical activity and had created strong links with her local Primary Care Trust and the safer and stronger communities' strategic partnership to enable cohesive service delivery across the region. In this respect, Wendy's proactive nature was clearly demonstrated. In discussing politics, she highlighted,

> At a local level it's not always the same politics as the national level. Once it was 'blue' at the top, but at a local level it was 'red'. So, the local politics were averse to what the national level wanted as locally we wanted a socialist agenda, they didn't want to listen to the entrepreneurs, they wanted subsidy for everyone, which meant raising the taxes and that's what happened. To then base sports development alongside that, it's got to fit both local and national agendas and that takes creativity. So, when you're delivering on the ground you need to be aware of the politics and you need to work with it. And that can be different to what the community wants.

Wendy commented that in her local authority role she always had to remain, 'innovative in the face of change' and believed that sport was still part of her local authority's offer because of her ability to speak to the dominant political agenda - be that sport or health. Through knowing the targets that her local authority had to achieve, and in turn, knowing that ministers were answerable to government, she was able to ensure that the community sport offer in her local authority was perceived as being central to these aims. This aligns with other research which has found that in times of rapid social and political change, the work and job role of CSDW is both unstable and unpredictable, with a need to contribute to a range of competing policy agendas (Bloyce et al., 2008; Pitchford & Collins, 2010; Mackintosh, 2012).

Wendy stated that some of the community sport programmes that she was involved with may not directly contribute to the political party's aims, but instead were a direct request for activities from her community. However, she was able to write reports and funding bids in a manner that aligned to political aims due to her knowledge of the political system. This she termed as 'playing the game'

and discussed how during her time working within sports development she viewed her role as, “Part magician, part second-hand car salesperson and part Mystic Meg visionary, to stay ahead of the game on all levels”.

Being able to ‘play the game’ demonstrates a degree of individual agency, a way in which through her knowledge of the political system Wendy was able to ensure that sport, as a non-statutory service, retained its funding. Gramsci (1971) discusses how the ruling class exert ideological beliefs and that individuals are often complicit in accepting such ideologies as the norm. However, other CSDW, such as Julie, were also finding ways to circumvent the system,

> I work in Aaronville and they want activities for the elderly but that’s not on Sport England’s agenda so I have to look around for other funding, may be a more local funding pot for example, and get a bit creative. Funding is a barrier though, as you have to fit your project in to what the higher organisation’s agenda is… seems a bit backwards to me.

Julie worked for a social enterprise that focused on deprived communities, and she voiced frustration at not being able to offer what the community wanted, feeling compelled instead to align the local offer with national funding streams. At the time of interview the sport strategy (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012) was driving a focus on youth, aged 14 to 25. Funding beyond this was available, not necessarily from traditional sports funding streams, i.e., Sport England, but from charitable and grant making trusts (Berry & Manoli, 2018). Sport policy often focuses on target groups, the rationale being that there is not a limitless amount of funding available and therefore resources need to be focused (Henry, 2001; Houlihan & Lindsey; 2013; Widdop et al., 2018). However, this is somewhat at odds with trying to encourage personal responsibility for health and sporting participation, as championed in recent government and Sport England policy (HM Government, 2015; Sport England, 2016), when those taking personal responsibility may be beyond the remit of policy specified target groups. The Aaronville community had been proactive in requesting sporting services but as Julie highlighted, they were not a ‘target’ group, and so funding proved difficult to obtain. This aligns with Grix and Harris’s (2017) discussion regarding centralised target setting for CSD and how this paradoxically, can severely inhibit the delivery of increased sporting participation. They suggest that overarching themes could be utilised and CSDW trusted to

choose the most appropriate targets for the communities in which they work (Grix & Harris, 2017). Julie was not alone in her sense of frustration. Speaking about her experiences in Louistown, Amy articulated similar thoughts,

> When it comes to sport a lot of issues come down to funding: which way's the wind blowing now, and where the money is being targeted. I wonder if we have lost sight of what sports development really is, and instead we're just trying to tag on to everyone's agenda…

As a member of staff for a large NGB, Amy was somewhat dismayed and frustrated at having to 'play the game'. However, she was positive about local authority sports development in helping her deliver targets for her NGB. Indeed, she saw local authority sports development as being crucial to the coordination and direction of community sport as did Eric, who operated a sporting social enterprise also based in Louistown,

> You can't cut local authority funding to the extent they have and expect to achieve all of the sport related goals, it doesn't make sense, especially in sport where it's a non-statutory service. Young people have fewer and fewer services and the few services they have, we expect more and more from them. Local authority sport is crucial for young people.

At the time of interview, spending on local authority sport and leisure services had been reduced from £1.4bn in 2009–10 to £1bn in 2013–14 (Conn, 2015) and shortly after phase one interviews were concluded in late 2015, George Osborne (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) announced a new spending review that subjected the DCMS to a 20% budgetary reduction. Widdop et al., (2018) examined the impact that austerity measures had on sporting participation between 2008 and 2014 and found that increasing sporting participation and widening access targets were not met to any significant degree as participation levels had changed little for lower income 'hard-to- reach' groups who, they argue, tend to rely more upon local authority provision as opposed to commercial or non-profit sport sector providers. Some caution is needed with regards to this study as its method was a secondary analysis of the Active People Survey (APS) between 2008 and 2014 and therefore it cannot be assumed that a correlation of flat lining and reduced participation is necessarily proof

(causation) of the impact of austerity measures, but is instead just that, a correlation. That said, Widdop et el., (2018) corroborate findings of previous studies regarding the negative impact of austerity measures on sport participation (Devine, 2013; Parnell et al., 2015), specifically a Sport for All agenda.

Participants from the first phase of the data collection process were generally positive about the role of local authorities and their unique position to coordinate and champion sport within their locales. This aligned with findings from a 2014 survey undertaken with 92 sports industry leaders, of which 62% believed that public funding for local authority sport should increase (Sports Think Tank, 2014). Most respondents (21%) were from an academic background or from within the private sector offering professional services to sport (13%), hence these results need to be treated with a degree of caution. That said, the survey does highlight the support for local authority sport, in much the same way as participants within the first phase of this research.

The reality of working within LA sport was offered by George. George had been involved with LA sport development for 15 years and was, by his own admission, becoming somewhat jaded about the volume of change experienced year on year,

> A change in government hasn't just impacted on sport development, it's impacted across every service as we have to downsize, to be more 'efficient' to go through 'systems thinking' - that's the buzz word. We systems think daily, because we have to.

This was further emphasised by Eddie who worked for a local authority in a neighbouring county,

> We have to find more and more 'efficiency savings'. Makes me laugh. We can't even be honest about what this is. It's not efficiency savings, it's cuts to services. Teams are being downsized and because we're not a mandatory service, we're vulnerable.

Klein (2007) argues that social activities organised on the basis of public good or social solidarity are branded as inefficient by those who favour limited and dispersed government intervention and the primacy of a free market economy as

championed by Friedman in his seminal text, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Friedman,1962). Friedman (1962) promoted public services to be reorganised as a marketplace, subject to competitive forces and the neoliberal ideals of value for money, efficiency and a focus on the bottom-line logic of the market which emphasises the exchange value of goods and services. The benefits and aims for community sport are often situated within an ethos of public good and social cohesion, and participants within the first data collection phase concurred with Klein's (2007) somewhat damming views of the impact of neoliberalism within public services in that when social activity is subject to market forces, communities can cease to look out for one another and become more focused on their own self-interests.

Paradoxically, the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015), heralds sport as a means of encouraging community cohesion, and a means by which to 'fix' fractured communities; communities that live and exist within the cultural realm of neoliberalism – the very ideology that has promoted self-interest and freedom and exacerbated such fracturing of community in the first place.

Clive who worked for a small district authority was pessimistic both about his role and whether local authority sports development could survive under the current political climate,

> I doubt very much that local authority sports development will be around for much longer. Give it 10 – 15 years and we'll all be gone, and it will be outsourced.

This aligns with the findings of Griggs (2010) who investigated the outsourcing of primary school PE to coaches and found this to be increasingly the norm. Parnell et al., (2017) also witnessed the trend towards outsourcing primary school PE, stating that this was a reflection of a shift in focus from central management, to a competitive, decentralized environment, with a range of deliverers taking advantage of the new funding space, including small businesses, social entrepreneurs and charities. Although such research was conducted in school settings it is highly likely that local authority sport will follow a similar path. King's (2014) findings from a survey of 95 local authorities and 55 senior local authority officers found that 62% of respondents had observed a shift

in the role and remit of local authority sport services from acting as a 'provider' to a 'facilitator', since 1997. Moreover, King's participants argued that leisure professionals must "adapt to survive" (King, 2014 p.364) in much the same way that Wendy emphasised earlier. However, as Clive states, government cuts have been so severe that direct delivery and coordination of community sport via the local authority seems increasingly untenable.

That said, for some participants the changes to local authority sport provision were proving beneficial. Eric established a sporting social enterprise in 2013, which now ran several sports programmes targeting specific groups. He admitted that setting up the venture had been difficult, but that the axing of the local authority sport development department shortly after he established the social enterprise had offered opportunities,

> Local authority sport services being cut has created opportunities for us as a social enterprise. In this area the local sports development team was axed, some charities that relied on certain funding streams that dried up went under and there was a gap in the market. The local authority didn't want to know us when we first set up, but now it's very different.

For Eric and those organisations aligning with neoliberal ideals of market forces, the shift to diversified funding has been beneficial and created opportunities. Julie, who worked with a neighbouring sporting social enterprise (a competitor of Eric's) highlighted how her organisation had also benefited,

> All of the local authority sport development people in this area have gone. Bentown used to have 60 people working in their sport development unit, that's been reduced to five. On one hand they're being told to meet all these targets and then on the other hand they're taking all of the sport development workforce out of the equation!

Julie went on to discuss how the local authority that she worked with was keen to utilise her social enterprise in order to meet their targets - targets they would otherwise have struggled to meet due to their reduced workforce. It is worth noting that Julie's social enterprise drew down government funding to work with target groups within the local authorities' own communities. Hence, government funding may not necessarily be reduced, but is being driven via different

mechanisms that align to a neoliberal agenda. As highlighted by Mikler (2018) the size of government expenditure and taxation relative to GDP varies significantly among capitalist nations, but it has not changed substantially during the last quarter of a century. Stilwell (2014) concurs that it is the nature of the state, rather than its size, that has changed most during this period and that corporate welfare has been emphasised at the expense of social welfare. Where policies lead to growing disparities in the distribution of income and wealth, they can serve to exacerbate social problems that then require greater state intervention. Of course, if welfare cuts designed to reduce public spending lead to rising poverty and increased crime, this can lead to a need for more policing, an increased prison population and ultimately more government spending, not less (Stilwell, 2014).

The rise of neoliberalism accomplishes securing the conditions for capital accumulation and restoring the power of economic elites by means of specific political and ideological structures and understandings (Harvey 2007; Wacquant 2012). This was evidenced by Amy, aged 29, who had worked for NGBs since leaving university,

> We're guided by what Sport England say, but equally Sport England may not agree with what they're being told by government, so I don't think it's just a case of Sport England coming up with ridiculous ideas that don't work. I think it's they're being told that they have to do something. It's very top down as £25 million investment in sport is a lot, and I wouldn't be sat here if that investment hadn't been put into sport, but because of that they have the say in what needs to be done.

Authors who have examined the modernisation of sport via new public management, networked governance and partnership working (Green, 2009; Houlihan & Lindsay, 2008; Grix & Harris, 2017) have found that although the rhetoric of new forms of governance have emphasised more freedom for sporting organisations, the reality was that tightly defined KPIs and performance management regimes within sport essentially led to increased regulation from central government. Amy seems to accept the balance of power that agencies who fund sport have, and to some extent is grateful for that investment, and in turn her job. Amy's comments highlight the lived experiences of CSDW at the grassroots

of sport and move us beyond a focus on structural and political change at an organisational level to the impact of such change on individuals.

A fear around losing one's job came through in several interviews, and this fear was clearly worrying for participants who felt vulnerable in the face of cuts and changes to delivery mechanisms. As highlighted by Parnell (2017), the community sport sector is pessimistic about how it can accommodate government cuts to sport and leisure services. However, creating conditions of fear and shock can be a means by which the ruling elite can exert control over the workforce (Gramsci, 1971; Klein, 2007) and encourage compliance and acceptance with a system that CSDW may think poorly conceptualised, yet feel powerless to act against.

Sport England has committed to producing investment guides to help sporting organisations transition to diversified funding models (Sport England, 2016) which actively encourage private sector input and emphasise neoliberal ideals of competition and market forces. This is evidenced in the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) which calls for sporting agencies to consider increased diversification of funding through, "for example, philanthropy and fundraising, crowdfunding, social impact bonds or partnerships with the private sector that have yet to be fully utilised" (HM Government 2015, p53). Such directives exhibit a clear example of how ideological agendas are driven via policy.

A neoliberal agenda not only emphasises a market driven approach but also imports business principles such as performance indicators, inputs, outputs and target-setting, traditionally found in the private sector in to public services, an approach that has been referred to as new managerialism (Farrell & Morris, 2003; Grix & Phillpots, 2011; Nichols et al., 2016; Grix & Harris, 2017). A sense of frustration came through Wendy's comments as she recalled the stage when she thought CSD started to become more managerialist,

> It was Sport for All in the seventies and eighties, then you moved into the nineties where sports development became a bit more formal, not so many trackies being worn, a bit more strategising. Sport England made themselves a bit more factioned, but focused. Suddenly sport had money – money from the lottery, money from the pools, it had money

> to build and goals and targets and we then had a cabinet of sorts being created with the DCMS emergence. So that was good. Then we've seesawed back and forward between focusing on competition, then focusing on priority groups and health – mainly disadvantaged, oh and now we're back to competition, and now we're focusing on health again and sport's a swear word… Get my drift?

For Wendy this 'seesawing' of priorities was problematic as it did not allow for a focused approach or long-term planning. It also meant that funding was only allocated within short-term cycles for the length of a government office term. In Wendy's view, this had led to instability within the sector and worked against the remit of new managerialism which seeks to drive business management protocols in to the public sector to ensure the achievement of outcomes and outputs, alongside cost efficiencies; all of which, paradoxically, short-termism does not enable. This aligns with Collins' (2010) discussion regarding the short-termism of community sport policy and highlights how sport is used as a political football to meet ideological aims. Wendy's comments surrounding a move away from 'trackies' to targets was echoed in Bloyce et al.'s (2008) study which found that those working within local authority sport development had witnessed an increase in office-based work which diverted them away from delivering sport and physical activity programmes, the reason they had entered the profession in the first place.

A focus on managerialism was viewed in a negative way by some participants because it removed them from the delivery of sport in to a more office-based environment, something that several thought they were not best suited to, however, James thought what he termed 'the professionalisation' of sport was a positive move. James had worked in sports development for ten years, since graduating with a sport and exercise sciences degree. He had recently moved into a more management focused role within a CSP, but a role that still encompassed aspects of delivery. He commented,

> Lucy Lamb came to Sport England from a non-sport background and that is a strength. She said that the trouble with sports development is that those working in the service are from sports backgrounds and can only see sport as a positive. This creates a biased and potentially non-

> objective outlook. We need objective evidence-based examples that sport works.

Beyond this, James was very positive about how Sport England specifically were starting to look at sport more as a business. He discussed how sport had traditionally been a bit “jumpers for goalposts” and needed to “get with the times” if it was to survive. He was damning of the old-fashioned sports development officers who in his opinion,

> Just do the same old all the time, nothing innovative, nothing vaguely interesting and they expect people to rock up to that?! We really do need to get more entrepreneurial in sport. Society is moving on and in sports development we’re not.

As the CSD sector evolves some CSDW lament the passing of a focus on the delivery of sport rather than the management of sport. This tension is highlighted through James’s comments in that he clearly articulates a need for CSD to be entrepreneurial and embrace business principles, whilst Amy and Wendy’s discussion presents a more sceptical view. It appears that CSDW are struggling with the tensions of an ongoing paradigmatic shift whereby neoliberal ideals and managerialist principles drive forward the need for CSD to embrace target setting and performance management. Discussion within this section highlights that not all participants were completely comfortable with this approach. Encompassed within a consumer-led, new managerialist approach is an increasing commodification of community sport, and though this may be subtle in some instances, it is another aspect that participants were keen to discuss.

Commodification of Community Sport

Since the introduction of CCT to leisure centres in 1989 and the client-contractor split, neoliberal ideals of market forces have prevailed (Henry, 2001). In a commercially driven environment, contractors have been forced to focus on the ‘bottom line’ yet may not fully understand the role and remit of community sport development (King, 2014). This will be discussed further in chapter eight. However, Isaac believed that a focus on the bottom line and inclusive CSD were not mutually exclusive as his comments highlight,

> Aaronville’s leisure centre works with toddler groups and has set up its

> own soft play toddler group now. They offer reduced charges between £1 and £3 dependent upon participants' income and it brings in money when the centre is otherwise dead. That's great!

It is clear from this extract that Isaac understands the commercial drive of the contractor and he offers a simple, yet effective, example of how a proactive centre management is catering for its broader community, whilst also generating income. Isaac had recently graduated from a sports coaching degree and had been taken on by the social enterprise where he completed his placement. Although he recognises it is early days in his career, he is positive about the future of community sport stating,

> I think this government has got it right. You have to have that flair to work in sport and it is encouraging people to set up their own businesses. It's not easy, but then nothing worthwhile ever is.

This aligns with Eric and Julie's earlier comments regarding the benefits to social enterprises considering a shift away from local authority-controlled sports development services. However, Eric found that his social enterprise was still, to some extent, reliant on local authority facilities and from his perspective the financial cost to the community of using community sport facilities seemed to be a barrier to participation,

> I know the local authority are struggling to balance their books. We use the leisure centre facilities a lot, and we get a community rate, but that's it. It doesn't encourage us to go in. We run one session a week – a community football mash-up session. But to be honest, most people we take down there …it's difficult. We can get them in to the centre, they know where the lockers are, how to find their way around, but then we have to say, well, if you want to use it in your own time it's a fiver a time, it's just not going to happen. So, you've raised their awareness of the facility, they want to use it, but it costs too much! Better off not having taken them there in the first place.

The latest sport policy (HM Government, 2015) emphasises the need to persuade those within the population who are the least active to become more active and highlights that such populations have the most to gain from increasing their physical activity levels. However, Joseph who works alongside

Eric within the same social enterprise stated,

> With facilities and leisure centres they're very short sighted, they're all about making a profit. They want to charge us £55 an hour to bring a community group to the facility, but you want to say well hey, I'm bringing people from Louistown who have never been in the centre before even though it's on their doorstep. Open up your mind a bit, if they feel comfortable coming to the centre they might come on their own and you'd make some money!

Surprisingly, George who worked within a local authority sport development unit made similar comments surrounding working with local authority leisure facilities. He highlighted that even though he worked for the local authority the relationship with the facilities was often strained, commenting,

> It's about getting the facilities to think that our groups aren't a nuisance, if we bring these guys in then they're more likely to respect the centre, not vandalise it, get to know people… Gotta start somewhere and give people a chance. Can't all just be about middle class people paying their monthly membership to use the gym. Local authority leisure centres are meant to be there for everyone, but they're too focused on the money these days…

Moving the commentary on to a broader discussion of the commodification of community sport, Julie stated,

> National Sporting Enterprise say they work in deprived communities, so they have a specific focus. They knew there was a gap, and they're meeting it. I went to their big national conference and the reality is they're a business really…They have really big partners like Coca Cola and soon Spotify, because it looks great for them. We saw the ad for Spotify and it's really clever. It will play free music as you move but if you stop it won't play. So it's encouraging people to be active but also to buy in to the Spotify brand. But in my head I was thinking some of the people I work with won't be able to afford an iPod or iPhone, are we becoming more of an advertising space for these big companies?

This brings in to question the neutrality of a government funded organisation such as 'National Sporting Enterprise' and its links to large scale commercial operators

such as Coca Cola and Spotify. Daunton and Hilton (2001) have highlighted the role of the state in encouraging a shift away from social citizens to citizen-consumers and this could be seen as part of this shift. This is not the only example of commercial sponsorship of community sport, McDonalds, Asda and Sainsbury's have all sponsored community sport initiatives in the past. The discussion surrounding the commodification of sport is beyond the scope of this thesis but is of note regarding sponsorship as a driver of an increased emphasis on consumption, choice and marketisation (Horne, 2006). Julie was clearly uncomfortable with this relationship with large commercial entities. On the one hand, 'National Sporting Enterprise' is benefitting financially from encouraging partnerships with large commercial sponsors, which could benefit the communities they serve through offering opportunities to participate that would otherwise not be possible. On the other hand, it cascades the commodification of sport via CSDW through to disadvantaged communities. Communities, who, as Julie emphasises, may not have the purchasing power to engage with these brands. Neoliberalism as a driver of commercialism and commodification can serve to highlight to disadvantaged communities their lack of economic capital in relation to purchasing power. Ben-Ami (2010) states that in neoliberalism, freedom is understood as choice. We are free to choose between Pepsi and Coca Cola, between Levis and Calvin Klein and thus, freedom becomes a matter of consumption. However, what is lacking from this discussion is that choice demands economic capital, and if economic capital does not exist then such choice is severely curtailed, which can lead to feelings of resentment and anger. Added to this if we promote commercialisation through championing specific products and brands then it could be argued we serve to inculcate neoliberalism as the accepted, and promoted, hegemonic norm. Ultimately, CSDW want what is best for their communities. However, this motivation is situated within a rapidly changing environment and one where job insecurity is commonplace, which can lead to compliance with practices of commodification and commercialisation that may otherwise be opposed.

Within the next section we start to examine the dissociation between government priorities and community needs and discuss the implications for CSDW, the communities they serve and the broader community sport landscape.

The dissociation between government priorities and community needs Participants expressed frustration at what they thought were poorly conceptualised governmental strategic priorities, a lack of understanding regarding community need and an inability to grasp what it was like to work at the grassroots of sport. This parallels earlier research by Bloyce and Smith (2009) and King (2014) who highlighted how CSDW have faced increased demands to meet non-sporting government policy objectives linked to crime reduction, improved health and community cohesion. Collins and Haudenhauyse (2015) discussed how many CSD initiatives were only funded for three years, with a tendency to start too many new initiatives to demonstrate 'political virility' which often confused recipients and partners about priorities. In this respect CSDW are required to tailor activities towards the achievement of policy goals, even if such goals have a limited evidence base and are perceived by the workforce as being unrealistic in the timescales allocated (Coalter, 2007; Collins, 2009; Mackintosh, 2012; Grix & Harris, 2017). New Labour's modernisation of sport agenda placed an emphasis on ensuring that public service users, not providers, were the focus (Houlihan & Green, 2009), yet in so doing led a system whereby power was devolved and dispersed downwards, with limited regard for how this would work in practice (Grix & Harris, 2017). As Ann, who worked for a CSP, commented,

> We've had so many ideas from different governments over the years…obesity is always on the agenda but what actually is being done? Isolated examples of good practice. Then it was competitive sport that was the focus, but if you go into communities, sometimes the reason they've dropped out of sport is because they don't like competitive, structured sport, yet we're being forced to concentrate on that by the government…

Ann highlights that the strategic priorities she has to achieve can be at odds with her community's needs. She expressed that she would like to start with the communities' needs and that they often have skills that can be utilised too, but these are often overlooked. Garven et al., (2016) highlight that this is often the case and advocate a strengths-based focus when working with communities, which instead emphasises what exists within a community, rather than a deficit model, which emphasises what doesn't and focuses instead on 'need'. This will be

further explored in chapter nine.

Maria who worked for an NGB highlighted similar thoughts about the way that she was driven by the target groups which she was able to access funding for, and how this did not always translate into what the community demanded,

> You take some of the programmes we deliver and prior to the age group dropping for funding, we had so many enquiries coming in saying I want to do something with 12 years and under groups, and likewise, older people. But we weren't given any funding for those groups, they're not a priority, so we can't offer any funding…

Maria did not try to 'play the game', possibly due to inexperience and knowledge of how to do so, having only worked in community sport for two years. Amy who had worked within an NGB structure for 10 years had a different view, stating that funding wasn't allocated on need or evidence, but instead that politicians were only interested in community sport if it offered them a means of achieving positive publicity, and therefore bolstering their popularity,

> Politicians think satellite clubs are a good idea, so we now have to gather a lot of information about them. It almost feels like the satellite clubs programme is being run by politicians not sports development officers, they don't quite understand how things do and don't work in a community setting. They just think it sounds like a brilliant idea, let's give you loads of money, let's make you do it, regardless of whether it's the right thing for the community or not… Aarghhh!

The strategy driving practice during this first phase of interviews (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2012) specifically sought to increase participation by providing more quality coaching for a greater number of people. Well-meaning in intention, this strategy thrust a participation agenda upon NGBs, one that they were clearly not well equipped to implement. Harris et al., (2017) were damning of national governing bodies of sport highlighting that many continued to receive significant levels of public funding despite declining participation within their respective sports. They stated that the continued investment of hundreds of millions of pounds into NGBs of sport demonstrated the inefficiency of public policy decisions and the contradictions of evidence-based policy. However, this may be

viewed as harsh criticism given that NGBs mostly did not want a participation agenda, did not feel they could deliver on this agenda but were given no choice in the decision. In this respect, those working within NGBs were complicit in driving forward an agenda that was doomed to fail. This was borne out through participation figures that since 2005-06 had remained static or declined within NGBs key target group of 16- 25-year olds during the strategy's lifespan (Active People Survey 10 2015/16). Fast forward from 2015/16 and declining participation figures were to cost NGBs dearly. In the 2017 – 2021 UK Sport and Sport England funding rounds the focus shifted away from NGBs having absolute oversight over participation in their sports. Instead, they were now mainly responsible for retaining those who regularly participated in their sport already. As a result, several NGBs saw funding severely reduced, as they were not considered best placed to deliver the participation agenda or target the inactive market, which the 2015 sport strategy had shifted emphasis towards (HM Government, 2015). Reflecting on the participation remit for NGBs at the time of interview, Oscar commented,

> We're all about participation, participation, participation and that's kinda not something that's sustainable. There's been a massive shift towards getting adults playing, focus on getting adults once a week 'cos that's where the funding is…and I think it's got worse in this round of WSP (whole sport plan) submissions. More pressure from government to hit targets.

During interview, Oscar's frustration at not being able to concentrate on talent development, but instead having policy drive a participation agenda via NGBs, became increasingly evident. He thought that NGBs were not best placed to deliver on the participation agenda, which was evidenced by his further comments,

> It's just not what we're about. Why can't the local authorities deal with those people who want to get a bit more active? If I'm honest, I'm not that interested in people who want a mess about for a few weeks and then you'll never see them again. I'm here to help people improve their game and improve their ability, that's when you get a buzz, when people improve.

In 2016, Sport England announced that as part of their 2017 – 2021 funding

round, funding for NGBs would be targeted at their core markets. That is, those who regularly take part in sport already. During the same funding round UK Sport also announced that due to the likelihood of medal targets not being met in Tokyo 2020, it was cutting funding for eleven NGBs' performance programmes. Although some NGBs may have welcomed the shift away from a participation agenda the refocusing of funding to core markets and cuts to elite sport funding caused some controversy in the media (Kelner, 2017) and also meant that several NGBs were hit funding wise at both participation and elite ends of the sports development spectrum.

In one respect, the move away from NGBs as the focus for participation targets could be perceived as evidence that the government is responsive to the sector, as it is clear that NGBs were uncomfortable with this remit (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). However, this research found that those working within NGBs were not unwilling to embrace increasing participation targets within their sports; they just needed more support to do so. It is also worth noting that NGBs (in neoliberal terms) also have customers - those clubs that pay to be affiliated and are reliant on a voluntary workforce to survive (Harris et al., 2009). Lee who worked for a small NGB stated,

> I think we will totally alienate our volunteers cos we're saying, "Sorry, we can't help you with that because it's not a priority for government, we've got to concentrate on the 16+ groups so we can't help with your youth group" … Then they get fed up and say, "Why are we affiliated then, how are you helping us?" We did alienate some clubs and we didn't want to, but we had no option because of the 16+ remit.

This dissociation between government priorities and community needs was highly frustrating for participants interviewed during the first phase of the research. They saw sport as serving the needs of politicians rather than those of their communities.

From a Gramscian perspective this hegemonic control of community sport can only be arrested if individuals join in an intellectual 'war of position' against the forces that control their practice (Gramsci, 1971). However, examples of this within community sport are limited. One instance of this occurred when the Coalition government announced in 2010 that it planned to dismantle the School

Sport Partnership (SSP) programme. Michael Gove, then Secretary of State for Education, was forced to back down on immediate plans to abolish the scheme due to sector and public outcry, however, a stay of execution was only given for one year and the scheme ceased to exist in 2011. Mackintosh and Liddle (2015) have subsequently highlighted how such dismantling of the SSP infrastructure led to reduced specialist support for primary PE teaching, loss of collaborative primary PE curricular and extra- curricular club developments and posed significant implications for the quality of primary PE and physical activity opportunities for young people. Although those in the sector were vocal in voicing their discontent about the dismantling of the SSP infrastructure and enacting what Gramsci may term a 'war of position' and joining of forces from organic intellectuals at the grassroots of society, this did little to arrest its subsequent demise. Schwarzmantel (2015) argues that a 'war of position' relies on the relative autonomy or freedom of civil society. However, such freedom in practice can be eroded by those in key positions within society being subsumed into the ranks of the elites or intellectuals who support the existing order (Gramsci, 1971; Bellamy, 1994; Freire, 1996; Schwarzmantel, 2015). If those concerned are not already part of this order then they may aspire to be in a position of power and privilege, so that rather than opposing the elitist system they are willingly subordinated into it; a case, perhaps, of hegemony through intellectual and moral leadership (Gramsci, 1971).

Community Sport or Show Time?

Sport can serve to connect with communities and cross ideological and political divides. In this respect, sport is appealing to those who seek public approval through exercising their support of sport as a means of manipulating the views of the electorate as a form of soft power (Lukes, 2005; Nye, 2011).

The relationship between the media and sport is well researched (Whannel, 2002; Rowe, 2004; Boyle & Haynes, 2009) and has been described as symbiotic in that both parties benefit (Coakley & Pike, 2014). The public relations benefit of successful community sport programmes for political actors at all levels cannot be underestimated. Commenting on the art of political communication, Mauser (1983) highlights that communication strategies that originated within the business world have been transposed to the political arena to assist in influencing mass

behaviour. In this respect, political marketing shares characteristics with commercial marketing as McNair, (2018 p.7) highlights, “political organisations, like those in the commercial sector, must target audiences from whom (electoral) support is sought, using appropriate channels of communication, in a competitive environment where the citizen/consumer has a choice between more than one ‘brand’ of product”. The neoliberal language of consumer choice and brand is central to the expedient use of sport as a means to gain political ascendancy.

As we have observed, several participants within phase one of the research were skilled at ‘playing the game’ and this extended to an awareness of the benefits in ensuring that their work was visible and ‘of use’ to politicians. Others felt they should not have to be overly vocal about their work and that they were first and foremost there for their communities. This raises questions in relation to the role of CSDW. Drawing on the earlier comment from Wendy that CSDW have to be ‘part magician; part used car salesperson and part Mystic Meg’, we may conclude that public relations would seem to be an essential part of modern day CSD work.

A neoliberal agenda may well be changing the nature of community sport development work in the way that it drives services such as public relations, advertising and marketing, and CSDW increasingly found that skills in these areas were essential. Although CSDW may not want to ‘play the game’ they may have to in order to serve their communities and to retain and obtain funding and ultimately secure their own employment.

Reflecting on the use of sport by politicians to bolster their public profile, Laura who worked for a CSP stated,

> The bottom line for government is that they have to be seen to be doing the right thing, irrespective of whether the money is being wasted or not. They have to prove they are doing something that the public thinks is positive. My sceptical view is because they want to look good.

Such sentiments were further highlighted by Eric from a social enterprise perspective,

> Even though we’ve had the Olympics, there’s still a lot of major

> events planned so sport is still in the public eye and on the agenda. So politicians can't be seen to not be engaging with the sports agenda.

However, when it came to smaller community projects Julie felt that they were of a lower priority to politicians,

> In my experience, a lot of funding focuses on facilities. I'm not going to apply to build a sport centre or a facility but the community stuff is much smaller, but equally important. The Small Grants funding has been really useful but that type of funding is few and far between. Often, it's great big pots of money that take an age to apply for and I'm just not going to do that… A lot of these facilities are vanity projects for politicians anyway.

Some participants were exasperated at politicians being supportive of sport as a means of positive publicity, yet this support not being realised financially. Wendy who had spent considerable time planning for the Olympic Torch to be carried through the streets of her local authority (which raised a lot of media profile for the area) stated that "even though we planned six months for the Olympic Torch to come through our district, we got no money to support it".

George, who worked for a neighbouring local authority, had experienced a similar situation,

> We had the Tour of Britain coming through Maxtown. A big spectacle, roads closed the lot. But we got no funding from government for the increased costs and no funding from the NGB either.

As we can see from the examples offered above, tensions exist in the way that local authorities are treated. On one hand it is clear that they are best placed to coordinate community sport projects and events, yet on the other sports non-statutory status has the potential to relegate such co-ordinated provision to nothing more than a Cinderella service, even when the show is coming to town and politicians can benefit from ensuing positive publicity.

Summary

There are contradictions in how governments use sport as a means of developing communities (Skinner et al., 2008), whilst at the same time creating the very

conditions that fracture and dislocate such communities in the first place. In this respect the role of CSDW becomes ever more challenging as they try to navigate a changing political agenda that places diversified funding and delivery as a central tenet of their work (Grix & Harris, 2017; Walker & Hayton; 2017; Berry & Manoli, 2018; Parnell et al, 2019).

This chapter has highlighted some of the constraints that CSDW face and how they try to ensure that those constraints do not overly restrict their work within the communities which they serve. However, CSDW often felt hamstrung by what they perceived as limited funding for community projects, and limited job security (Bloyce et al, 2008; Mackintosh, 2012). The fear of losing one's job may contribute to CSDW becoming complicit in enabling a neoliberal doctrine to be central to CSD, a doctrine that, as we have observed, may be detrimental both to themselves and their communities.

However, what we have also seen is that CSDW are not without voice and may not be as repressed as a critical lens may lead us to believe. Participants spoke of how they 'played the game' in order to cater for their communities' needs and this highlights how participants interpreted and reinterpreted policy to fit their own ends (Fischer, 2003). That said, Government plans to reduce public spending for sport, to increase diversification of funding and further extend the reach of market forces' appear to have gone relatively unchallenged by the sector. Gramsci firmly believed that politics was about 'all of life' and should not be reduced to an economic focus and determinism (Gramsci, 1971, Shwarzmantel, 2015). He spoke of organic intellectuals, those that rose from the ranks of the working classes into the hegemonic class of tomorrow; intellectuals that paved the way to critical self-consciousness of the masses as a form of enlightenment and awakening. This new type of intellectual has to be closely bound to the world of production, in the case of the present discussion, community sport. Even though some CSDW may not agree with cuts to the public funding of community sport, they have not made a concerted stand against them, or may have felt powerless to do so. Through a Gramscian lens this is an example of hegemony in action.

The austerity message became a means by which government, via the national media, started to convince the public of the need for increased efficiency

measures. Peters (2016) highlights that to understand contemporary governance one needs to be cognisant of the way media is manipulated as part of the governmental process. Dahlstrom et al. (2011) highlighted how governments in most countries continue to employ a growing number of people to control the flow of information to the media to ensure that the right image and message is presented. In this respect, the media is a crucial player in gaining public consent and acceptance of neoliberal practises.

However, the UK government has been challenged by the public on several occasions and social media may increasingly facilitate the rise of what Gramsci terms ‘organic intellectuals’. The general election of 2017 witnessed a backlash against the Conservative government when they failed to win the 326 seats needed to form a majority government, resulting in a hung parliament. This forced them to pursue a deal with the Democratic Union Party (DUP) to stay in power and left them backtracking on some of their key manifesto pledges. Public pressure underpinned the government’s abolition of the cap on public sector pay (from 2018) and therefore, the public voice (via the ballot box) does matter to Governments when it threatens their time in office, and ultimately their power base. People are perhaps beginning to question neoliberalism and are gaining confidence in doing so.

It could be argued that through the means of social media channels now, more than ever, society is able to pave the way to a critical self-consciousness of the masses. Government and the media may try to arrest such an awakening, but whether they are able to do so completely is open to question. Political parties are not immune to public pressure, especially if the outcome dictates whether they retain power. Although public pressure may influence at a governmental level it is questionable whether this is evident within policymaking. Public consultations on proposed policy are commonplace but the impact such consultations bring to bear on final policy is likely to be variable. Within the next chapter we question policymakers within the sporting arena to illuminate what is often a hidden process and we discuss the role of the sport sector within policymaking.

Chapter Seven: Sport Policy: Setting the Rules of the Game

Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw how aware CSDW were of the political forces affecting their working practices, and what pressures and opportunities they felt sport policy exerted on day to day operations. In mapping this terrain, CSDW highlighted how policy influence impacted ring-fenced funding streams that did not always align with community need. From the perspective of participants this resulted in a dissociation between government and community priorities. In this chapter, we bring those involved in devising sport policy into the discussion. Participants in this phase of research (phase two) highlight how political ideology has the potential to impact policy development and subsequently their working lives, and they offer personal insight into the challenges of the lived experience of devising sport policy.

Some phase two participants had been involved with grassroots community sport for the majority, or all, of their working lives, and had risen through the ranks to influential leadership roles within the sport sector. Others had little, if any, experience of working within community sport and were instead career politicians or senior civil servants who had an interest in sport and had therefore progressed into key sport focused positions within government. All had been involved with either writing sport policy or had been a member of key government committees and consultation groups that discussed policy before publication. All interviews were confidential and anonymous, but respondents often unknowingly referred to other participants within the phase two cohort. It became clear as the interviews progressed that this was a very tight knit circle of individuals, with strong oppositional opinions. Relationships between some participants were clearly tense, and the influence and importance of this was somewhat surprising given the supposed 'objective' nature of policymaking. However, participants were willing to share their experiences, and this has led to an illumination of what is often an unseen process.

Welcome to the Policymaking Arena

As Beland and Cox (2013) have highlighted, policymaking is dominated by paradigmatic thinking, that is, widely shared beliefs that lead to a consensus for

a policy response. Political struggles ensue when reaching a policy consensus and agencies responsible for drafting policy can create a paradigm in which a particular voice can gain preference in decision-making (Beland & Cox, 2013). Hall (1993) outlines the power play that takes place within communities of policy experts leading him to conclude that much policy expertise is contested and contestable, as expert knowledge is constructed by actors with political objectives. Whose 'voice' is at the table, but more importantly heard, is crucial when it comes to deciding sport policy objectives. Within this phase of research some participants felt that personal experience of working within the sport sector was crucial to policymaking in order to understand the challenges which the sector faces. Participants that had risen through the ranks from grassroots community sport often voiced frustration at those from a non-sporting background believing that they did not understand the community sport sector. However, career politicians and senior civil servants also voiced frustration. From their perspective those from a sporting background were sometimes not objective enough, and needed more of a grasp of the bigger, political and business picture. Therefore, a strained dynamic was present (oftentimes) from the outset of interview discussion.

As the sport sector increasingly looks to business to recruit its leaders, this tension between those from a sporting background and those from a business background is likely to surface throughout the sport sector. However, both policymakers and CSDW emphasised how community sport can be perceived as being a 'jumpers for goalposts' affair, with a perception that there is a need to professionalise and upskill the sector workforce. From this perspective, importing business principles into community sport is perceived as beneficial. The trend to look towards the business community when recruiting to key leadership roles within sport aligns with a new managerialist focus of bringing the economic rationality and decision-making processes of corporations into the public sector. However, as Clarke (2004) states, new managerialism is much more than the application of managerial practices in organisations. In addition, it is a belief that all organisations can only work properly if decision-making is centralised and placed in the hands of professionally trained and 'objective' managers. Clarke (2004) reflects on the role of managerialism within the neoliberal discourse with the former perceived as a means by which the latter can be implemented, while

also providing an apolitical mask to disguise the intensely political nature of neoliberal reform within these organisations. Lynch and Grummell (2018) concur by highlighting how new managerialism operates as an ideological configuration of ideas and practices that is not a neutral management strategy but rather a political project, borne out of 'the spirit of neoliberal capitalism' (p203).

In the pursuit of career advancement, politicians and civil servants can assist in driving forward a neoliberal ideology, regardless of whether it is the best approach for community sport. As Hall (1993) highlights, the need to clearly understand the motivations or interests of the relevant actors and how these are translated within the policymaking arena is crucial. Hill and Varone (2017) identified that policy is a process as opposed to a single decision or decisions that are isolated in time and context, which further serves to highlight the influence of individuals within the policy making process (Fischer, 2003). How individuals serve to influence policy is worthy of further attention as Houlihan et al. (2009) alluded to when launching the International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics in 2009, highlighting that social constructivist frameworks can provide rich insights into the policy process and can easily be applied to sport.

We now turn to the voices of phase two participants in order to examine and illuminate the lived experience of working within a policymaking arena and to answer the call of Houlihan et al. (2009) to bring social constructivist approaches to the study of sport policy.

The voices shaping sport policy: A case of government facing sport or sport facing government?

Alice had been involved with community sport and elite sport development for over 30 years. She had led several influential sporting organisations and been involved with policymaking spanning several government administrations. She was still passionate about sport and strongly believed that the voice of sporting professionals was important within the policymaking landscape. She was vocal in her opinion that the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) had 'sold sport short' to go down a health route, and in so doing had abandoned 'sport for sports sake'. She was frustrated that, from her perspective, sport policy was written for government rather than for the sports industry,

> The senior civil servant responsible for writing it (HM Government, 2015), a chap called Jasper Jasperson said to me that his priority was public value, not sport, and therefore the document is written justifying back to central government, back to treasury really, why they should invest in sport. It's moved from sport for its own sake to sport to enable others to grow socially and lots of other ways, however, I think those of us that worked in sport development years ago did that anyway, but you didn't abandon sport in the process.

Alice was concerned that in focusing on social outcomes the centrality and role of sport in achieving such outcomes had been lost. She provided commentary on how community sport was defined and operationalised within policy and suggested that it should retain a focus on developing sport. Alice felt that the balance had tipped in favour of social outcomes first, sport last and she felt that this was detrimental to both participants and the sector. It was her view that government should be explicit in its aim to develop participants' sporting ability first and foremost, regardless of their ability levels. In developing sporting ability, she believed that it would then be possible to influence broader social outcomes such as improved mental health, community cohesion and personal responsibility.

In contrast, Bella was vocal about her disagreement regarding sport for sport's sake:

> What do you think of the argument that it's a very dangerous business to … (pause) when you say 'sport for sports sake', unless you're talking about the elite stuff, I don't know what it means… cos I think sport is a social good, so therefore, what are we talking about when we say 'sport for sports sake'? It's like saying 'food for food's sake'. It doesn't make sense.

Like Alice, Bella had enjoyed a long career (over 25 years) working within grassroots sport but had also held civil servant roles. She believed that all sport, both elite and community, had a social benefit and therefore the term 'sport for sport's sake' was a misnomer. She was supportive of the governmental emphasis on sport as a social good, and her organisation had benefitted from substantial Sport England funding in driving this remit forwards. Reflecting on Hall's (1993) discussion surrounding the political objectives of those involved with

policymaking we see that such advocacy had served Bella well within the current political paradigm. Bella's name was mentioned positively by Isaac (a career politician involved in sport policymaking), who thought that she was an example of someone who understood the broader picture, not just sport. Sport policymakers based within government were very aware of the broader political picture and felt that sometimes such awareness was lacking within the sport sector. In contrast, Alice believed that a key obligation for sport policymakers should be an understanding and experience of grassroots sport,

> Do the people who write the policy understand the ground on which we walk as people who work in sport? I think one of the big differences for me is that I knew sport and people knew me. Did that mean that everybody liked me, no not necessarily but everybody knew that I'd come through sport, everybody understood that I knew sport. And so, when we had our barnies or our moments people at least thought I was coming from the right place even if they didn't agree with the solution and I encouraged open challenge. You know, we opened our door to challenge, we were very transparent. Everything we did was highly transparent. We took challenge on everything and that created the systems that you've got.

Gramsci discussed how human beings are not determined in a mechanistic or passive way by their environment, but through their own activity they change that environment, and in so doing, they change themselves (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci also believed that this transformative process was a crucial aspect of the development of civil society. We can see that Alice has been strongly influenced by her experience of working in community sport development, and this experience is brought to bear on her opinions and on her discussions with fellow policymakers. Challenging the system is part of this dialogue and from Gramsci's perspective, this highlights a transformative process, which has clearly moved community sport development forward.

Gramsci (1971) further discussed that in 'normal times' subordinate groups take over the beliefs 'borrowed from another group' and this is a sign of submission and intellectual subordination. From Alice's perspective, this aspect of hegemony was increasingly visible within the sport policymaking arena,

> I used to feel that my job was to face government for sport not to face sport for government. My job was to say, 'I'm sorry Secretary of State, I don't think that's a good idea'. You know, we haven't got that now, we've got someone … if government said we want you to do 30 minutes in pink tutus that's what would damn well be promoted.

From Alice's perspective, community sport development without the sport is neither sport development nor community development, but an unfocused hybrid of the two, which lacks clarity and focus. Alice was frustrated by the lack of challenge back to government regarding this discussion and was surprised that the sector was silent in fighting sports' corner. Other participants said that they sometimes felt stifled in voicing their own opinions, and that sport sector organisations, such as Sport England, should take this role.

Participants were reflective of their practice and role within the policymaking process and were also conscious of their social position on the superstructural terrain (see Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci extensively discusses the development of critical self-awareness amongst subaltern groups. For Gramsci (1971), everyone is a philosopher and possesses the ability to reflect on how they conceptualise and act in the world (Gramsci, 1971). Such philosophising was evident from participants within this phase of the research, however, their ability to act on this seemed constrained. Although participants sometimes spoke in opposition to government opinion, they were mindful of the potential consequences for their careers as Alice continued,

> There's a personal cost to speaking out. I've felt that. You can be totally ostracised. Affecting change is personally painful, utterly frustrating and at times I've paid every price for having a view that isn't the one that they want you to have.

The strength of sentiment behind this quote highlights why some may choose not to speak out. To risk being ostracised, having funding potentially removed and to be criticised by peers may prove too high a price for most sport leaders. Participants clearly face personal dilemmas regarding how vocal they should be, and if they do voice opposition whether they will be heard, and/or whether it will negatively affect their career. Within Alice's comment we see a pressure from

above (be that perceived or real) upon policymakers to align their thinking with that of government.

Sport England was seen as the intersection where community sport meets government and, in this respect, ideally located to fight sports' corner. However, there was disappointment from some participants with Sport England as they saw the organisation as a government mouthpiece rather than representing the views of sporting professionals. Whose voice Sport England hears is one part of the equation, but we now turn to a discussion of whether (or the extent to which) the voice of Sport England itself is heard within government circles.

The Voice of Sport England: Powerful or Powerless?

Participants reflected how Sport England had undergone significant change during the previous 20 years and had often found itself in a difficult and compromised position. The structure and remit of Sport England had been reviewed on numerous occasions during that time, with a triennial review of UK Sport and Sport England being launched in November 2014 (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2015). Triennial reviews are part of the Conservative government's public bodies reform programme that aim to provide, 'a robust challenge to the continuing need for non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and reviewing their functions, performance, control and governance arrangements' (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2015 p.5) and this was the first triennial review of UK Sport and Sport England. The results of this review were reported in 2015 (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2015) and key findings included a need for UK Sport and Sport England to work more closely together on talent identification, participation and the governance of NGBs, and for Sport England to focus more intently on diversity in relation to black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) groups. Beyond this, the consultation as part of this process highlighted that stakeholders were less confident in UK Sport and Sport England's governance and management and this has been under increased scrutiny since the review. These findings echo those of Houlihan and Green (2009) who found that both UK Sport and Sport England were perceived by major political parties and NGBs as being in serious need of reform due to being unresponsive to the needs of their clients; overly bureaucratic and complex, and generating an excess of, often short-term,

initiatives. The focus on the drivers and context of Sport England and subsequent impact on CSD practice has received scant attention within academic literature over the past ten years. Although authors have discussed the role of Sport England within the broader delivery system for CSD (Green, 2009; Phillpots & Grix, 2014; Grix & Harris, 2016; Harris & Houlihan, 2016), Houlihan and Green's (2009) study is unique in placing the primary focus of critique on two specific organisations, Sport England and UK Sport. It is hoped that this chapter may contribute towards closing this gap in literature and in so doing, bring Sport England back in to focus for ongoing and further critique.

We now turn to participants from this phase to progress this critique. All participants had some involvement with Sport England, with some having worked for Sport England, and others having received funding from them or being responsible for liaising with them from a governmental perspective.

William had worked in sport for over 20 years and held mixed opinions about Sport England. On the one hand his organisation had benefitted from funding from Sport England, yet on the other he felt that they were out of touch with the sports sector and somewhat ineffectual. Beyond this he voiced concern that, from his perspective, Sport England were somewhat untouchable, stating,

> It has to be said that Sport England is the 'elephant in the room'. I have spoken with ministers who would like to see it gone, but how on earth can you do that? It has grown exponentially over the years and I suppose at least the reviews are now tackling that.

William was not the only participant who was somewhat negative about Sport England, with others believing that as an organisation it was purely the mouthpiece for government. This was tempered by other participants who felt that Sport England was doing the best that it could, often in difficult political circumstances.

Frankie voiced frustration with Sport England,

> ABC and XYZ are both heavily into control, and they want what they want… and they're both very focused on giving the government whatever they think it needs. They're not, you know, if you say, are

they working for government-facing-sport or are they working for sport-facing-government, they're certainly the former not the latter.

Frankie had worked for Sport England for several years before setting up his own sports consultancy company. He felt that Sport England was increasingly becoming the government's 'lap dog', whilst also acknowledging how its arm's length governance may exacerbate such issues. Boswell (2018) highlights how the so-called 'quangocide' (Verhoest, 2018), or culling of arm's length organisations, had been far less radical than originally anticipated in light of austerity measures. The same could be said of the outcome of the recent CSP review that saw 49 CSPs reduced to 45, a relatively minor reduction considering what the sector was expecting (Reed, 2016).

Sport England has survived several reorganisations in recent years and its role in relation to insight and intelligence is burgeoning. Boswell (2018) further reflects that the ability of arms-length organisations to ride the political tide has been studied by several authors who find no explicit or single explanation regarding their ability to remain a key player on the political landscape. Instead, they point towards the capacity of such organisations to depoliticise complex and contested issues within the public arena, and to import new public management and private sector norms of specialisation and efficiency (Boswell, 2018). More recently, scholars have explained the resilience of arm's length organisations through focusing on their role in facilitating buy-in across political and professional boundaries (Nicholson & Orr, 2016; Pill & Guarneros-Meza, 2017; Boswell, 2018). However, this buy in from sporting professionals is not evidenced within this research. Reflecting on Frankie's comments in interview, he would like Sport England to represent the sector to government, rather than, what he perceives to be, the other way around. It could be argued that the focus of boundaries research starts from the viewpoint of those in power, and how arm's length organisations can assist in the retention of such power, rather than starting with the individuals who are part of the professional communities which government seek to influence and this is likely to impact on findings.

The quasi autonomous relationship that Sport England shares with government has long since proved problematic in that the organisation receives its funding from Treasury and because of this may feel somewhat restricted in

speaking out – a fear that is evident throughout the respondent cohorts in this research. Of course, in not speaking out, one might reflect that the sports sector is actively complicit in driving forward strategies that do not work for the communities or the environments in which they work, a trend which could be regarded as hegemony in practice.

Reflecting more positively than others, Alistair commented on what he perceived as an increasingly closer working relationship between Sport England and government than he had witnessed over the past 10 years. Alistair felt this was beneficial in that it increased the alignment between Sport England and government strategies, stating,

> With the last two or even three strategies I've written, the idea that government and Sport England were separate in a sense was not the case. I'm not sure that's necessarily a bad thing either … There were situations in the past where you had Sport England having a strategy and then the government coming out with its own sport strategy and the two had hardly spoken to each other. That didn't make sense. That's not the case now.

Alistair had worked for Sport England for over 20 years and had been involved with writing several sport strategies. He felt that this alignment of strategies was important and a means by which joined up thinking had been promoted. However, from Hall's (2011) perspective more aligned thinking can be a means via which the dominant political ideology is inculcated through managerialist mechanisms. Some respondents believed that in achieving a closer working relationship with government, Sport England had ceased to challenge, with Alice claiming that, "There's no challenge to government from Sport England. They just give government what they want". Frankie voiced similar frustrations,

> Transparency is important, and there needs to be an ability for the sector to challenge government. Sport England seem more and more reluctant to do this…

From a Gramscian perspective (1971) this can be interpreted as bureaucratic centralism. Gramsci (1971) discussed the notion of bureaucratic centralism and organic (or democratic) centralism. Within organic centralism there is a

continual adaptation of the organisation to the 'real' movement and a matching of 'thrusts from below, with orders from above' (Gramsci, 1971, p.188). From a community sport perspective this would involve sport policy reflecting the needs of the sector and evolving organically from discussions with the sector. In contrast, bureaucratic centralism turns into 'a narrow clique which tends to perpetuate its selfish privileges by controlling or even by stifling the birth of oppositional forces' (Gramsci, 1971 p.189). Such commentary can be reflected upon in relation to Grix's (2010) discussion which highlights how a trend towards 'agencification' and a decentred approach to governance within sport (that is governance from the 'bottom-up) had not resulted in less centralised control but had, paradoxically, ensured that hierarchical power relations and resource-dependent networks and partnerships contributed to increased central state control (Taylor, 2011; Bevir & Rhodes, 2018). In this respect the modernisation of sport and trend towards a decentred approach to governance (Grix, 2010) can be viewed as a 'sleight of hand' in that it promoted a bottom-up approach yet failed to offer a 'voice' to those at the grassroots of CSD delivery.

Frankie's concerns regarding Sport England's perceived reluctance to challenge government align with Gramsci's discussions (1971) regarding the hegemonic process and the subtle manipulation by government to curtail dissenting voices within key organisations. Oppositional forces to sport policy development may not be directly controlled through stifling these voices but may instead be controlled by co-opting those in senior, influential roles within sport into governmental or quasi-governmental organisations. In subsuming potential dissenting voices into the political elite and higher managerial roles within sport, government succeeds in gaining active consent from policymakers and practitioners to implement its will. Such active consent being a key element of the hegemonic process (Gramsci, 1971). Although this was evidenced by looking at the composition of the boards of both UK Sport and Sport England, of whom several members are key players within the sport sector, the neoliberal agenda has increasingly championed that Sport England's board should be selected for their expertise and non-executive skills (i.e., strategy, vision, wide business experience, planning scrutiny and leadership) rather than their representation of stakeholder interest (DCMS/Strategy Unit 2002; Houlihan & Green, 2009; HM Government, 2015).

Those involved with sport policy at a governmental level may be reluctant to challenge government as it may stifle their career progression, and in this respect, Gramsci recognises that there will always be a division between rulers and ruled, or leaders and led (Gramsci, 1971). Questions about the degree of democracy involved within leadership and the relationship between political organisations and conscious leadership of the general populous permeate Gramsci's (1971) work. From Gramsci's (1971) perspective, the reluctance of some institutions and policymakers to challenge government symbolises a willing consent to implement government ideology, or in this instance, government-facing-sport as opposed to sport-facing- government, to use Frankie's earlier commentary. Concurring with earlier discussion, Alice believed that the reason behind this was due to people within these organisations being afraid that challenge may be perceived negatively, stating, "Well you don't challenge because you don't want to bite the hand that feeds".

Reliance on government funding clearly offers a degree of control over the sector. However, government are keen to move the sector away from such reliance on the state (HM Government, 2015) and in so doing may risk losing this element of control. Reflecting on the changing mechanisms of control that Sport England exerted over the sector Alistair offered the following thoughts,

> Sport England used to have more of a guidance role. It was well respected by local authorities and those working in the sector. Nowadays, Sport England's key control mechanism over the sector is through funding. Before the National Lottery remit, Sport England used to have more autonomy, and respect in the sector. It was actually a much more academic based world interestingly… Sport England was at arm's length and government kind of left it alone a bit… That all changed when lottery funding came along.

This theme was echoed by others within the phase two respondent group. For example, Jack reflected on how he thought the power base of Sport England had changed over time,

> Sport England has become like a big funding agency…and in the process it hasn't got thanks for that it's got critique. Perhaps that's

> because there's always gonna be winners and losers in funding, I don't know…With the diversity of sport and you don't have control , look at the elements of control Sport England have, and that's in its funding process, not much else now.

Although there has been a push towards diversified funding models via recent government strategy (HM Government, 2015) it is interesting to note that the majority of funding for sport still flows via arm's length organisations thus enabling government to retain ideological control of the sector, whilst appearing to promote autonomy. As Grix (2010) highlights in his study of sport policy and CSPs, there was often an element of enforced partnership working in order to receive funding and as funding was linked to government objectives all 'partners' spent a vast amount of time chasing a raft of government-led initiatives that may or may not be in the longer-term interest of their organisations.

Reflecting on Alice, Alistair and Frankie's comments, we can infer that Sport England continues to have significant control over the sector due to its funding remit. However, other sources of funding community sport are available, but accessing such funds relies on the knowledge of those involved with running such initiatives being aware of broader funding streams. In driving a diversified funding mix for community sport via policy (HM Government, 2015), government appears to have attempted to open the market for community sport. Yet as witnessed in the previous chapter, CSDW who have worked in sport all their career do not feel well prepared for this new landscape. Pitchford and Collins (2009) review of sports development as a job, career and training found that respondents cited more than 40 types of agencies as their employer including local authorities, local education authorities, voluntary sector organisations and a plethora of third sector agencies. They also found that the flexibility and multi- skilling needed to work in a community sports development setting was likely to lead to a lack of focus, and consequent difficulties in relation to goal-setting, and evaluating outcomes and overall effectiveness. Brian acknowledged that there was scope for increased learning in this respect,

> We're still making our way out of a structure in which people were looking automatically to the hand of the state to a situation in which they're acting more entrepreneurially and openly so I do think there's scope for learning in that regard.

A Conservative career politician, Brian had lifelong involvement with playing sport and being on sporting boards. He believed that a market led approach was the right one for community sport, but pointed towards compassionate conservatism (Norman & Ganesh, 2006) and there being a need to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable in society. Although he acknowledged that there was scope for further learning regarding increased entrepreneurialism, when questioned about where that learning should be positioned, he was less certain.

Alice thought that over the last 20 years, Sport England had become more bureaucratic, with fewer people within the organisation that really knew and understood the community sport sector. She believed,

> Sport England used to be out there, advising, not now. Just a bunch of bureaucrats sat in an office, providing 'insight'. Years ago, Sport England research staff used to get out and talk to people at all levels in the industry. They knew what was happening. Now it's just office-based staff who have no clue of the reality of sport development.

This continues the focus on whose voice is powerful in driving the community sport sector. There is clear frustration in this comment that, from Alice's perspective, sport is increasingly controlled by those with no experience at the grassroots level. Frankie reflected on his career at Sport England,

> I do remember when I first joined Sport England that the status of the organisation, I used to have a sense that it was extremely high, and local authorities particularly and others looked for guidance strategically from Sport England and when Sport England came up with target groups and other recommended approaches, strategies and so on, local government listened and tried to implement it. And when you went out and about at Sport England you kinda felt like you had status somehow, I felt like that got chipped away in the end and then wherever you went you were there to be knocked down (laughs).

Other participants who had worked for Sport England reflected on how the organisation had changed over time and moved to recruiting fewer people from the sport sector and more from a business background, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Views concerning the pros and cons of this were polarised. Participants working at governmental level felt that this was beneficial and

evidenced a maturing market and professionalisation of the sector. Those from a sports background felt that it signified that government was increasingly losing touch with the reality of community sport development work, whilst simultaneously being responsible for the leadership and policy shaping the sector.

Several participants felt that the launch of a sport strategy offered an instrumental means for government to stake their claim on sport. Some highlighted how strategies were often heralded in, with grand announcements as Frankie stated,

> A new strategy is announced and there's a feeling that yeah, everything's gonna be fantastic (laughs). New strategies are like watershed moments, it's like everybody's seen the light. There's always a new start, new feeling of positivity when a strategy is launched.

Alice held a similar opinion,

> A new strategy is a chance to start again, the sheet gets wiped clean. The reality is that strategies are generally launched with a 10-year timescale, but usually only last 3, 4, 5 years before we start again.

All participants referred to a 'feel good factor' when a new strategy was launched and how this was positive for both government and the sport sector. However, Jack, who had been involved in writing sport strategy spanning several government administrations, found what he referred to as the 'revolving door of writing strategies' frustrating,

> I gotta little bit frustrated with the idea that new strategies came along before the old strategy was complete… Well I'm not sure you ever complete a strategy, or you've ever reached an accountability point …I think you will find very little reference and accountability or looking back to previous strategies, does that make sense?

Jack, Alice and Frankie were from sporting backgrounds and felt that the lack of reflection on how previous strategies may or may not have worked was a lost opportunity to enhance practice. As Frankie stated:

> There's absolutely no memory in Sport England. What have we learned from what's gone before? Nothing. We keep making the same mistakes.

When probed why they thought this was the case there was a resounding feeling that the lack of reflection on previous strategies occurred because targets had not been met and government did not want to take responsibility for that or advertise it. As Alice commented, “It’s simple, they don’t refer back to previous strategies because they haven’t delivered on the targets”. Participants felt that another contributory factor was the current workforce of Sport England. It was perceived that those working within strategic roles at Sport England had changed, and instead of recruiting those with experience of sport, Sport England’s recruitment strategy had shifted to new graduates, with a knowledge of the business process rather than sport. There was much discussion regarding the current focus on insight, and Alice commented,

> We’ve got insight teams who seem to think you sit in a room and read a lot of data and then you know what’s going on. But those that really knew what was going on have long left Sport England, there’s nobody left so all this stuff they’re talking about, they think nobody’s ever thought of it before.

As subsequent Sport England strategies, driven by a neoliberal agenda, emphasise sport participants as sports consumers, there has been a move towards embracing market research principles, placing market intelligence and consumer insight at the forefront of the business model (Stone et al., 2004). In 2010, Sport England developed 19 market segments to help sports clubs and CSPs to target their local populations. Each of the 19 segments were given a name, for example, Ben was a competitive, male urbanite aged 18 – 25 and single. The segmentation tool offered guidance on branding tone and marketing messages as well as an in-depth consumer profile of each market segment, highlighting, for example, what newspaper they may read (Pielichaty et al., 2017). The increasing importance of market research is further evidenced by a focus on customer satisfaction via Sport England’s Quality of the Sporting Experience Survey (2012) and the championing of Insight teams within SE and CSPs. Insight into consumer behaviour and the consumer experience, lies at the heart of a neoliberal ideology that emphasises choice and the free market. Determining how this supposed ‘choice’ could be better catered for and encouraged has driven a new sector through market research in the form of insight

and intelligence departments, which has now ported across to the sport sector (Pielichaty, 2017). We can question whether we have lost the opportunity to learn lessons from the past or whether this is just evidence of a maturing industry that will have to embrace business principles to survive. William was frustrated that, in his opinion, history had taught Sport England nothing,

> I have to tell you I didn't know where to look when I was listening to Sport England talking about the behaviour change theory, telling us all what we need to understand is that people are motivated in different ways and I sat there and thought, you think you're telling me something new here, honestly? How patronising.

William felt that his knowledge and experience was now irrelevant and unrecognised. He was frustrated that the stages of change model (Prochaska et al., 2000) was seen as something new, and not even referenced within the Sport England strategy document (Sport England, 2016). He reflected how the trans theoretical model on which the stages of change model was based, had been used in healthcare for nearly 30 years and certainly was not new. Frankie voiced similar concerns regarding a patronising tone to the announcement of the strategy. He felt that the latest strategy (HM Government, 2015) not only lacked reflection on previous strategies, but the proclamation by Sport England that it was the first strategy to focus on outcomes was factually incorrect,

> So they said (Sport England) for the first time we're gonna look at the outcomes… well I'm sorry it's not the first time is it!! (laughs) I mean it's probably about the fourth or fifth …I don't know, but the Framework for Sport was all about the outcomes, so you know, you feel like someone ought to pick them up on it…

Some 15 years ago, Sport England's Framework for Sport (Sport England, p3, 2004) created a conceptual framework for sport, the first UK sport strategy to do so, and systematically documented priorities for affecting change in participation, performance and sports contribution to social objectives (Sport England, 2004 p.6). Priorities for action were stated and this strategy introduced a clear focus on not just delivering sport but measuring the impact and outcomes of public investment. Frankie's frustration regarding the promotion of the latest sport strategy as the first of its type to focus on outcomes (HM Government, 2015) in this

respect seemed well founded. The pervasive amnesia of sport policymakers and Sport England may be a frustration for some, yet each successive government has a need to create positivity around its policies and actions and, in this respect, is compelled to dissociate from previous strategies. Political expediency can take precedence with soundbites rather than substance being the modus operandi.

Within the next section we move the focus specifically to the discussion surrounding the importance of evidencing the impact of community sport development and the drivers behind this taking centre stage within policy discussions.

Evidencing the impact of community sport development

From an ideological perspective, the notion of public expenditure on sport may be unwelcomed by some politicians and policymakers who feel that sport and leisure should be a matter of individual choice and left to market forces (Jefferys, 2012). However, the oppositional view is that sport is a fundamental route to improved health and wellbeing which offers immense public value (Brookes & Wiggan, 2009), therefore warranting public expenditure. Such ideological differences surrounding sport will not simplistically represent the different views of political parties but will also elicit in-party differences. Conservative politician Brian had held several influential positions within government and provided insight into how government justify public expenditure on sport and the implications this may have,

> And in the public sector, the desire to show that public money is being invested sensibly and accountably tends to mean they focus on outcomes that have ascertainable social value. So that pushes government inevitably into the direction of sport as a force for social integration, or better health outcomes or better … reduction of crime … some of the key elements of, as it were, a social agenda. And therefore, for the same reason as focusing on these consequential benefits, it makes sport into an instrument of policy, rather than something that would be of benefit in its own right.

The latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) firmly places the emphasis back on ‘sport for good’ stating that one of the most important changes is the new focus

on the broader outcomes that sport can deliver. This instrumental use of sport drives outcomes linked to alleviating social and economic problems and promotes community development, economic regeneration, crime reduction, health improvement and educational attainment (Coalter, 2007; Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Hylton, 2013). The current strategy (HM Government, 2015) highlights that for mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development, more work will need to be done in the coming years to understand and evidence the exact impact that sport and physical activity can make on these overall outcomes (HM Government, 2015, p72). At one level this statement seems to take us no further forward than the 1990s, when Coalter's work on the Value of Sport Monitor highlighted a lack of a strong cumulative body of research evidence for such social welfare outcomes. This lack of evidence, according to Coalter (2007, p.2) is explained by conceptual weaknesses in defining sport and outcomes, methodological weaknesses and a limited consideration of conditions that are necessary to effect change. Because of this, CSDW have often struggled to evidence and understand the positioning of their work and have been offered little guidance in doing so (Mackintosh, 2012). The pressure on CSDW to deliver and provide evidence for achieving the underpinning social welfare aims of their programmes remains strong, yet the ability to provide this evidence base seems ever elusive.

In May 2019, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee reported to the House of Commons regarding the social impact of participation in culture and sport (House of Commons, 2019). This report detailed several sport and arts initiatives that positively contributed to health and wellbeing, desistance from crime, educational engagement and attainment and the regeneration of communities. Each section highlighted individual initiatives, or in some instances, individual case studies to evidence the social impact of participation in culture and sport. However, it is questionable whether isolated case studies (however positive) can build a national evidence base which addresses Coalter's (2007) concerns regarding conceptual weaknesses in defining sport and outcomes, methodological weaknesses and consideration of the conditions necessary to effect change. Focusing on successful initiatives also disregards the myriad of unsuccessful initiatives, which through careful examination of why they failed could prove beneficial for sector learning.

Within the report (House of Commons, 2019), cross-government working is highlighted as a fundamental way in which to maximise the social impact of sport. The complexities of cross-government working are highlighted, for example, silo mentalities within government departments and a lack of proactivity to drive forward cross-departmental working (House of Commons/DCMS, 2019), all of which are corroborated within this thesis. The report also highlights a concern regarding a perceived lack of institutional memory relating to the social impact of sport within Government stating that, "the evidence that we received made reference to a breadth of prior related work on this topic, some of which was funded and published by the Government itself" (House of Commons/DCMS, 2019, p40) and this strongly resonates with findings within this thesis relating to the pervasive amnesia of government in relation to policymaking.

The unintended consequences of the marketisation of community sport

Sport policy as a driver of practice was acknowledged by participants across all phases of this study. Within phase two, Lauren (a senior civil servant) reflected on her perceptions of how community sport delivery mechanisms were changing and commented,

> You have to remember the conservative philosophical political viewpoint which is, it's a marketplace and your job is to allow the free market, not to allow anyone to have any kind of control over the market. Total free market and the strong survive and the weak go to the wall and I'm afraid that's the philosophy that pervades education, health, everywhere now not just sport.

Leaving community sport to the free market was seen by Lauren to be detrimental both to communities and to the sport sector. She believed that fragmentation of services was problematic, and further exacerbated through a focus on the free market. Lauren's comments aligned with those from CSDW in the previous chapter who also feared fragmentation of the market. King's (2014) study of local authority sport services under the UK coalition government found that services owned or delivered by non-council providers could not guarantee a policy focus and his findings of increased fragmentation of services at a local level was detrimental in relation to equitable access, sustainability and service quality. Therefore, participant pessimism within this phase of research surrounding

the fragmentation of services as a result of the supremacy of market forces may be well founded.

Emphasising her dismay at the focus on the free market, Alice commented,

> The more you do this and the more you focus on markets the more you will diversify into small organisations doing random things. Is that what we want? I don't know… It seems to me to have lost the plot, but I think it's that the top doesn't understand the bottom.

Alice's comments concur with those of CSDW that those involved with government policymaking do not really understand the sport sector, and certainly not at the grassroots level. The reoccurring theme throughout this research regarding the fragmentation of community sport services substantiates Bevir's (2011) statement that neoliberalism may have created new governance mechanisms, but not necessarily those of properly functioning markets. Instead, neoliberalism appears to have driven the proliferation of networks, the fragmentation of the public sector and service delivery, and erosion of public sector control (Bevir, 2011; Stoker, 2017). The unintended consequences of this, as perceived by participants within this phase of the research and a view shared by CSDW, being a negative effect on quality assurance mechanisms. Several phase two participants felt that the quality of community sport was declining as a direct result of the focus on the free market and an opening up of the market to those who may not have the knowledge or experience to deliver a quality experience. Some questioned who was now responsible for the quality assurance of those delivering community sport. A driving down of quality was seen as an unintended consequence of an increasingly fragmented community sport delivery system. A delivery system driven by a neoliberal agenda, with a focus on market forces. As Alice commented,

> And what you're now seeing is Sport England saying, right...it's open season, there's money, you can bid for it… But what's the quality assurance on your delivery? Who's going to quality assure the coaches you use, the managers you use, and the sports development personnel you use?

Frankie made a similar point in relation to quality assurance mechanisms for school sport,

> Central Government's philosophy is to leave it to the market…Let's use schools as the example, money goes in to every primary school via the school sport premium, the number of private companies has quadrupled, the quality assurance system is not there, so man in white van is making a good living at the expense of people who are quality providers. So what you have when you open it to the market like this, unless you open it to the market and impose some quality assurance mechanism, is you are incredibly dependent on the people on the ground being discerning about what is good and what is bad, and the vast majority of head teachers don't know the difference, which means the quality of provision is highly variable…

Alice and Frankie reflected that when local authorities managed sports development the landscape was different. From Alice and Frankie's perspective, local authority sports departments were run by people who knew their communities and knew the legal obligations relating to health and safety, event management and other quality assurance criterion. Alice and Frankie viewed the demise of local authority sport departments as detrimental for community sport and believed that local authorities provided an essential quality assurance mechanism that was now increasingly lacking. This concurs with Greve (2017) who states that the scope for differences in provision of services grows exponentially because of increasing complexity and fragmentation of local service delivery. Osborne and Gaeblar (1993) believe that government has increasingly focused on steering rather than rowing when it comes to public service provision, and this has led to confused and fragmented delivery mechanisms, exacerbated by a 'can't govern, won't govern' narrative and confluence of governance and neoliberalism (Talbot, 2016). According to Blyth (2013) policies allied to notions of 'austerity' have become a powerful narrative at the heart of a reinvigorated right-wing project, driving a focus on the steering rather than rowing of public services via a rhetoric of cost reduction and budget cuts.

However, not all participants viewed such fragmentation of services as a negative consequence of a focus on market-led services, as Bella commented,

> So, at a local level it's already starting to happen – it's fragmenting…which it would because that's how markets mature so

> we would expect to see that.

Bella saw the fragmentation of services as a natural phase of markets maturing. She was objective, but not necessarily supportive of this as her following comment highlights,

> The dominant model has moved from sports development to a market-led approach. That's the way the thinking's going. It's not the way my thinking's going, but that's the big picture. If sport is a marketable commodity, if it is a commodity really … then NGBs will either do it and make some money out of it or commission someone else to make some money out of it…or get out of the way and let a third party make some money out of it.

Bella was accepting, albeit somewhat reluctantly, of sport becoming more market focused and thought this was a natural progression for the sport sector. Lauren, a senior civil servant involved at a governmental level with sport policy development, also emphasised a market led and customer focused sport sector as increasingly important,

> Some organisations will not struggle to become, let's call it, customer led…Well there's two issues aren't there. There's one maintaining the people who already participate in your sport and that all seems straightforwardly the role for governing bodies, and then there's opening up, in policy terms, the right, for other organisations to deliver that particular sport , and some of it will be governing bodies and some of it won't be.

Government's focus on consumer choice, market forces and the subsequent opening of delivery to other providers beyond NGBs, LAs and CSPs was seen to be driving an evolving delivery system for community sport. Whilst it was acknowledged that this was causing the market to fragment there was consensus from some participants that delivery mechanisms for sport were outdated and that opening services to the free market could prove beneficial.

Whilst most participants believed that the demise of local authority sport departments was detrimental to community sport, opinions surrounding NGBs, CSPs and social enterprises as the delivery mechanism for community sport

were more polarised and this discussion will be further considered in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter has examined participants' opinions regarding the sport policy making process. Beyond this it has sought to access the meanings and beliefs participants held around policy interpretation. There was a perception from some participants that the voice and opinions of those who had worked at the grassroots level of sport were less valued than in the past, and instead the focus had switched towards encouraging people from the business community into sports leadership roles. As the emphasis shifts towards business principles and the primacy of the market, those with business 'skills' can be viewed as being of most use to the sporting sector. Additionally, sport participants are recast as sport consumers and market research becomes ever more important to ascertain consumer behaviour and opinion (HM Government, 2015, Sport England, 2016). Within this context, neoliberalism, as the backseat driver, can encourage a focus on managerialism and new public management and further requires that such principles are evidenced within funding bids (Grix, 2010).

Government may encourage sporting organisations to seek diversified funding streams, yet in doing so they retain some control of the sector and how it is structured. If government are directing the outcomes of extending community sport to free market forces, although viewed as a 'laissez-faire' approach it is still interventionist. With even the International Monetary Fund (IMF) questioning neoliberalism (Ostry et al., 2016) some say that its time has come. In subjecting sport to the primacy of the market it ignores deep-rooted societal inequalities and the inability that some may have to access sporting opportunities, regardless of the array of choice (Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015). Beyond this, neoliberalism can also exacerbate inequalities and ironically, as the increase in inequality deepens, this itself may undercut growth, the very thing that the neoliberal agenda is intent on boosting (Ostry et al., 2016).

Policymakers within this phase of research that disagreed with a neoliberal ideology often felt silenced and voiced that there was a personal cost to speaking out. This may partly explain why the voice of dissent, the voice that questions, the

voice that reflects and the voice that says it 'how it is', was seen by participants to be lacking within key sporting organisations. This also aligns with commentary from CSDW in phase one who felt that they were unheard within policymaking circles. This lack of representation of the sport sector to government was viewed as problematic in that government were never challenged and some of the unintended consequences of neoliberalism and sport policy (for example, a driving down of quality and non-existent quality control measures) not counteracted. From a Gramscian perspective (1971) this can be interpreted as bureaucratic centralism. He discussed the notion of bureaucratic centralism and organic (or democratic) centralism. Within organic centralism there is a continual adaptation of the organisation to the 'real' movement and a matching of 'thrusts from below, with orders from above' (Gramsci, 1971, p.188). From a community sport perspective this would involve sport policy reflecting the needs of the sector and evolving organically from discussions with the sector. In contrast, bureaucratic centralism turns into 'a narrow clique which tends to perpetuate its selfish privileges by controlling or even by stifling the birth of oppositional forces' (Gramsci, 1971 p.189). Such commentary can be reflected upon in relation to Grix's (2010) discussion which highlights how a trend towards 'agencification' and a decentred approach to governance within sport (that is governance from the 'bottom-up) had not resulted in less centralised control but had, paradoxically, ensured that hierarchical power relations and resource-dependent networks and partnerships contributed to increased central state control (Taylor, 2011; Bevir & Rhodes, 2016).

This research highlights that both CSDW and sport policymakers feel limited in being able to challenge the established order. Gramsci's work and the call for organic intellectuals to challenge and progress the cultural environment (Gramsci, 1971) seem to be lacking and we might reflect that this is hegemony in action. That said, through this phase we have observed that those involved in policymaking do reflect and question how the sector is evolving but are not vocal in expressing their opinions widely. To be vocal or to remain silent is a personal decision. To speak out against a system and risk being a lone voice is a brave move in any circumstance. That said, with the rise of social media it is increasingly possible. To complain that the sector is not vocal in voicing its dissatisfaction with government and sector developments whilst remaining

silent seems somewhat contradictory. Underpinning these tensions is a discussion around structure and agency and the power that is vested within each. Every participant operates within the context of wider social structures and in order to examine their motivations we need to examine why they choose to remain silent. We can reflect on Wright Mills (1959) work regarding the sociological imagination that highlights how social outcomes are based on biographical trajectories. Shaping these social outcomes are social norms, social motives and the social context, all of which were discussed within this chapter to examine whose voices are and are not heard within policymaking.

For political parties to hear the voices of those they represent, they have to be receptive to hearing dissenting opinion. If this is not the case, then voicing one's opinion may appear hopeless, with a politics that will not listen and a personal cost to speaking out. This brings into focus the role of political parties and Gramsci's work on this can prove illuminating. Gramsci (1971) discussed the role and nature of political parties reflecting that politics is separate to economics, yet not independent of it. Gramsci (1971) was concerned with how we determine the concept of the state and the organisation of political parties. It is interesting to note that nowhere within Gramsci's (1971) work is there a separate and distinct discussion of hegemony. Rather the concept is embedded throughout via a consideration of the limitations of economism and the narrow interpretation of politics as a struggle to secure economic interests. In reacting against a purely economic view of political life, Gramsci develops new concepts for interpreting political realms and in so doing establishes the concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Schwartzmantel, 2015).

Neoliberalism as an economic philosophy is often portrayed as a political ideology and can crowd out voices that disagree with its tenets. Those that benefit the most from neoliberal concepts are those that hold power, and, in this respect, it is not surprising that they may choose not to hear voices that question its ideological underpinnings and implementation. This may go some way to explaining participants' perceptions that there was a pervasive amnesia of government and sport policymakers to hear or learn from dissenting voices or policies of the past.

Chapter Eight: Playing the Game: Returning to the Grassroots

Introduction

In this chapter, we return to the grassroots of community sport development and those working face-to-face with sporting participants. Rather than individual interviews, a new data collection method was trialled in phase three whereby participants were invited to post on a Padlet wall. The rationale behind this was threefold: (i) it enabled participants to post at a time that suited them and therefore offered more flexibility in terms of data collection; (ii) it enabled participants to see and respond to the posts of other participants (which they were actively encouraged to do) and (iii) it provided a medium whereby images, websites and reports could be shared to validate, enrich and expand on the wider posts/commentary provided.

Twenty-five participants were invited to post on the wall; pseudonyms allocated, and a briefing document posted (on Padlet) outlining how to use Padlet. Initially, activity was slow, so to encourage posts participants were given two quotes to respond to from the first and second phase of research, these were as follows:

> Championing social enterprises and businesses to deliver sport is just creating a fragmentation and duplication of services. It's a bun fight...
>
> There were situations in the past where you had Sport England having a strategy and then the government coming out with its own sport strategy and the two had hardly spoken to each other, that didn't make sense. That's not the case now, it's much more aligned.

Participants were briefed that these quotes served only to stimulate discussion. Of the 25 invited to post on the wall, 12 actively engaged on a regular basis. They were drawn from a broad range of organisations including NGBs, social enterprises, CSPs, commercial sector, charities and local authorities. The results from this phase of the research corroborate findings from Phase One in which participants highlighted how political ideology, underpinned by managerialist principles, was driving the marketisation of community sport. This subsequently resulted in a fragmented and uncoordinated community sport landscape that shifted organisational values away from welfarism, to individualism and competition.

Serving to illustrate this point, a study of higher managerial sporting leaders (Sports Think Tank, 2014) highlighted the acceptance of commercial principles with respondents stating that there was a need for sport to be more consumer-focused and demand-led, and that the sports sector should foster stronger relationships with innovators and entrepreneurs to meet consumer demands.

The demise of local authority community sport development caused concern for participants during this data collection phase (as it did within phases one and two) as participants specifically believed that the speed of the transformation of public services had been too rapid. However, public sector reform shows no sign of abating and public sector managers must cope with an agenda that is imposed by politicians over which they have little control (Massey & Pyper, 2005; Massey, 2019).

This phase of the research, unintentionally, served to triangulate results from Phase One and Phase Two and in this respect some of the discussion is similar but has been broadened to a wider audience. Offering participants, the opportunity to post freely on the Padlet, facilitated a validation of some of the key issues facing CSDW that were highlighted in Phase One.

We turn initially to explore the changing role of local authorities in community sport praxis, before progressing on to discussing the unintended consequences of the marketisation of sport and the role of monitoring and evaluation within community sport.

Local authorities as the nexus of community sport development

Even though participants within phase three valued the coordinating role that local authorities played within community sport development, for those working in local authority sport it was clear that the speed of change was leaving some feeling deflated. Wendy had worked in local authority sport development for over 20 years and raised the barrage of changes that she had witnessed over this time,

> We undergo constant change; people are demoralised and uncertain about their jobs. People have left their jobs because of the pressure, have been made redundant or are on long-term sick leave. I'm one of the few that remains within local authority sport development now.

As neoliberal ideology at the macro level, drives managerialist principles at a

meso level, this influences micro level delivery. As is the case in a host of wider public service contexts, the stability of a career within a local authority setting, where jobs and lifetime service were once considered the norm, has been replaced with systems of personal performance management, restructuring and redundancy, often for no obvious reason (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Importing private sector principles into the public sector is often fraught with difficulties. Some tensions arise due to organisational environments, goals, structures and management values being different to those of the private sector from which such management principles have been imported (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Whilst the private sector may place an emphasis on the customer, this is done to maximise profits. The public sector has different values and aims, in that it exists to cater for its local population and to foster fairness and equality of opportunity. Forms of accountability are to the political leadership, central government and its local population, rather than shareholders, and because of this private sector principles may work in direct opposition to public sector goals (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). For example, community sport services may not always be profitable, and may run at a loss. The rationale being that equality of opportunity and the promotion of citizen welfare is more important than income generation and profit maximisation. However, as public services are compelled to operate within a managerialist framework, regardless of whether such principles are appropriate, this focus can overlook the important aspect of external forces acting upon the public sector from politicians, the public and wider society. This, in turn, can leave local authorities stuck between the demands of a system of budgetary squeezes imposed by central government and the dissatisfied voices of its local population who bear the brunt of this via service cuts and increased council taxes (Bevir & Rhodes, 2018).

Phase three participants were positive about local authorities' strong 'moral compass' and their focus on the social wellbeing of their communities. Furthermore, participants felt that the underpinning values and principles of the public sector were well aligned to the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015), and were perplexed at the continued reduction of funding to public services that could help achieve such aims. As Lucas who had worked for a charity for eight years explained,

Having worked in most sectors and known people who have worked in

> local authority sports development for a long time it has become clear to me that local authorities are socially and morally best placed to lead the latest sports strategy. Not only do they have the wellbeing and engagement of the whole community at the core of their philosophy but morally address the imbalance in participation.

Responding to Lucas and furthering the discussion, Bob, who had worked for a national social enterprise for the last five years, concurred,

> I feel that the majority of local authorities are still well placed even if under resourced to deliver key elements of the new sport strategy. The majority of local authorities are values/principle led and have for decades been focused at providing services to the most at need. Alongside this, local authorities have clear structures and lines of accountability with local councillors championing the health needs of their patch - which helps provide part of that moral compass.

Even though, from a values perspective, participants may feel local authorities are well placed to deliver the sport strategy, this may become increasingly difficult as local authority councils face increasingly severe pressures on funding. For example, public health grant funding is to be cut by £531m between 2015 and 2020, and it is estimated that councils are facing a funding gap of £5.8 billion by the end of 2020 (Local Government Association, 2018). Therefore, even though the latest sport policies specifically outline the importance of local authority contribution towards achieving policy outcomes (HM Government, 2015; Sport England 2016) this is at odds with dramatically reduced funding within public health and public services. This dislocation of policy from practice is further deepened by sport being a focus of other policies that span several governmental departments (school, community, and elite sport) with limited interaction across and between these policies and departments, as highlighted in the triennial review (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2015). This leads to funding, infrastructure, objectives and the means of evaluating each policy being treated separately (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). In turn, such dislocation has the potential to exacerbate a competitive and fragmented delivery at the grassroots level. Participants saw fragmentation of community sport delivery (which can be inadvertently driven by policy) as problematic. Ironically, local authorities

were seen as a conduit to prevent uncoordinated and piecemeal development of services. As Wendy stated,

> We (local authorities) understand our communities and our communities understand us (from both a strategic and operational perspective). Connecting partners/organisations, whether we use sport as the tool, or embed the concept to other broader asset-based community development projects - enables less fragmentation and better working together in partnership. We can ensure delivery of the sport and health agenda, equally avoiding duplication of precious time/resource/funds.

Highlighting the widespread support for local authority sport from CSDW working across all organisations within the community sport spectrum, Oscar, who worked for a large NGB, joined in the discussion adding,

> Local authorities have the knowledge of the local landscape in order to deliver effectively for hard to reach groups in the community, and therefore whilst they may not be able to deliver, their input and commitment is invaluable.

However, as supportive as participants were of local authority CSD, rather than being central to sport policy, King (2013) argues that the reductions to local government finance will lead to sport services facing their most serious threat to date. Although participants within this phase of the research held local authorities in high regard, local authority sport clearly faces an uncertain future.

Participants viewed the discussion surrounding diversification of funding (HM Government, 2015) as another attempt by which to convince CSDW that a reduction in public sector funding was necessary. In turn, they returned to the discussions regarding the values of market driven services being in opposition to the values of a welfare agenda in which community sport was, in their perception, located. Bob, who worked for a small NGB questioned the value of opening the market to diversified funding streams and alternative providers,

> In these challenging times, I have often seen the local authority' sports development unit adapt to the new landscape and work differently with partners, often being the instigators of change. Can

> we actually say the same about existing or the new partners that Sport England want to invest into as key partners for delivery? They are primarily focused on their own growth and development.

As we can see, the diversification of sport funding did not get support from Bob, but in this respect, it could be said that the sector does not have a choice in such diversification. Policy has stated that this is necessary and therefore will be driven via non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) when allocating funding and advising community sport providers. Policy wording tries to convince providers of the necessity to diversify funding sources and broaden the range of agencies involved with delivering CSD. Over time, this directive has the potential to become accepted and unquestioned. In discussing 'Americanism' and 'Fordism', Gramsci (1971) highlights how populations can become subject to 'collective pressure' and personally 'mechanised'. By this, he means that under certain structural conditions the work that individuals undertake has the potential to be reduced to a series of tasks and the intellectual discussion surrounding appropriateness of such tasks is discouraged. It is possible to apply this to modern-day community sport, in that CSDW are not encouraged to question delivery mechanisms but purely to accept that diversified funding and delivery systems are a feature of the sporting landscape. Even though participants may think that local authorities are best placed to deliver community sport, over time, as this service is reduced and diluted and people move on from the sector, the collective memory of such service delivery will inevitably fade, along with dissenting voices. A fragmented community sport delivery system, in time, becomes the only environment that CSDW know and because of this, they may be increasingly tolerant of a system that does not work for them or their communities. In this respect, a Gramscian lens highlights a mechanistic acceptance by and intellectual reductionism of the workforce, through subtle hegemonic persuasion driven via policy and government institutions.

Laura, who had worked for a CSP for three years, reflected on how local authorities were having to operate differently,

> There is certainly an argument that local authorities have the granular level of understanding to implement and deliver the sport strategy - they know their audience and community. That said, because of local

> authority funding being squeezed, they are being forced to operate differently, with many now having their sport development arm as a function within a leisure provider. Whilst it is still within their remit to support local community sport development, their focus inevitably centres on increasing facility usage. Consequently, the community sport options are now not as deeply entrenched within the community but are at times made to fit the leisure facility, regardless of whether this is the right thing for the audience.

Laura's comments bring into question how community needs are accommodated within a contracted-out environment, driven by the marketisation of services. All councils have the power, under the Local Government Act 2000, to secure the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their residents, of which sports and recreation can play a crucial role (Audit Commission, 2006). A study of all councils in England (to which 95 councils responded) and detailed fieldwork in 30 councils, found that from 2002 to 2006 the number of trusts that ran public leisure services had doubled from approximately 40 in 1997 to over 90 in 2006. With the demise of the Audit Commission in 2015, large scale studies of local authority delivery have ceased to exist, however, the Chief Leisure Operators Association (CLOA) and the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) do continue to monitor and evaluate the trends, challenges and effectiveness of public sector delivery. The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) is the professional association for strategic leaders managing public sector Culture, Arts, Heritage, Tourism, Libraries, Parks, Sport and Leisure services. They work closely with central government and key national organisations such as Arts Council England and Sport England to influence the development of national policies and to lobby for positive change (CLOA, 2019). The APSE is a networking community that works with more than 250 local authorities across the UK to assist in improving their frontline services and to advise and share information and expertise (APSE, 2019). An APSE survey into local authority sport and recreation services (APSE, 2012) concurred with the Audit Commission (Audit Commission, 2006) in identifying a growing trend towards trust management, stating that the trend is likely to continue. However, APSE (2012) highlighted that it was debatable whether the establishment and expansion of service management through leisure

trusts would ensure that community benefit was central to sport and recreation services. They highlight that only 32% of Chief Leisure Officers within the UK believed that trusts had been introduced to defend welfare objectives and, in many cases, the move towards trust status had been motivated by the opportunity to reduce costs (APSE, 2012). This concurs with the Audit Commission's study (Audit Commission, 2006) which found that two fifths of councils based their management option decision on a desk-top analysis and this process was often poorly managed and focused on financial criteria. Beyond this the Audit Commission (2006) highlighted that strategic planning of sports and recreation services was underdeveloped and weakened by a lack of a robust assessment of current sports and recreation provision, community needs and future demand.

In the face of significant reductions in local authority expenditure on sport and leisure services in England since 2010, some public sport facilities have faced the threat of closure, consolidating their provision, or having to shorten their opening hours (APSE, 2012; Conn 2015, Parnell et al., 2015). More recently, Ramchandani et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between austerity policy in the UK and the management and performance of public sport facilities in England. Their findings indicate that the financial efficiency of public sport facilities had shown a marked improvement during the post-2010 period and that this has been achieved by utilising business models and commercial practices more typically associated with the private sector (for example, a focus on direct debit schemes rather than pay and play). Ramchandani et al. (2018) further found that financial efficiency was achieved predominantly by raising the price of activities and increasing income, rather than reducing costs. The key implications from this study being that promoting access to public sport facilities by hard-to-reach or disadvantaged groups has been compromised in exchange for the pursuit of financial stability (Ramchandani et al., 2018). Furthermore, hard-to-reach groups tend to be more reliant on local authority as opposed to commercial provision (Widdop et al., 2017). With structural inequalities being exacerbated by political ideology and policy (Piketty, 2014; Dorling, 2018) it is questionable whether moving forward, the community in its broadest sense, will ever be positioned at the heart of community sport development as it is currently conceptualised, driven and operated.

Amidst the need to ensure financial stability, it would be easy for the wider community to be overlooked due to a pressure to achieve financial key performance indicators and subsequent targets linked to facility usage and throughput. Positive benefits such as improved health, community cohesion and job creation have been used to legitimise government involvement and public spending on sport. All of which are key strands within the latest sport policy (HM Government, 2015).

As public sector sport is contracted out or moves towards community interest companies (CIC) or Trust status, it promotes the commercial operation of services. The revenue cost of sports facilities is often high. A profit maximising commercial provider may raise tariffs to cover these costs, which, as highlighted, may subsequently exclude specific target groups (Vos et al., 2016). Additionally, local authorities have tended to maintain facility spend and reduce commitments to community programmes when budgets have been reduced, which can lead to 'sport for all' being policy rhetoric rather than policy reality (Widdop, 2017; King, 2013, 2014).

The role of leisure facilities within community sport development

An emphasis on profit has the potential to lead to leisure facility operators prioritising gym and exercise services that tend to be more profitable than sports programmes. Participants in phase three discussed the role of facilities within the broader community sport offer with several believing that the programming of facilities was unimaginative and, at times, exclusionary. Oscar articulated his thoughts on this issue,

> In my experience of working across local authorities and NGBs, I believe a real opportunity lies with local authorities and their influence on the leisure providers who hold the contract for the delivery of services at their leisure centres. However, too often these leisure providers are focused on income generation and expanding gym and group exercise space rather than fulfilling the needs of the community by providing spaces to participate in multiple sports and ensuring a wider and engaging sports programmes.

Luke, who, like Oscar, worked for an NGB, agreed,

> I have not seen one local authority think differently about the development of their new centres. If we looked at integrating doctors' surgeries, health clinics, youth services and others into these buildings, we could enable people who wouldn't normally walk through a leisure centre door, to do so.

Ironically, co-location of sport with other services, such as health and education, is championed within the latest sport strategy, which states that: "… in assessing applications for all major capital investments in future, SE will include a presumption in favour of co-location of services wherever possible" (HM Government, 2015, p.36). Of course, this idea is not new. Indeed, in 2001, The Big Lottery Fund announced £232 million funding for Healthy Living Centres (HLC). The aim of HLCs was to promote good health in its broadest sense, to reduce health inequalities and to improve the health of the most disadvantaged sections of the population. Sports facilities were housed alongside GP surgeries, chemists and other professions allied to medicine and thirty-five HLCs were funded. However, this scheme did not continue and was somehow lost to policy makers over successive governments – an example of the pervasive policy amnesia that participants from phase two discussed.

For all respondents in this phase of the research, the role of the local authority was crucial in ensuring that welfare outcomes were not lost. Participants believed that local authorities, in their capacity as client, could stipulate and hence drive the welfare outcomes they expected the contractor to contribute towards. As Jamie, who worked for a small sporting social enterprise, noted,

> In my view, far from being seen as just a management of leisure facilities, the new social enterprise leisure provider organisations can if the contract and objectives/outcomes are stipulated correctly fully embrace sports development, facility programme delivery and partnership working to create a joined-up approach and achieve local authority sports objectives.

This directly questions the working relationship between the local authority and the contractor (if contracted out) and what stipulations have been placed within contracts to drive such partnership working and community interaction.

Discussions such as these are central to a debate that highlights the potential for leisure facilities to be at the heart of community sport. How operators worked with the communities they served, and the drivers for this interaction was also commented on by Wendy,

> Leisure Trusts could be much more creative and in doing so cater to a broader market. Who is influencing them to do so? Do leisure facility operators even talk to their communities or is it more a case of we're here, it's up to you to walk through the door, we aint coming to you?!'

These comments highlight that it is not just the physical design and infrastructure of facilities that is important, but also the outreach work that occurs within the community to not only encourage community usage but to establish community demands and needs. The recently published Civil Society Strategy (HM Government, 2018) seeks to strengthen the role of the social sector 'space' for voluntary and community and social enterprise organisations, such as those who manage contracted out leisure facilities. It is anticipated that such services will cater for their community's needs. However, empirical evidence within this research does not support this hypothesis in that the social sector (for leisure facilities management) appeared to be more focused on profit maximisation than catering for broader community needs and wants.

Both phase three and phase one participants questioned how well staff working in leisure centres understood their communities and were therefore able to help develop them through sport. As discussed in Chapter Four, community dynamics can be complex and for CSDW to operate effectively an awareness of such dynamics is useful. If leisure operators carry out limited sport development work beyond the physical environment of the leisure centre, then impactful community engagement is unlikely.

Comments from CSDW within phase three highlighted a negative perception of leisure centre staff and how they engaged (or not) with their local communities. Participants stated that they found such staff to be somewhat insular and preoccupied by a focus on their facility, and facility programming/management, rather than outreach work that might engage the wider population. This is perhaps unsurprising given Ramchandani's et al.'s (2018) findings that highlight

leisure centre operators as being focused on profit maximisation via maintaining and increasing income from existing customers, as well as raising costs for facility usage in general. In this respect, wider community engagement may seem somewhat superficial to some facilities staff. Eric, who worked for a large sporting social enterprise, believed that SE seemed to miss the important role that leisure facilities' operators could potentially play in developing community sport,

> Some providers are focused on getting more people in the pen and paying their direct debits, rather than creating a positive experience that changes mind-sets and enables longer active participation. These providers have also been missed by Sport England in all their historic strategic documents and, for me, are a key player in getting more inactive people doing something, it would also be interesting to see if and in how much detail Sport England has been talking to the big players, such as the GLLs, Everyone Actives, and PFPLs.

It is widely acknowledged that Sport England has worked in an advisory capacity with local authorities for some time, providing guidance to help develop sport and physical activity facilities in their areas and navigate the national planning policy framework (Sport England, 2019a). The latest guidance from Sport England highlights that local authorities are now more commonly 'commissioners' of services than 'deliverers' (Sport England, 2019c). The first part of the commissioning process is understanding need (Sport England, 2014; 2019c) and participants within this phase of the research felt that this stage of the process was often ignored. If operators are not present within their communities it is questionable whether they can fully understand, and therefore cater for, community wants and needs.

Lucy who worked for a small social enterprise thought that a lack of 'joined up thinking' within local authorities exacerbated the ability of leisure facility operators to contribute to broader social objectives,

> Leisure facility discussions don't overlap with health and youth sector discussions in my experience. If they did what an opportunity that could be…

This would appear to be a missed opportunity. Participants in APSE's (2012) survey of Chief Leisure Officers stated that reductions in the budget for sport

and recreation services coupled with rising service charges was likely to negatively impact on health and anti-social behaviour objectives delivered through neighbouring departments and other partners. In coordinating these discussions there may be scope to limit such potential negative impact.

The ‘hidden savings’ made for the local authority and partner agencies of investing in sport and recreation services are not currently made explicit in most cases. For example, the removal of resource intensive commitments such as GP Referral Schemes, despite evidence-based data that indicates health gains in some instances, highlights how short-term savings made by budget reductions compromise sustained investment in pre-care interventions. Services may be cut for short-term gain, which in the longer term can prove more costly (Sam & Macris, 2014).

Collaboration as a panacea to solve all challenges is questionable, and arguably fundamental to the neoliberal agenda and language driving CSD practice (Lindsey, 2013; Baker et el., 2016). However, there were positive examples provided by respondents of inter-agency and departmental coordination. James, who worked for a large sporting social enterprise, offered this scenario,

> Where I live, the contracted-out leisure operator has been tasked with this joined up thinking and to have the sports development team at the heart of the provision linking leisure centres, community provision and club development. This new way of delivering has allowed for other funding pots to be explored and by working with agencies such as StreetGames they have been able to develop a Friday evening Doorstep Sports Club for young people which has now been embedded into the regular programme as it is bringing in a hard to reach clientele on a slow evening. Over a 100 attend so it is more than paying for itself, the leisure management has worked closely with youth agencies to design delivery and change mind-sets of leisure centre staff too.

In this instance, it appears that the local authority had given the operator a directive regarding ‘joined-up’ thinking, which had led to positive collaboration with other sporting agencies. That the activity was ‘more than paying for itself’

and profit was being generated may also have been a contributory factor to its longevity. Some participants within this phase discussed how a focus on income maximisation was driving an agenda that overemphasised participant numbers and a sense that more attendees were always preferable. This is evidenced in the above quote whereby 'over a 100 attend'. Even if this is spread across several hours, the quality of the sporting experience may be compromised with so many participants.

Some respondents described how it was relatively easy to 'game' the system regarding monitoring and evaluation of community sport programmes. For example, extra attendances added to registers, offering holiday sports programmes in order to conflate 'occasional' sporting participation with 'regular' participation and working with easier to engage groups who were more likely to attend. Smith and Leech (2010), in their study of SSPs in the North-West of England discussed the insatiable appetite amongst policymakers for what he termed, simple, 'killer facts', as indicators of policy success, which required participants to assemble 'evidence' in support of their contribution to delivering government's policy goals. They concluded that the need for assembling evidence of the effectiveness of the SSP programme and the frequency with which political imperatives dominated evidence meant that it was likely that evidence-based policy making and practice would remain very much an aspiration, rather than a reality, in part explaining the 'gaming' of the system. (Smith & Leech, 2010).

This phenomenon has also been observed in social service settings where agencies may avoid working with more challenging and difficult clients in order to meet their targets (Behn & Kant, 1999; Van Dooren et al., 2015). Likewise, in sport, when faced with 'ratcheting' participation targets (i.e., when performance indicators go irreversibly upwards), there are incentives to game the system (Bevan & Hood 2006). Individuals may fulfil a performance measure by enticing more participants through the door, but in fulfilling this task, they may ultimately subvert the overall intentions of the organisation itself, such as social inclusion, community development or the personal development of vulnerable groups, all of which require more intense personalised work practices (Austin & Lee, 2013). What this evidence suggests is that quantitative performance indicators can be used to

shape the practice of community sport as they generally focus attention on attendance figures, but in so doing they run the risk of directing the focus away from the quality of the sporting experience itself.

The impact of focusing primarily on quantitative performance indicators was seen by participants in this phase of research as impinging upon community sport practice and it is to this discussion that we now turn.

'Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing' (Wilde, 1890)

Although it may seem strange to be quoting Oscar Wilde within a doctoral thesis on community sport development, this sentiment embraces that of participants who believed that quantitative monitoring and evaluation methods did not offer a full picture of impact and instead drove practitioners to operate in superficial ways. A common point of discussion amongst respondents was the way in which focusing on the number of participants at a session drove CSDW to 'fill the room' rather than concentrate on the quality of the experience offered. Laura, who worked for a CSP, was critical of Sport England and how they were guiding projects that had received funding to monitor and evaluate their offer,

> I find it difficult to understand how Sport England is still rolling out programmes without any consideration given to monitoring and evaluation (Satellite Clubs for example). Programmes are still heavily centred on quantitative targets (whilst they decide what new methods may look like) in which case it means we are operating on a sport for social good strategy yet still employing monitoring and evaluation under the pretence of sports for sports sake.

At the time of writing, the sport sector is still awaiting direction regarding how to monitor and evaluate programmes to evidence social outcome impact, a key thrust of recent sport strategy (HM Government, 2015). Evidencing social outcomes such as community cohesion and development, social inclusion and increased mental wellbeing is complex. Community sport development workers may need guidance before setting up programmes to ensure such processes of monitoring and evaluation are embedded from the outset. As Theo who worked for a CSP stated,

> I think that our monitoring and evaluation is crap and we are just told to come up with a plan for monitoring and evaluation without any kind of guidance. It's just sort of random with how things are measured.

Often staff working within CSD are recent graduates and may need further scaffolding and help to understand the monitoring and evaluation process, whilst examining a breadth of ways of evidencing impact. Kenny who had worked for a CSP for eight years highlighted how the haphazard way in which some funders monitor the impact of projects could lead to unscrupulous practice,

> One of the challenges for funders is to monitor and evaluate the impact of their investment. What you often find is funders don't put enough resource into monitoring and evaluation and schemes are not well monitored across the sector. Projects are often double funded and organisations who are clever in the way they do this are sustainable.

This could be viewed as unscrupulous practice or, reflecting on commentary from phase one, it could simply be regarded as an example of CSDW 'playing the game' to get the best for their communities. These findings concur with those of Sam (2012), who refers to this practice as 'cream skimming' and one that is driven by the quantitative link between attendances and funding. In this respect, performance management and measurement systems account for the measurable rather than the meaningful (Bevan & Hood, 2006; Sam & Macris, 2014).

Quality assurance was another area that elicited concern from participants. By inviting a broader range of organisations to deliver community sport, some participants felt that this removed an aspect of quality control that would have traditionally been provided by local authority sport departments. As Luke who worked for a large NGB highlighted, "Wherever private enterprise is delivering my sport, it is often done without any quality assurance particularly where we are left out of the picture".

This echoes discussion from phases one and two regarding a concern for quality assurance of community sport programmes. Luke went on to discuss how he was aware of clubs that had been established within his sport, but which had not linked with his NGB and in this respect he believed that the quality of such clubs was highly variable. Wendy, who worked for a local authority, had

similar experience of a community group who had taken over the running of a village sports facility highlighting,

> Whether you like it or not there are certain quality assurance mechanisms that you have to adhere to. We handed back two of our sports facilities last year. The community set up a community interest company and combined efforts via the parish council to run the facilities. They developed a key holding structure so that local sports clubs could just let themselves in, but with that comes a raft of risk issues that they were totally unaware of. But these groups are the vision of how community sport should operate, yet there is absolutely no expertise at all, enthusiasm is not enough.

A neoliberal agenda driving marketisation of services and an agenda that focuses on quantification and KPIs has the potential, it would seem, to drive down quality as the 'expert' is downgraded and de-professionalisation encouraged to open out the market, provide 'choice' and foster a competitive environment that is viewed as beneficial for consumers. Phase three respondents suggested that the de-professionalisation and reduction of the local authority workforce due to cuts and austerity measures had led to a vacuum of expertise. Such assertions resonate closely with participant commentary within phase two in which policymakers also believed that there was a 'lack of memory' and expertise within key sporting organisations due to staff changes. Rather than trying to hold on to such expertise within the sporting arena, some participants believed that sporting organisations favoured a younger, more inexperienced staff that according to Wendy were "easier to manipulate". In a marketised environment, staff may also be viewed as replaceable commodities and this may be just one unintended consequence of the marketisation of community sport.

Further reflections on the marketisation of community sport

NGBs are expected to work closely with the 45 CSPs across England and CSPs are expected to provide local-level support for NGBs, foster links with local agencies, and help transition young people into clubs (Baker et al., 2016; Harris and Houlihan, 2016). However, from this phase of the research we can see that such collaboration is not only complex and difficult but is sometimes actively avoided to secure funding in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The unintended

consequences of the marketisation of community sport can include a drive towards competition rather than collaboration and a culture that makes people wary and suspicious of working together.

Hood (1991) discussed the term New Public Management (NPM) as describing a movement oriented towards managerial, performance-driven, market-orientated delivery of public goods. In sport, NPM has prompted the 'modernisation' of the public bodies responsible for both elite and community sport. Although local authorities face many challenges due to reduced funding and a shift from provider to enabler and commissioner, NGBs and CSPs have experienced equally challenging times. NGBs are faced with reconciling the aims and objectives of Sport England (grassroots and participation sport) with those of UK Sport (elite sport) and their own objectives (Harris & Houlihan, 2016; Bostock et al., 2018). Within phase one of the research, participants working within NGBs discussed the complexity behind having to meet an array of competing political agendas with a limited workforce who were often ill prepared to focus on, for example, increasing participation. Likewise, CSPs have faced uncertainty regarding both their remit and subsequent funding. As we have seen, a major review of CSPs was undertaken in 2016, highlighting that several CSPs would need to strengthen their strategic leadership capabilities and work with a wider range of partners from health and the private sector to fulfil the government's strategy for sport (see Reed, 2016). The report also stated that there was a "clear role" for CSPs in the delivery of the strategy (HM Government, 2015), suggesting that Sport England would have to create a "core specification of services" for CSPs to be measured against when it came to accountability and funding decisions (Reed, 2016). Accountability being a core tenet of NPM, and the language of NPM is evident throughout Reed's review of CSPs.

NGB employee Jason, was mindful of the changing policy landscape and how this had impacted NGBs,

> Current sport policy has moved away from 'sport for sport's sake' to the inactivity and physical activity agenda. This does not always fit the overall objectives for an NGB, often meaning local authorities are best placed to deliver the national and local sport strategy. NGBs need to be careful not to lose focus on their primary objective to grow and

> support their sport.

This comment highlights the difficult position in which NGBs have found themselves in more recent years, with the community sport infrastructure largely viewed as failing due to falling participation figures as reported through the Active People Survey (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). Policymakers within the second phase of this research also questioned the role of NGBs moving forwards, and in this respect, it is not surprising that some NGBs felt rudderless. As Luke reflected,

> In terms of getting Sport England funding I think an NGB is now very poorly placed due to the 'limited' product range we can offer individually, and that whilst we could be future partners/deliverers on funded projects - I actually envy CSP's or other agencies who are very well (centrally) placed to lead and obtain funding for programmes. As always, it seems most of the priorities for my NGB and most of the priorities for Sport England are different.

Having to dance to many conflicting and complex tunes (participation, elite) can prove difficult and leave governing bodies unfocused and adrift. Participants who worked within NGBs often felt frustrated regarding their role, as Jamie commented,

> Through the new strategy, we are now seeing a complete U-turn with little to no investment in NGBs to grow the sport.

There was widespread uncertainty from governing body participants regarding their place in the sporting landscape. Some discussed how perceived failure by NGBs on the participation agenda of the 2012 sport strategy had left them fearful and unable to develop longer-term plans due to uncertainty of funding. There was some evidence of infighting between NGBs too as Bob’s comments highlighted,

> This strategy is a one size fits all approach by Sport England and this could damage the sector further as some NGBs have grown the game e.g. RFU, wheelchair rugby and have been unfairly treated with those who have failed. We are anticipating themed funding shortly however there is no guarantee that NGBs will be successful.

This highlights the competitive nature of funding, and how NGBs are now essentially in competition with other sports providers (including other NGBs) when it comes to community sport provision. Theo, who had worked for a CSP for two years questioned the role of NGBs in this respect,

> Please don't take this as too flippant, but I would just like your perspective on this - what is the point of NGBs? From my perspective, they are stuck between sport and the nation's physical activity levels, a sort of lose, lose limbo?

This is an illuminating comment from someone working within a CSP environment that is essentially tasked with partnership working across NGBs, LAs and the broader sporting landscape within their counties. Indeed, it raises the issue of whether there is a more widespread concern for the overall status and future of CSPs as Laura similarly alludes to (Laura also worked for a CSP),

> CSPs were/are not encouraged to apply for recent Sport England funding streams, but instead enable others to do so. CSPs are now seen as the facilitators but not necessarily the fund holders so where does that leave them - seeking other funding streams.

The need for expediency within an increasingly competitive market has implications for delivery. Theo, held a different opinion to Laura, even though they both worked for CSPs,

> Honestly, we (CSP) may not be the best organisation to receive some funding, but we have ensured that no other organisation from our area will be bidding for it. Competition for funding may not always result in the best organisations receiving the funding.

Ultimately, such a scenario may not be entirely beneficial for community sport as there may well be greater strength in collaboration and partnership including the avoidance of service duplication. However, such a collaborative spirit does not seem to be facilitated by market forces that pit organisations against each other in the funding arena, in order to survive. This practice is borne out of a neoliberal ideology that believes in competition as a means of promoting freedom of choice for consumers. Some community sport collaboration is contractual and therefore

based on a requirement or condition of funding rather than a strong belief that the mutual benefits of the partnership outweigh the pitfalls. This can also prove detrimental as there is a forced nature to the relationship which, in turn, requires partnership working to be successful. Faced with such a challenging context, organisations can approach the collaborative exercise with indifference, primarily motivated by the need to receive central funding to survive, rather than the need to work with specific agencies in order to deliver certain outcomes (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). Luke (who worked for an NGB) discussed the difficulties that he had experienced when collaborating with his local CSP,

> My own NGB strategy absorbs most of my time - partners can certainly help me (and vice versa) but it's much simpler for me if the CSP could often be a one-stop shop for facilitating that as I'm unlikely to be very up to date with many developments otherwise. I'd like to deal with CSP, local authorities, and Education for many things. How will NGB officers generally covering large areas or remits know who relevant local programmes or people are easily, if the sector becomes more fragmented?

This brings us back to the difficulties that NGBs face when trying to meet broad aims and objectives spanning grassroots and participation to elite sport development. It also highlights the challenges of collaborative working with a minimal workforce who are stretched across broad remits. NGBs are subject to a philosophy of government intervention that offers autonomy in return for efficient, effective services that secure Olympic medals – the currency for measuring success. Such simplified measures of performance attract criticism because these bodies have complex and contingent objectives (Mongkol, 2011; Dent et al., 2017). New public management techniques that seek to clarify roles and responsibilities and which provide a rational and transparent means to monitor, evaluate and reward NGBs, CSPs and other sporting organisations seem to not only have a detrimental impact on partnership working but also on participation rates in the majority of sports (Harris & Houlihan, 2016).

Summary

Participants within this final phase felt that local authorities were best placed to deliver outcomes within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) including

social and community development, physical, mental and individual wellbeing. The rationale being that local authorities have a welfare agenda and a drive to serve their local communities, all of which participants felt strongly aligned to stated objectives within the lasts sport strategy (HM Government, 2015). However, with councils facing an estimated funding gap of £5.8 billion by the end of 2020 (Local Government Association, 2018) this may be increasingly difficult. As local authorities look to improve efficiencies to accommodate budget cuts, many have placed their leisure services operation within a trust, yet Ramchandani et al. (2018) found that financial efficiency was achieved predominantly by raising the price of activities and increasing income, rather than reducing costs. Additionally, local authorities have tended to maintain facility spend and reduce commitments to community programmes when budgets have been reduced, which can lead to 'sport for all' becoming policy rhetoric rather than policy reality (King, 2013, 2014; Widdop, 2017). Therefore, the perception that local authorities are best placed to deliver the social objectives of the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) may prove overly optimistic given the organisational and budgetary pressures that they continue to face.

Comments from CSDW within phase three highlighted a negative perception of local authority leisure centre staff and how they engaged (or not) with their local communities. Participants stated that they found leisure centre staff to be somewhat insular and preoccupied by a focus on their facility, and facility programming/management, rather than outreach work that might engage the wider population. This is perhaps unsurprising given Ramchandani's et al.'s (2018) findings and earlier discussions which highlight that leisure centre operators are increasingly focused on profit maximisation via maintaining and increasing income from existing customers, as well as raising costs for facility usage in general. In this respect, wider community engagement may seem somewhat superficial to some facilities' staff.

There was discussion within this phase concerning how a focus on quantified monitoring and evaluation outputs via central government had driven CSDW to 'play the game' when it came to recording attendance figures at CSD programmes. When faced with 'ratcheting' participation targets (i.e., when performance indicators go irreversibly upwards), there are incentives to game the

system (Bevan & Hood 2006) and participants discussed how it was relatively easy to initiate programmes that were 'quick wins' in relation to ensuring a higher number of participants – for example, children's activity camps running in school holidays. This may be at the expense of other types of programmes that may, ironically, be more likely to meet the latest sport strategy objectives (HM Government, 2015) yet may not offer a positive output measure in terms of numbers of participants. Especially given that groups such as those with mental health problems, the disabled or those leading chaotic lives may find it harder to commit to attending such programmes. In 'cream skimming' (Sam, 2012), CSDW may ultimately subvert the overall intentions of the organisation itself, such as social inclusion, community development or the personal development of vulnerable groups, all of which require more intense personalised work practices (Austin & Lee, 2013).

We have discussed throughout this thesis how a policy rhetoric of social good is often not borne out via practice. Budgetary constraints within CSPs, NGBs and local authorities, community interest companies and social enterprises have forced organisations to focus on maximising and retaining income and funding. This often promotes competition between providers and can lead to duplication of services. In turn, it may shift the focus of organisations to one of self-preservation and individualism, rather than collaboration and collective effort. New public management techniques in community sport can further exacerbate a focus on individualism and self-interest and in so doing, promote organisational survival, whilst distracting attention away from the primary goal of growing sporting participation and contributing to the welfare of the community (Sam, 2009; Harris & Houlihan, 2016; King, 2016). From this perspective, tactics and techniques such as core specifications, contracts, funding conditions, enforced partnerships, and performance management systems form the rules of the game by which central control is maintained, albeit, ironically, within a broader government discourse emphasising decentralisation, localism, and the empowerment of local communities (Grix & Phillpots, 2011). Clearly, the rationale for the techniques of contemporary governance lay in the overly normative assumption that they are helpful management tools that facilitate efficient and effective policy implementation (Sam & Macris, 2014). Whilst this may be the case when employed in certain environments or under certain conditions, discussions

with CSDW across phases one and three of this research challenge this normative view and assert that rather than supporting implementation, performance management systems used in community sport make the exercise of implementing policy more challenging than it otherwise might be.

Within this chapter, we have further explored the fragmented development of the community sport sector. Fragmentation is evidenced at the grass roots level of sport, but also spans central government through to NDPBs and regional and local level governance. Phase Two participants (policymakers) discussed how government departments did not evidence 'joined up' thinking – even though several policy objectives demanded this approach. They reflected that this could be due to inter- departmental competition and a need to be seen to be performing well, and for this credit not to be diluted across several ministerial departments. This fragmentation and lack of joined up thinking at government level was seen by participants within this phase to exacerbate the fragmentation at grassroots level. If the leadership of the sector is not coordinated, it could be argued that this can only lead to confusion and a lack of joined up thinking at grassroots level.

Harris and Houlihan (2016) in their discussions of community sport development highlight that it would be more helpful to have a primary agent closer to the point of implementation who understands the local community, is able to provide and promote the right mix of formal and informal activities, link with sports-specific structures such as clubs and NGBs where appropriate, and at the same time work with, empower, and support the community to take action itself. This resonates with an asset- based community development (ABCD) approach that starts from an assumption that residing within every community, regardless of the community profile, are assets (Kretzmann & McNight, 1993). These assets may take the form of spaces, such as green space, unused derelict land and buildings that may be reinstated. However, more essentially ABCD is concerned with the assets that reside within people, the local population and what they can offer (Green & Haines, 2016). The traditional deficit approach to sports development seeks to provide for those who 'lack' provision or target groups that may benefit from sporting activities. What this approach can overlook is that within communities we may have qualified coaches, skilled sports practitioners, those who would like to get involved. Yet the CSD structure

does not easily facilitate such involvement as we do not have methods to ‘unearth’ such talents, but instead opt to ‘parachute’ in professionals, often from outside the locale and who have limited knowledge of the community. Community sport could learn from aspects of community development such as community profiling (Hawtin & Percy-Smith, 2007) that offers methods in which an asset- based approach to development can be facilitated. To concur with Harris and Houlihan (2016) a primary agent who is close to the community and who can facilitate and coordinate local demand and use of assets and input from sporting agencies may prove to be a more coherent model for community sport. This resonates with commentary from participants within this phase who highlighted the importance of local authorities to community sport development due to their knowledge and understanding of their local communities. As local authority sport declines there may be a need to explore a new model of community sport that embraces some of the advantages linked to knowledge of the political environment, the community, an asset-based approach and a clearer focus on engaging diverse populations.

Chapter Nine: Towards a Community Sport Development Framework

Conceptualising the Community Sport Development Framework

This chapter suggests a need for a new model of community sport that recognises the importance of the political environment, the way in which policy drives practice and the impact this has on sports governance, CSDW and the community. It also aims to synthesise data across all three phases of the research culminating with a new conceptual framework for CSD. In so doing, it is argued that a new framework for community sport is required as an enabler for CSDW and policymakers to understand and accommodate the interconnectedness between political ideology, policy and practice. To this end, the Community Sport Development Framework (CSDF) is introduced and presents a framework that is underpinned by empirical research presented within the thesis, is influenced by a Gramscian lens and utilises policy paradigms literature within its conceptualisation. Even though the interconnectedness between communities, governance, policy, delivery methods and political ideology (among others) formed some of the discussion across all phases, participants did not necessarily explicitly discuss such relationships, but instead they were often inferred. The CSDF makes these conceptual relationships explicit as they became particularly evident at the selective and theoretical coding stages and therefore underpin the framework.

As alluded to throughout this thesis, community sport is not easily defined, and as Coalter (2007) highlights this can lead to equally ill-defined interventions and outcomes. Because of this, community sport is delivered by varied and competing agencies. Some of these agencies may be focused on one sport that they wish to develop within the community (NGBs are a useful example in this respect) and others may have highly specific social objectives which they aim to achieve through sport. Considering this, the CSDF (Figure 6) demonstrates a utility for different organisations and contexts. By highlighting the interconnectedness between political ideology, sport policy, sport governance, practitioners, delivery methods, the community and specified target groups, the CSDF aims to offer those working in and around CSD a more holistic and broader interpretation and awareness of its principal drivers. This broader awareness may help CSDW 'play the game' more effectively or may encourage participation with industry

lead bodies and organisations that offer a forum for discussion and a means of helping shape the CSD landscape. Political ideology as a key influence surrounds the framework and in so doing emphasises its omnipresence and impact on all aspects of CSD. Politicians and policymakers could find utility in the CSDF as a reminder of the interconnectedness of politics and policymaking and its relationship with practice. Keeping this at the forefront of thinking whilst being involved with the policymaking process may encourage more integrated and ultimately, impactful, policymaking than has been evidenced within this thesis.

Within the CSDF, hegemony is reflected in the influence of political ideology and sport policy as a driver for community sport delivery and associated governance structures. Gramsci argues that the distinction between state (political society) and civil society is not 'organic' but 'methodological' *(metodica)* (Gramsci, 1971). By this he means that, although the two levels must be analytically distinguished, they must also be seen as being intertwined. Reflecting on this, we see that CSD is part of political society but that practice within this realm is not wholly subservient to the state or necessarily reflects ruling-class interests. This has been evidenced in this thesis by CSDW ‘playing the game’ (see chapters six and eight) and in so doing exerting an element of a ‘war of position’. That is, an ideological struggle and a building of hegemony between the working classes and their allies (Gramsci, 1971). By making such a 'methodological' distinction between these two spheres, Gramsci avoids a liberal reductionism, which sees civil society as a realm of free individuality entirely apart from the state. He also avoids a statist and functionalist reductionism, which views everything in society as belonging to the state and serving its interests (Gramsci, 1971; Schwarzmantel, 2015). The CSDF attempts to integrate this complex relationship between the individual/community (civil society) and the state (political society) by emphasising the interconnectedness of both and, as such, has been influenced by a Gramscian lens.

Policy paradigms literature was instructional during the conceptualisation stage of the CSDF. I engaged with this literature after reflecting upon the data collected across all phases of research and subsequent compilation of selective and theoretical codes. In this respect, it could be viewed as theoretical sampling of literature to progress to the next stage of analysis and development of a conceptual framework (Urquhart, 2013; Charmaz, 2014).

The macro, meso and micro aspect of policy paradigm research resonated, as it mirrors the focus of this thesis from a broader macro level (politics and political ideology), moving to a meso level (policy development) and through to a micro level (sporting governance, practitioners and community). The following section discusses policy paradigms literature and its utility and importance in the framing and conceptualisation of the CSDF.

Policy Paradigms and the Community Sport Development Framework

Policy paradigms as a means to interpret policy development and implementation became influential via Peter Hall's (1993) work in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in which he adapted and developed Kuhn's (1977) seminal work on scientific paradigms to critique the paradigm shift from Keynesianism to Monetarism (Deigneult, 2014; Nicholls & Teasdale 2017). Since Kuhn's work (1977), the term paradigm has evolved but essentially is underpinned by a focus on the set of sometimes unconscious values, beliefs and ideologies in which a population is immersed and which they use to navigate new evidence, challenges and/or choices (Hogan & Howlett, 2015). This discussion resonates with Gramsci's work on hegemony regarding how a dominant political worldview can be subtly inculcated within society via the media, the state and institutions to become the unquestioned mores of society (Gramsci, 1971).

Critics of policy paradigms argue that as ideational frameworks they are abstract and subjective, in that they incorporate values, philosophical principles and worldviews that are open to multiple interpretations (Blyth, 2012). In this respect a specific definition of a policy paradigm is elusive and for some this proves problematic (Berman, 2012; Matthijs & Blyth, 2018). Despite this lack of clarity, what is instructive and helpful in progressing a new conceptual framework for CSD is policy paradigms' use of multi- layered analysis, focused at the macro, meso and micro levels. Macro-level approaches recognise the importance of broader political-economic contexts. These approaches focus on the interactions between state, markets and society and the level at which decision-making takes place. Nicholls and Teasdale (2017) discuss an overarching neoliberal political-economic frame or macro-paradigm where a coherent set of ideas has been institutionalised and which appears to shape all policy areas. In relation to sport, a macro level neoliberal political ideology informs the meso level paradigm of sport policymaking in that it shapes and contextualises policy decisions. Delivery

at a micro level, via sports organisations and CSDW is, in turn, influenced by macro and meso level influences. The interaction across the macro, meso and micro levels has been referred to by some authors as a 'nested' paradigm (Kuhn, 1977; Nicholls & Teasdale, 2017). The interactional framing across macro, meso and micro levels is pertinent to this thesis and to the development of the CSDF as it assists in conceptualising and critiquing the interaction between policymakers, sports organisations and CSDW.

At the micro level, Vanner and Bicket (2016) suggest that different groups and individuals are susceptible to change, depending on how things are presented. There is also the potential for people's socio-cultural paradigms (and therefore behaviours) to be constrained by the worldview messages communicated within the way that policies are constructed and are communicated. The neoliberal influence on current sport policy is clearly evident in its use of language and focus (for example, an emphasis on achieving KPIs, diversification of funding) and this has affected the micro level of community sport delivery as evidenced in and through the experiences of CSDW as discussed in chapters six and eight. Paradigm shifts are complex to evidence but are more likely to occur if policy is conceived, framed and presented from the worldview or paradigm pathway that it seeks to create (Vanner & Bicket, 2016).

Gramsci's discussion regarding the creation of a new cultural hegemony in society provides a useful means of reflection. Gramsci (1971) discussed how a key aspect of a new cultural hegemony may be inculcated through the use and control of language. By influencing the language of a society, the new hegemony controls how society speaks, and subsequently how it thinks. Such processes, Gramsci argues, begin amidst the captive audience of state schooling (see also Althusser, 2014), but in order to be effective must be repeated in many strata of society. The use of language within the UK government policy is informative in this respect (HM Government, 2015) and it is perhaps worth noting how repeated reference to KPIs, outcomes and outputs has become commonplace and accepted terminology within a range of sectors including community sport. That said, the empirical findings presented within this thesis highlight how policymakers may be uncomfortable with a macro level neoliberal directive yet feel powerless to influence change. Given that policy is couched within the political ideology of

its day, some policymakers have discussed how to push against this can be unwelcome and personally damaging (see Chapter Seven). Paradoxically, by not speaking out, policymakers are complicit in transferring the macro level paradigm of neoliberalism to a meso policy level and therefore ensuring a cascading to the micro level.

Policy paradigms offer a complementary and accessible lens alongside the work of Gramsci when critiquing how the macro level influence of neoliberalism, driving a meso level policy directive impacts on the micro level of delivery. In turn, CSDW operating at a micro level may cease to question the influence and impact of such macro and meso drivers. Instead, CSDW can become operationally focused on (and pre-occupied with) day-to-day implementation and organisational pressure in order to survive. This pressure to deliver programmes and to pursue funding leaves little time for them to reflect upon or understand how meso and macro level influences might impact upon their day-to-day work. In this respect, hegemony is subtly enacted as CSDW can unwittingly become passive implementers of neoliberalism. As discussed in chapter six, amidst these circumstances, CSDW run the risk of becoming complicit in driving forwards an agenda that does not work in their or their communities' best interests.

However, CSDW that demonstrate an awareness of such macro and meso level drivers are able to 'play the game' as they understand the political landscape and can speak in terms that are acceptable at a governmental and senior level, whilst ensuring the programmes that they deliver are seen to meet the demands of policy objectives. This highlights that an understanding of macro and meso level influences, by those working at a micro level, is incredibly useful. Suzuki (2017) argues that greater emphasis should be placed on meso and macro-level analyses of sport, as this is where convention can be challenged and transformed. It could also be argued that greater emphasis should also be placed on the interaction across macro, meso and micro policy paradigms, as investigated empirically throughout this thesis.

A Critique of Sport Development Models

In order to progress our journey towards a new conceptual framework for CSD we first turn to an examination of current models of sports development and how

they have impacted practice.

Possibly the most widely acknowledged framework for sports development is that of the Pyramid Model, which is sometimes referred to as the Sports Development Continuum (Eady, 1993). This model visualises a 'foundation' stage (usually school based), whereby the fundamental skills of sport are introduced to develop hand-eye coordination, speed and timing. The foundation stage progresses to a broad base of participation, from which talent is identified and nurtured through the stages of 'performance' and then 'excellence' (see Figure 1 below).

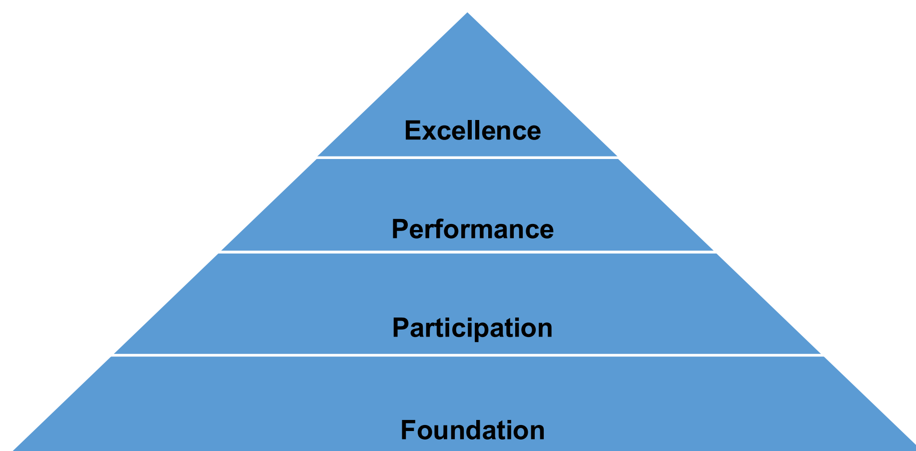

Figure 1: Pyramid Model of Sports Development

In the Pyramid Model, sporting progression is visualised hierarchically with the participant graduating through each stage sequentially. Of course, such progression is less than certain on account of variations in participant motivation to and accessibility/availability of facilities, support and resources (amongst a plethora of other factors) (Robson et al., 2013). That said, this model has been used extensively by UK government and sports agencies to underpin policy agendas and subsequent initiatives. One example is the Active Programmes initiative which was introduced by New Labour via the Framework for Sporting Opportunity and Performance (English Sports Council, 1997, p.5).

In Figure 2 we can see how the Pyramid Model strongly influenced the Framework for Sporting Opportunity and Performance (English Sports Council, 1997). This is evident from the colocation of 'Participation' to the left of the framework (aligning with Active Schools and Active Communities); Performance

to the top and crossing all areas of the Framework, and Excellence to the right aligning with the World Class programmes. The wording of the policy from which the Framework for Sporting Opportunity and Performance is derived (English Sports Council, 1997) specifically outlines each stage of the pyramid from foundation to excellence, stating that, "the framework for helping individuals to achieve their personal best is expressed as a continuum moving from foundation, through participation and performance, to excellence' (English Sports Council, 1997 p.5).

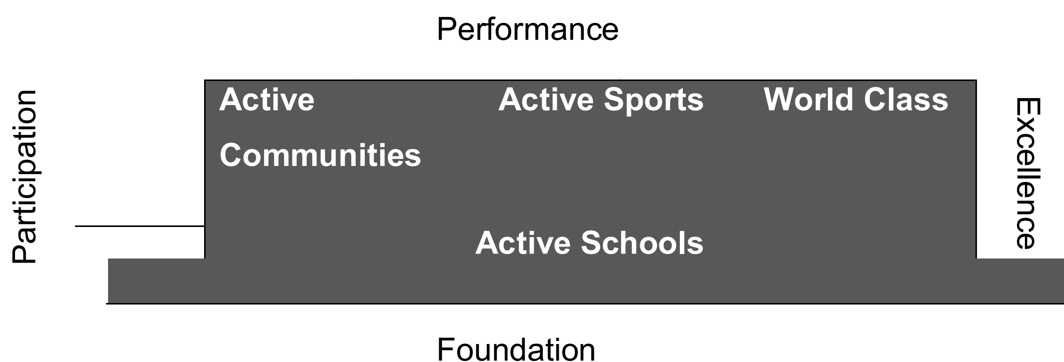

Figure 2: Framework for Sporting Opportunity and Performance (English Sports Council, 1997)

Within the Active Programmes initiative, CSD is most logically situated at the Active Communities stage (dependent upon the definition and conceptualisation of CSD). Critics of the sports development pyramid highlight how it is widely utilised by sport administrators and policymakers but lacks sustained empirical or conceptual integrity (Shilbury et al., 2008; Houlihan & Green, 2013). How community sport is conceptualised is critical for sport policy and critics of the Pyramid Model believe that it offers an overly simplistic and reductive account of sports development that does not easily accommodate community sport and its broader aims of contributing towards social and welfare objectives (Coalter, 2010; Hylton, 2013; Houlihan & Green, 2013).

Hylton (2013) highlights that sports development models do not necessarily portray community sport as an entity in its own right; but instead conceive of it as a staging post to create a wider participatory base, from which to identify talent and improve performance. He argues that an alternative model can and should be developed which values the primacy of the social role played by CSD. To this end, Hylton (2013) proposed the community sport development continuum as a

way in which to frame community sport and this is outlined in Figure 3 below.

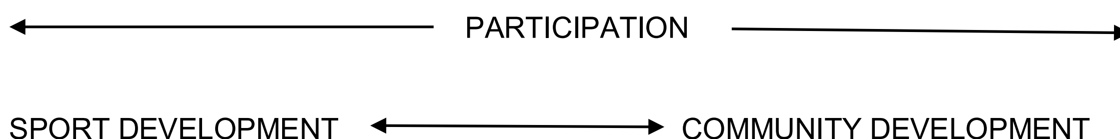

Figure 3: Community Sports Development Continuum (Hylton, 2013)

Within the context of the Community Sport Development Continuum (CSDC) pure 'sport' development or sport in the community is located at one extreme in which the practice of sport is an end in and of itself and practice does not stray beyond the primary focus of participation in sport. At the opposite end of the Continuum is community development in which sport is focused on achieving broader social objectives and the development of sporting ability is not a primary focus (Hylton, 2013). Within this model the interface between participation and community development is acknowledged. In this respect the model does broaden the conceptualisation of community sport in comparison to the pyramid model of sports development. However, we could argue that this model is equally reductionist by failing to locate the community at the heart of CSD and by ignoring the political complexity at play within this environment. Whilst simplicity of design can aid conceptual understanding of complex interactions, the community sports development continuum does little to portray the drivers and complexity of developing community sport. That said, it does further the conversation regarding how we locate and define community sport and, in that respect, offers a foundation on which to build. Hylton (2013) acknowledges that how CSD works and what influences the point of delivery is part of a more complex picture of how policy makers and funders influence practice. He situates this discussion within a structural and organisational reflection of community sport incorporating the importance of national, regional and local levels of provision. In so doing, he proposes the CSD matrix (see figure 4) as a lens through which to locate CSD. According to Hylton (2013, p.96) this model "enables a vigorous analysis of the structure of CSD policy provision and enables comparative analyses of organisations, initiatives and partnerships".

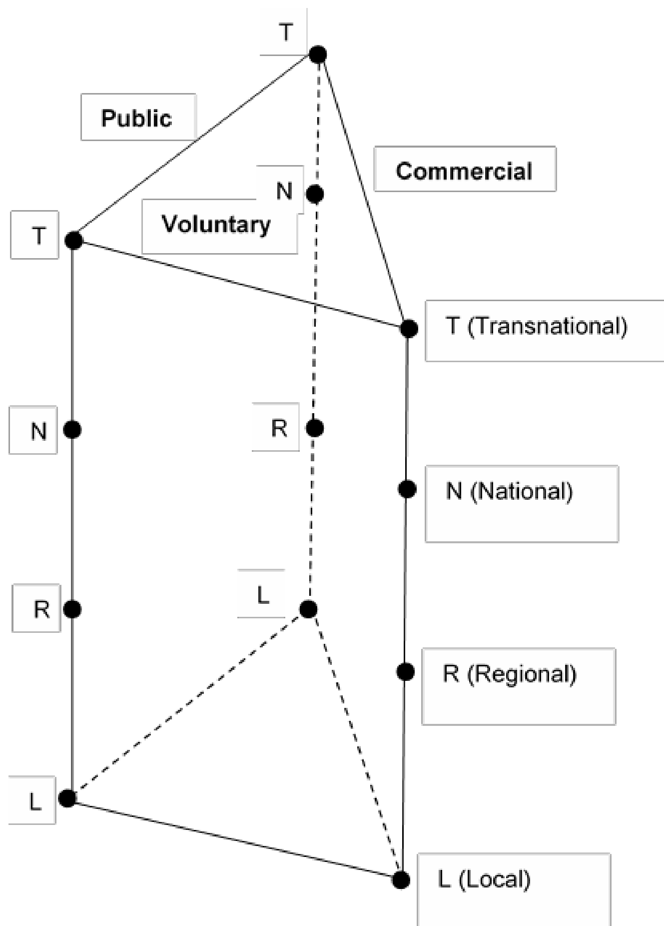

Figure 4: The CSD Matrix (Hylton, 2013)

Whilst it may be important to recognise the sectors and partnerships involved in CSD, the CSD matrix shifts focus to the mode of delivery rather than the conditions and environment of the delivery itself, and therefore fails to recognise the broader political, cultural and economic factors and forces at play. Beyond this, the CSD matrix seems particularly opaque and unnecessarily complex for what it is trying to portray. In this respect one might question what the CSD matrix brings to community sport, beyond a means to reflect upon the structure and organisation of provision, of which there is already a substantial amount of accumulated knowledge (Grix & Phillpots, 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Mackintosh & Liddle, 2015; Parnell et al., 2019).

Taking a slightly different stance, Bolton et al. (2008) offered a reconceptulisation of CSD, arguing that rather than accepting the somewhat sterile debate of 'bottom–up' or 'top–down' approaches, there is a need for practitioners to develop a more centralised position in relation to community development (see Figure 5 below). Within this reconceptualised model, developed from their case study of

CSD in South Wales, Bolton et al. (2008) argue that governance is the primary feature of the model and that public sector practitioners should more readily be located as influencing agents in the ‘space’ between local authorities and communities.

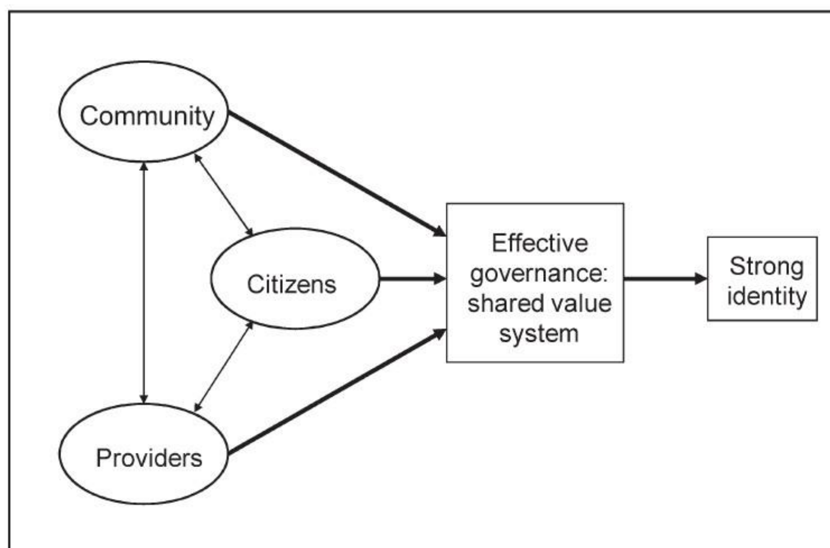

Figure 5: A Reconceptualisation of CSD (Bolton et al., 2008)

It is worth noting, of course, that Bolton was writing during the New Labour administration, an administration that increased the focus on partnerships between public and private sector organisations (Bovaird, 2004; Sarmento & Renneboog, 2016) and between public sector organisations (‘joined-up government’) and the third sector (Carey & Crammond, 2015; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016). It is therefore unsurprising that this model centres around a focus on partnerships and shared value systems that were a key tenet of this era as part of the modernisation of sport (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; King, 2016; Swain, 2019). Although this model is empirically grounded in a case study it is not theoretically underpinned and therefore its conceptual rigour is limited.

More recently, political agendas have explicitly encouraged market forces and alternative funding sources for CSD provision (HM Government, 2015) and hence, the nature of partnership working has shifted to a more competitive, rather than collaborative environment (as demonstrated by CSDW participants in chapters six and eight of this thesis). In this respect, Bolton et al.’s (2008) model may be seen as somewhat dated, yet reflects the era in which it was written, rather than

being wholly appropriate or applicable for today's community sport landscape.

What all of this suggests is that it is difficult for one model of community sport to embrace the complexity and influencing factors across macro, meso and micro levels. Indeed, it could be argued that the models of CSD discussed here (Eady, 1993; Bolton et al., 2008; Hylton, 2013) fail to address the intersectionality of relationships between political ideology, policy and practice. That said, both Bolton (2008) and Hylton (2013) have progressed thinking around how community sport is conceptualised, and this is to be welcomed.

A Critique of Community Development Models

In chapter four we saw how the term 'community' is open to interpretation and how this has proved problematic not only for CSD but also community development itself (Ledwith, 2011; Gilchrist & Taylor, 2016). Community development has spawned a growing literature which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is generally accepted that community development is concerned with individuals, groups and networks that want or need to cooperate in order to achieve change at a local or community level (Craig et al., 2011; Gilchrest & Taylor, 2016). Several authors conclude that adopting a community development approach means ensuring that issues and priorities are identified and agreed by the communities themselves, and that people are encouraged to work together towards a collective solution to a shared concern (Ledwith & Springett, 2010; Gilchrest & Taylor, 2016; Ledwith, 2016; Somerville, 2016). Applied to CSD, and concurring with Bolton et al. (2008), successful CSD initiatives tend to be championed by members of the community in which they are situated. Community projects are more likely to achieve effective outcomes if they encourage the engagement of the local community before inception (Bolton et al., 2008; Ledwith, 2016). This contrasts with a 'top–down' paternalistic approach to programme development and likely assumptions about the community in which such programmes are situated - assumptions that may have been made by people who do not live in that community and of which they have limited knowledge or understanding. Exacerbating this situation is a dominance of the 'deficit' model within CSD. A deficit model focuses on the problems, needs and deficiencies in a community such as deprivation, illness and health-damaging behaviours, designing services to fill the gaps and fix the

problems. As a result, a community may feel disempowered and become passive recipients of services rather than active agents in their own and their families' lives (Coalter, 1998; 2007; Somerville, 2016).

A deficit model is underpinned by determination of a community's 'needs' and has the potential to drive a focus on 'problems' rather than solutions. Services are often implemented to educate the community about the nature of their problems and how to overcome them, emphasising the value of services as some kind of social saviour. An emphasis on problems such as high levels of crime and/or poor health can serve to develop a community identity that emphasises such issues. In areas of high crime, the media is often keen to highlight deep rooted social problems as soundbite 'hooks' to attract media consumers. This is unhelpful for the community in question, bringing the risk of a deficit mentality within associated neighbourhoods where a sense of dependency and powerlessness spread (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Added to this, many organisations retain a vested interest in ensuring that this cycle of dependency continues. Funding to alleviate social problems is based on problem-oriented data such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and other such quantifiable metrics which help funders determine levels of 'need'. As Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) emphasise, making resources available on the determination of need can have negative effects on the nature of local community leadership. If, for example, one measure of effective leadership is the ability to attract resources, then local leaders are, in effect, compelled to conceptualise their community by highlighting its problems and deficiencies, and potentially ignoring its capabilities and strengths. This could indeed by levelled at CSD, which often is the recipient of funding determined by IMD or regional 'need'.

An asset-based approach to community development attempts to shift the focus away from this deficit model towards an appreciation of assets and a strengths-based approach to community development (Gilchrist, 2009; Ledwith, 2015; Garven et al., 2016). Asset-based community development (ABCD) values individual capacity such as skills, knowledge and connections which have the potential to contribute towards the broader social wellbeing of a community. It also considers the more formalised assets of organisations and associations within the community, as well as infrastructure and physical resources. This strengths-based approach has been widely adopted within the fields of healthcare

and social work (Saleebey, 2000; Minkler, 2012, Clarke, 2018).

Sir Michael Marmot's review of health inequalities in England, Fair Society, Healthy Lives, (The Marmot Review, 2010) reinforced the links between social conditions and health inequalities and further promoted an asset-based approach as a means of improving community health and wellbeing. However, within community sport, asset-based approaches to development have received limited attention beyond the sport for development (SFD) movement (Schulenkorf, 2017). Misener and Schulenkorf's (2016) work concerning the social value of sports events emphasised the importance of shifting the focus of event-led projects away from attempts to 'solve' social problems (i.e. deficit model) to enhancing the existing strengths of communities. Although focused on sports events, their work is informative for CSDW as in referring specifically to the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model, it concludes that the community as the source and beneficiary of development initiatives is best positioned to ensure that community-centred outcomes are relevant, planned for and realised (Misener & Mason, 2010; Misener & Schulenkorpf 2016).

Empirical research regarding the involvement of communities in planning community sport is surprisingly scant. Participants within community sport programmes are frequently interviewed to elicit 'good news' case studies for evaluation purposes, but the broader community context is often overlooked. By engaging communities in an authentic way, (not simply as participants in CSD programmes), CSDW could create opportunities to gain knowledge of community perceptions and awareness of sport and establish assets that already exist. It is not known how CSDW engage with their communities in planning sports programmes and this would make useful further research. Of course, understanding non-participation is as vital as understanding participation and talking to non-participants at the pre-planning and evaluation stages of CSD is crucial to establish the reasons for non-participation and how these may be counteracted (Burdsey, 2011; Mackintosh & Dempsey, 2017).

Misener and Schulenkorf (2016) highlight that external agencies often drive the CSD agenda and advocate the use of ABCD as a means of returning power and responsibility back to the community. Conceptually, the ABCD perspective

requires a fundamental shift in the way that community development is understood and implemented, the way that members of the community are valued, and the way power relations between local communities and external agencies are balanced. Ultimately, local communities need to be at the heart of ABCD activities. That said, ABCD is not without its critics who argue that this approach diverts attention from the role of the state and marginalises discussions about structural and economic inequalities (Friedli 2013; MacLeod & Emejulu 2014). MacLeod and Emejulu (2014) frame ABCD as 'neoliberalism with a community face,' stating that it encourages a free market system and a hostility towards government-sponsored social welfare. Indeed, ABCD could be utilised as a justification for a reduction of public services. In this scenario government would argue that individuals, families and community groups should be empowered to fill the public services vacuum through their local knowledge, assets and energy to rebuild local services and meet their communities' specific interests and needs (MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014; Phillips & Wong, 2018). Although this may be the case, such arguments miss the fact that ABCD is a community development model which is utilised by professionals working within communities. In this respect, it is a *method* for working with communities, which sits in opposition to a deficit model, rather than espousing a removal of community services altogether. Not only is the use of an asset-based approach to CSD (such as ABCD) a method for working with communities but in Gramsci's terms (Gramsci, 1971) we could also interpret this way of working as metodica (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci (1971) discussed how the distinction between state (political power) and civil society is methodological (metodica) and essentially, whilst separate, both are intertwined in practice. In this respect, asset-based approaches offer a means by which the state and civil society can meet their respective goals, thus demonstrating metodica and the interconnectedness of state and society.

There is concern that an approach which emphasises the need to release a community's 'untapped' assets (such as ABCD) has the potential to increase inequalities through prioritising already influential and cohesive communities that demonstrate a strong community voice (Friedli, 2013). It would be difficult to argue against such assertions given that there is potential for this to happen and should asset -based approaches be utilised within CSD,

practitioners would need to demonstrate a sense of reflexivity to ensure such tensions were navigable. However, this situation can occur regardless of what method of community development is utilised. Community consultations and discussions are often dominated by the most vocal and confident members of the community, whether or not an asset- based approach is adopted. The key in preventing this is to ensure that all sectors of the community have equal opportunity to input into discussion and that practitioners are aware of the potential for certain voices to dominate, and beyond this, have the confidence and skills to manage this accordingly.

In summary, we have addressed how sport development models do not accurately reflect or help facilitate CSD and that the term 'community' (and hence the term 'CSD') is poorly conceptualised. We have also critiqued a deficit model of sports development in light of asset-based approaches and have concluded that although it is not without its critics, ABCD may be worth considering when using sport as a tool for community development or to achieve broader social outcomes. Within the CSDF, 'delivery methods' are influenced by governance and organisations, practitioners and the community. The delivery method chosen could be the difference between success and failure of an initiative and therefore this would warrant further investigation and focus as a means of reframing community sport development.

The Community Sport Development Framework

In moving towards a new theoretically and empirically underpinned conceptual framework for CSD there was a need to outline the links of different concepts and to show their distinct relationships with each other (Veal, 2006; Schulenkorpf, 2012). After considerable thought and experiment, a Venn diagram was chosen to show interrelationships in the most easily accessible way.

In creating the CSDF, policy paradigms literature (Kuhn, 1977; Nicholls & Teasdale, 2017) has influenced the framing of content at a macro (political ideology), meso (policy, governance and organisations) and micro (practitioners and community) level and the work of Gramsci (1971) was utilised as a theoretical lens, as discussed at the outset of this chapter.

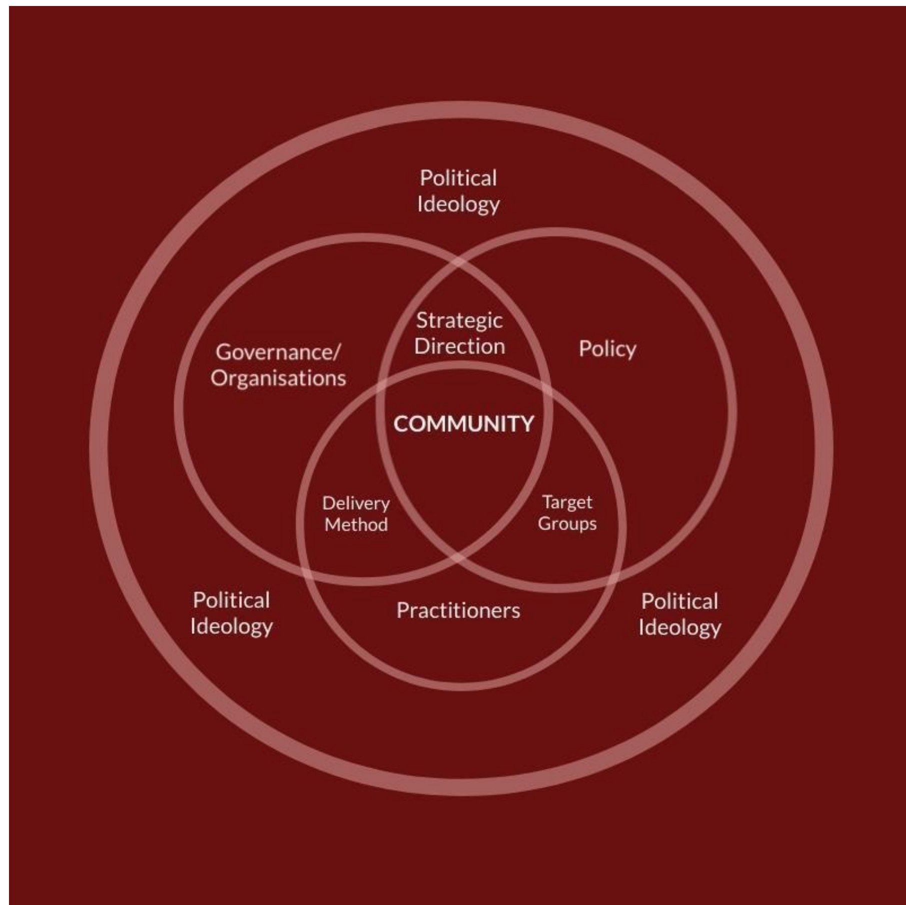

Figure 6: The Community Sport Development Framework

Locating 'Community' within the Community Sport Development Framework

The community is given primacy within the CSDF to ensure that the community remains the central focus of all CSD work. As we have seen, traditional models of sport development and the practice of CSDW often lack a central focus on communities (Eady, 1993; Bolton et al., 2008; Hylton, 2013). How CSDW understand and engage with the communities they serve is viewed as fundamental within the CSDF. We have observed throughout this thesis that the skills involved in CSDW can sometimes be overlooked in a system that favours neoliberal ideals concerning market forces, individual choice, competition and new public management. A system that in the way it is structured values entrepreneurialism over experience and leaves those working in community sport on ever shifting sands of short-term contracts and unreliable sources of income. All of which can have the unintended consequence of driving down quality. Furthermore, interviews with both policymakers and CSDW have highlighted how the focus on the community can sometimes be lost due to external factors emphasising income generation, maintaining funding of programmes and political expediency (among others).

The CSDF offers recognition that all macro to meso level drivers (such as political ideology, policy, practitioners, delivery methods) will impact on communities and their involvement with CSD programmes. Understanding the varied definitions of community could assist in helping CSDW work more holistically within the communities they serve, and time spent considering what is meant by the term 'community' may prove beneficial in this respect.

Specific delivery methods (such as ABCD) have not been identified within the CSDF, as there was a desire to enable and accommodate the changing nature of practice over time and for the model to elicit reflection rather that it being overtly directional and instructive for specific approaches to practice. That said, further discussion within the sector regarding how a strengths- based approach to delivery could be utilised, specifically drawing on ABCD, asset mapping and appreciative enquiry (Stavros et al., 2018; Cassetti et al., 2019), could be beneficial. Asset mapping involves working with members of the community to identify their strengths or assets and to articulate a future direction and desired outcomes (visioning) before working with community partners to mobilise strengths to help achieve goals (mobilising) (Fisher et al., 2009). This type of community-driven development can lead to external agencies engaging in a more supportive and enabling role, as opposed to pre-determined directional development of community sport (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). Fundamentally, the shift from a deficit-based to an asset-based approach requires a change in attitudes and values (Cassetti et al., 2019). Professional staff have to be willing to share power which means that instead of doing things for people, they have to help a community to do things for itself. Such working practices open opportunities to develop a community-led ethos which has the potential to be more open-ended and sustainable. Misener and Schulenkorf (2016) argue that it is important that practitioners take the time to build trust and reciprocal relationships within the community if an ABCD process is to be successful. The focus and funding of community sport via current sport policy (HM Government, 2015) does not encourage such longer-term, sustainable ideals which might eventually lead to community sport programmes being managed by communities themselves. Shorter employment contracts for CSDW and the need to persistently source funding streams can mean that more time is spent on administrative tasks than in the community. This may hamper the ability of CSDW

to achieve a central pillar of the sport strategy (HM Government, 2015), ironically, that of community development.

Alistair, who had been involved with devising sport policy for over 25 years, highlighted,

> I don't know how well a strategy ever delivers on its objectives to be honest … In the end a strategy is only ever gonna be as good as the micro level. Well you almost want a community development worker that does sport, rather than a sports development worker that doesn't know much about working with diverse communities… [name withheld] was saying that 30 years ago with demonstration projects …!"

A total of 15, five-year National Demonstration Projects (NDPs) were initiated by the Sports Council between 1984 and 1990, responding to the 1982 strategy, 'Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years' which was influential in contextualising sport in a wider social agenda and utilising a broader narrative around health and sports development. The NDPs aimed to involve new partners within CSD (such as the health service and probation service) and to make use of existing facilities in communities such as community centres, village halls and schools (UK Sports Council, 1991; Collins, 2010). The Sports Council's review of these projects was mixed, highlighting the difficulties of partnership working and how CSDW often worked alone within environments that little understood the sports development profession and made the reconciliation of sports development objectives with those of non-sport partner bodies problematic (UK Sports Council, 1991; Girginov, 2008). This is significant for CSDW who increasingly find themselves working within diverse environments, yet, as previously discussed, may be ill-prepared to work within such organisations and communities. Alistair's words encapsulate the interconnectedness of sport policy, strategic direction, organisations and governance as well as delivery methods, target groups and practitioners, all of which are essential elements of the CSDF. Beyond this, his comments also serve to validate the discussions surrounding policy amnesia observed in chapter seven.

The preceding discussion has served to elucidate some of the specified intersections of the CSDF. Areas not specifically addressed within this commentary have been discussed throughout this thesis, namely political

ideology, policy, practice, strategic direction and target groups. The relationship between these concepts has been drawn from the conceptual and theoretical codes developed across all phases of data collection and the interconnectedness and impact discussed throughout the thesis.

The Theoretical Underpinning of the Community Sport Development Framework

The theoretical underpinning of the CSDF has been influenced by the work of Gramsci (1971) and we close by returning to his work to help further illuminate the conceptualisation of the framework.

Gramsci reflected on the relationship between what he termed the 'war of position' and its relationship to the concept of passive revolution. Gramsci's thinking behind his use of the term 'passive revolution' is open to interpretation but essentially passive revolution is a means by which the masses (subaltern) may react against cultural hegemony and move to a new order. Gramsci argues that a groundswell of support for alternative approaches can be coordinated in to a war of position that is both an intellectual and cultural struggle to create a proletarian revolution that encourages greater class consciousness and which uses education, media and language to drive change (Gramsci 1971, Schwarzmantel, 2015). This cannot be done by force and may take time but involves the 'positioning' of passive revolutionists in key influential positions within political society.

We have seen from the empirical evidence within this thesis that CSDW and policymakers may be reluctant to voice opposition to the direction of sport policy and the way in which it drives delivery mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation procedures. However, there are several organisations that do offer CSDW and those within the industry a coordinated voice such as the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA), the Sports Think Tank, the United Kingdom Sports Development Network (UKSDN) and ConnectSport. Via such organisations, opportunities exist for practitioners and academics to discuss alternative approaches to CSD that begin to question the primacy of market forces, short termism, and NPM. Of course, discussing alternative approaches to CSD may mean that CSDW have to change established ways of thinking and (ultimately)

working. This may require a cultural shift in practice, and to some extent, further engagement with 'playing the game'. However, if advocates of alternative approaches genuinely want sport to contribute towards achieving social objectives in a meaningful way, then any such discussion may be worth having. The CSDF is influenced by this discussion as it highlights the importance of political ideology and policy upon all areas of practice and in so doing may assist CSDW to reflect and act should they feel that the current system could be more effective.

Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce a new conceptual framework for CSD and outline factors that have influenced its development. Existing sport development models have been critiqued and in so doing it has been argued that current models do not adequately reflect contemporary CSD. The CSDF has been introduced and contextualised utilising macro, meso and micro policy paradigms, and observed through a Gramscian theoretical lens. In so doing, how a macro political ideology influences the meso level of policy making and governance (which in turn drives the micro level of CSD) has been made explicit. This is the first time that this interrelationship has been made explicit within a sports development model.

As a highly experienced policymaker, Alistair highlights the importance of the micro level, and the skills of CSDW in working with diverse communities. This highlights how imperative it is that those working in community sport, regardless of their organisational context, are appropriately trained and introduced to the complexities of working in and around diverse communities. In placing an emphasis on the skills and expertise of CSDW, we start to move away from a reductionist paradigm that situates those working at a micro level as mechanistic implementers of political ideology via sport policy. Maybe now is the time to reflect on how community sport is conceptualised and delivered, and how we educate and support CSDW as they progress throughout their careers, within the wider paradoxes of an increasingly fragmented sector.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Introduction

The role and influence of politics upon sport has been well rehearsed (see, for example, Henry, 2001; Grix, 2010; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Parnell et al., 2018). Utilising Gramsci's (1971) seminal work on hegemony as a conceptual lens, this thesis has sought to advance debates around the sport/politics interface by examining the impact of political ideology, specifically neoliberalism, upon community sport across macro (government/political ideology), meso (policy development) and micro (delivery) levels. In so doing, the interconnectedness between each has been empirically explored. In particular, the thesis has sought to address the following research question: How (and/or to what extent) does political ideology influence sport policy development and impact community sport practice?

The overall findings of the study are that policymakers and practitioners are reluctant to voice their discontent about an increasingly managerialist and marketised regime that does not always support the aims or intended outcomes of CSD within diverse communities. Participants discussed the ideological conditions in which community sport operates and how this has resulted in several unintended consequences such as fragmentation of the market, job insecurity, deskilling of the workforce, non-existent quality assurance mechanisms and a competitive, rather than collaborative, culture.

The aim of the present chapter is to draw together the key themes that have arisen in the preceding discussion whilst at the same time re-framing the CSD agenda in line with the Community Sport Development Framework (CSDF) proposed in Chapter Nine. The creation of the CSDF was informed by the empirical findings on display and underpinned by a Gramscian theoretical lens. The CSDF highlights specified drivers across the macro, meso and micro levels of community sport policy and practice. In doing so, it charts the way in which the interrelationship between political ideology, policy, governance and organisations, delivery methods and practitioners (among others) are fundamental to the quality, delivery and impact of CSD. Hylton (2013) suggests that sports development models do not necessarily portray community sport as an entity in its own right; but instead

conceive of it as a staging post to create a wider participatory base from which to identify talent and improve performance. He goes on to argue that an alternative model can and should be developed which values the primacy of the social role played by CSD. The CSDF addresses this call but moves beyond the primacy of the social role played by CSD and encourages policymakers and practitioners to reflect on the broader drivers influencing whether CSD initiatives can achieve their intended outcomes. In turn, the CSDF acts as an enabling tool to assist deeper reflection around the impact of policy on practice.

The CSDF has been theoretically underpinned by the work of Gramsci (1971), which has served to illuminate the hegemonic nature of neoliberalism and as Hall (1987, p.163) highlights, "Gramsci gives us, not the tools with which to solve the puzzle, but the means with which to ask the right kinds of questions". This ethos of having the right tools with which to solve the puzzle also resonates as a key aim of the CSDF. The tools being the questions that the interconnected sections of the CSDF will lead policymakers and practitioners to ask and the puzzle, at this moment in time, being the way in which we can best practice CSD within the ideological landscape of neoliberalism and the complexities that may bring.

We now move on to a summary of the key themes identified through the research and that contributed to the development of the CSDF. The need for further research is established and recommendations for practice proposed that are grounded in empirical data.

The definitional dilemma of community sport development

Over time, community sport has been tasked with achieving a plethora of outcomes, from community cohesion to increased health benefits to ensuring pathways into elite sport (Coalter, 2007; King, 2009; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Harris & Houlihan, 2016; House of Commons, 2019). To this end, it is generally accepted that community sport is focused primarily on increasing participation in sport (Harris & Houlihan, 2016) however, these findings highlight a tension between a sport development agenda focused on identifying and developing sporting talent, and sport development as a 'hook' to achieve social objectives. Although the aim (and method) of utilising sport to develop sporting talent or achieve social objectives can be vastly different, both are perceived as falling within the community sport realm (Coalter, 2007; Hylton, 2013; Robson et el.,

2013). Historically this difference has proved problematic in that the term CSD has often been used as a 'catch all' to describe and accommodate vastly diverse programmes with vastly diverse aims, all of which can lead to a lack of clarity for those working within the CSD sector and potential sporting participants.

Within this study both policymakers and practitioners reflected on the cyclical nature of sport policy, as it shifts from a focus on health and wellbeing to that of elite sport and competition, before returning once again to the former. It is amidst these definitional swings that CSD can become both reactive and instrumental. The frustration and tension with this cyclical swing from 'sport for sport's sake', to sport for health was highlighted by some policymakers from phase two of the research who reflected that Sport England did not challenge government, but instead promoted anything that government requested, due to a reluctance to 'bite the hand that feeds.'

Some policymakers discussed the squeeze on public sector budgets because of austerity and how, in the public sector, the desire to show that public money is being invested sensibly tends to lead government to focus on outcomes that have an ascertainable social value, such as social integration, reduction of crime or better health outcomes. In focusing on these consequential benefits, sport becomes an instrument of policy, rather than something of benefit in its own right. All of which further contributes to the cyclical swing from sport for sport's sake to sport for social outcomes.

Policymakers understood and accepted the underpinning rationale for the instrumental use of sport to achieve a plethora of social outcomes, but collectively thought that this placed undue pressure on sport to be 'all things to all people'. Findings highlight that the focus on either sport for 'sport's sake' or 'sport for health' is driven via policy and yet perhaps somewhat ironically policymakers felt that they had limited agency in driving such agendas. In relation to the framing of the CSDF, this tension sits at the intersection of political ideology, policy, strategic direction and community, with one dimension subsequently influencing the next. Political ideology is recognised as a fundamental and covert driver of policymaking and is conceptualised within this model as influencing all levels from meso to micro.

Neoliberalism: the covert driver of community sport development

Previous research has shown that Government's instrumental role in determining outcomes for public services (including community sport) is heavily influenced by political ideology and embedded in practice via policy, outcome measures and KPIs that seek to ensure these outcomes are met (Klikauer, 2019). Although the focus is often at the micro and meso level of the management, governance and delivery of community sport (Grix, 2010, Grix & Phillpots, 2014, Parnell, 2018), the importance of the macro level influence of ideology should not be overlooked.

The instrumental outcomes that successive UK governments have used sport to achieve has often remained constant, for example, focusing on getting those who are inactive or participate the least in sport to get involved. However, what has differed is the process by which these outcomes have been achieved. For example, during the New Labour administration there was an emphasis on getting people more physically active amidst a pervasive sport for health agenda (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002). This focus is evident within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) and it could be argued that the outcomes are essentially the same across both. At the same time, New Labour looked to increase physical activity levels through investment in local authority sport, delivered via partnerships, whereas the latest sport strategy highlights the importance of local authorities, promoting delivery through diversified structures underpinned by private sector financing. Essentially, the driver behind this shift in terms of how increased participation can be achieved is a neoliberal ideology that favours the primacy of the market and consumer choice. In this respect, neoliberalism is conceptualised as a covert driver of community sport development in that it is not explicit, cannot be 'seen', and yet is highly influential in shaping sport policy development and practice. For this reason, within the CSDF, political ideology is conceptualised as a foundational cornerstone that influences all areas of sport policy and practice.

As we have seen in Chapter Three neoliberal tenets have been evident within UK sport policy from the 1970s onwards, but aspects of neoliberal ideology have been emphasised in accordance with the party politics in play. New Labour's modernisation programme drew more heavily on partnership working and

networked governance as a means by which to reform the public sector (Talbot, 2016; Stoker, 2017). This approach also drew on neoliberal underpinnings of facilitating choice via limited state involvement and a supposed decentralisation of government. That said, the reality of decentralisation has been questioned with the laissez faire approach being identified as still being one of control and coercion to ensure specific ideological tenets are embedded within society (Miller & Rose, 2008). Scholars discussing the mode of governance under neoliberalism highlight that the ideological focus does not necessarily mean a retreat of the state per se, rather new forms of governing that rely on actions at a distance in the form of incentives and assessments of performance that may manipulate the significance and benefits of competition (Miller & Rose, 2008). Other authors have alluded to the way in which a decentralised approach can essentially be more directive than not (Goodwin & Grix, 2011; Grix & Phillpots, 2011; Grix & Harris, 2016).This thesis progresses this discussion by offering empirical evidence of how specified targets and a culture of performance management exacerbate this within CSD. In turn, such arguments serve to illuminate the hegemonic nature and control of practice via a decentralised approach and, once again, inform the conceptual parameters of the CSDF.

The unintended consequences of neoliberalism upon community sport

This study has also raised questions concerning the ideological conditions in which community sport operates and how this might manifest itself via a range of unintended consequences. Consequences such as fragmentation of the market, job insecurity, deskilling of the workforce, non-existent quality assurance mechanisms and a monitoring and evaluation focus that favours quantitative measures and may not fully elucidate the impact of CSD activities.

A reoccurring theme throughout this research has been the fragmentation of community sport services and this substantiates Bevir's (2011) argument that neoliberalism may create new governance mechanisms, but not necessarily those of properly functioning markets. Instead, neoliberalism may be seen to have driven the proliferation of networks, the fragmentation of the public sector and service delivery, and erosion of public sector control (Bevir, 2011; Stoker, 2017). Within community sport, this has led to new entrants in the form of social enterprises catering for specific populations and competing for the same funds as

other operators within the same locale. Although such competition can sometimes drive up quality, the empirical evidence presented in this study highlights that it has instead served to create a culture of distrust and competition between providers of CSD services and a culture whereby partnership working is actively avoided as organisations move towards competition rather than collaboration. This can result in a confused sporting offer for community members as a proliferation of smaller organisations start to compete for the same market share. As we have seen in Chapters Six and Eight the fragmentation of community sport provision was viewed negatively by CSDW who felt that rather than serving to unite disenfranchised communities, the uncoordinated development of sporting opportunities had the potential to divide communities. Paradoxically this fragmentation appeared to be working against the core aim of community development as specified within the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015).

We have observed within the data on offer how sport policy, and ultimately political ideology, impacts on CSDW practice; short term contracts is just one example - another issue driven by a neoliberal agenda and raised by several CSDW related to the quality of delivery. Some CSDW felt that the quality assurance of community sport was at risk as new deliverers entered the market with an entrepreneurial spirit, yet limited sector knowledge of health and safety, communities or sports development to parallel such entrepreneurial drive. Some participants also questioned who was now responsible for the quality assurance of those delivering community sport, pointing to this having traditionally been the role of local authority sport departments. Sensing the further demise of local authority sport, participants came to question how community sport was now quality assured and highlighted a 'dumbing down' of quality as an unintended consequence of an increasingly fragmented community sport delivery system.

Policymakers also discussed a perceived absence of quality assurance mechanisms, highlighting how they often felt powerless to voice concern to Government about the increasing marketisation of community sport and fragmentation of services. As we have seen in Chapter Seven, policymakers may become compromised when devising policy due to their own ambition to progress, and an ideological directive that leaves little scope to deviate from central government diktat. Political differences between policymakers can cause

a rupture in agreeing policy outcomes, with the ruling party politic generally taking precedence. Beneath this level, community sport organisations are forced to respond to a neoliberal agenda that promotes market forces via funding, NPM mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation protocols. Reflecting on the results of the empirical work within this thesis, we can see that this has caused fragmentation and duplication of services and in some cases fractured working relationships, as sporting organisations perceive each other as competitors rather than collaborators. Furthermore, new public management techniques in community sport (i.e., decentralised management, the creation of autonomous agencies, contracting-out, KPIs) were seen to exacerbate a focus on individualism and self-interest. In so doing, CSDW believed that this placed an emphasis on organisational survival distracting attention away from the primary goal of growing sporting participation and community welfare.

Community – the forgotten element of community sport development

There are contradictions in how government use sport as a means of developing communities, whilst at the same time creating the very conditions that fracture and dislocate such communities in the first place (Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015). Political use of the term, 'community' is also loaded, emphasising community as a positive and aspirational goal for society, and promoting a 'feel good' factor (Bauman, 2001, 2007) – something that can often be portrayed as lacking in modern day life, nostalgically promoting 'community' as an ideal to be reclaimed. However, the reality of this 'feel good' factor has been critiqued as paradoxical in that communities can be as equally exclusionary as inclusionary and this paradox has rarely been acknowledged in a political realm (Koch, 2018). In relation to sport policy, 'community' is often observed as a 'fix' for social problems (Coalter, 2007; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013; Collins 2014), with sport located as the panacea for fractured and diverse communities. Such environments may be alien to CSDW and may prove particularly challenging locales in which to initiate and sustain sporting participation. Beyond this, these communities may feel increasingly alienated by an uncertain social environment that promotes zero hours and short-term contracts, media promoted perceptions of 'benefits' scroungers' and increasing public intolerance for marginalised groups. In turn, and perhaps somewhat ironically, CSDW may also be experiencing this sense of alienation and insecurity as their roles become

increasingly uncertain and impacted by market forces where the focus is on price rather than quality.

It could be argued that to work within diverse communities, CSDW need to understand the complexity of community dynamics and to be reflexive in how they approach working within such environments. If CSDW are subject to short-term contracts of one to three years, it is unlikely that this will be sufficient to ascertain trust from the communities in which they work. Communities that may well have been on the receiving end of a myriad of social programmes and interventions who may themselves have learned how to 'play the system', in full knowledge that CSDW are under pressure to achieve throughput targets. As short-term contracts become more pervasive this can impact on continuity of service as CSDW become focused on 'finding their next job' rather than meeting the needs of their communities (Collins, 2010; 2014).

Participants within phases one and three of this study believed that monitoring and evaluation methods that emphasised quantitative targets drove them towards ensuring high throughput measures, whilst diminishing the focus on the quality of the experience for participants. For example, in Chapters Six and Eight CSDW discussed that if a CSD programme attracted 50 participants that would be viewed positively, regardless of the quality of the experience. This scenario reinforces the narrowness of quantified KPIs that are largely unable to capture quality (Taylor, 2009). This resonates with Van der Kaulk and Kaufmann's work (2018) which highlights the beliefs that public sector workers held regarding performance measurement practices that were inspired by the NPM movement. Participants within Van der Kaulk and Kaufmann's study (2018) discussed how public sector employees were inclined to change their behaviour and avoid tasks that did not yield quantifiable results, and thus quantitative performance measures had the capacity to drive spurious practice.

Participants within phases one and three of this study also believed that the monitoring and evaluation process of CSD paradoxically, served to embed a surface level approach to community sport and instead focused on 'quick wins' via inflated attendance figures rather than taking time to develop services that are co-created by the community and focus on quality. Again, this aligns with

Van der Kaulk and Kaufmann's study (2018) that found an emphasis on quantified KPIs, such as number of attendances by those with disabilities, from black and minority ethnic groups (BAME) and other specified target groups, had led to spurious practice and 'gaming' of the process by adding extra attendances. This aligns with the work of Smith and Leech (2010) who found that external forces and power relations resulting in 'tick box exercises' often led to a misrepresentation of findings by CSDW through fear of having been seen to have failed in achieving CSD programme aims. The pitfall of a competitive market is that it may reward promises rather than performance. In their analysis of public sector contracts with private and non-profit sectors, Behn and Kant, (1999) warn that 'bidders who overpromise may be precisely those that have the poorest understanding about how to produce the desired performance' (p.477) and nowhere is this more apparent than where the organisations receiving investment are simply 'making up the numbers'.

Empirical evidence from social services' settings has found that agencies have selected easier to serve clients over more challenging ones, in order to meet their targets (Behn & Kant 1999; Van Dooren et al., 2015). While less effort is required to meet the targets (because agencies can manipulate the quality or quantity of the input), Van Dooren et al., (2015) suggest this 'cream skimming' can conflict with public goals associated with equity of access to services. This scenario could very much be applied to a CSD setting and we have witnessed in chapters six and eight that CSDW have perceived they are forced to 'play the game' in order to retain funding for their programmes. In this respect, CSDW can become preoccupied with retaining funding and there is a danger that the community becomes a forgotten element within CSD.

The fear of losing funding and for services to be seen to be 'failing' drives a perverse monitoring and evaluation system that only highlights the positive aspects of services. Of course, it could be argued that learning from failure is as important as learning from success, yet Coalter (2007) highlights that it is rare for negative results to be published. Both CSDW and policymakers who participated in this study believed that there was an unspoken pressure from government to present CSD programmes in a positive light, which they thought could lead to an exaggeration of what CSD schemes entail and achieve. Coalter (2007) discusses how the outcome measurement of CSD programmes is particularly flawed,

focusing on quantified outputs rather than 'true' outcome measures, whilst circumventing any discussion or investigation of process, for example, which sports work for which communities and in which conditions. It could be argued that by further understanding process related issues; CSD would be better placed to cater for prospective participants and contribute towards community development.

For Rogers & Weiss (2007), a clear understanding of desired impacts and outcomes and the associated processes of participation should inform provision and enable an approach based on managing for outcomes. For example, understanding how to design and deliver programmes in order to maximise the possibility of the achievement of the assumed impacts. However, this knowledge may be variable within the CSD profession, and others who are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. Some authors have commented that problems surrounding the monitoring and evaluation of community sport relate primarily to the inadequate training of CSDW (Hylton & Hartley, 2011). Indeed, time pressures, limited support from experts and a short duration of CSD programmes have been seen to exacerbate problems with monitoring and evaluation (Levermore, 2011).

In order to fully understand the impact of CSD within communities, it has been proposed that a critical learning culture (Edwards, 2015) needs to be fostered that harnesses the views of practitioners along with those of the communities and stakeholders with which they work (Harris & Adams, 2016). Weiss (1993) highlights that programmes can and do survive evaluations that demonstrate failure. A considerable amount of ineffectiveness may be tolerated if a programme fits with prevailing values, if it satisfies voters, and/or if it is politically beneficial (Weiss, 1993). In this respect, the primary focus could shift from true community benefit to one of political expediency and associated positive and managed public relations.

In phase one of this research, some CSDW highlighted that the strategic priorities they have to achieve for the organisations they work for, are at odds with their community's needs. They expressed that they would like to start with the communities' needs and that the community often have skills that can be utilised too, but these can be overlooked. Garven et al. (2016) advocate a strengths or assets-based focus when working with communities. This approach

emphasises what already exists within a community, rather than a deficit model, which emphasises what does not and instead concentrates on 'need'. Beyond this, CSDW participants mourned the demise of traditional sporting provision believing that local authorities were best placed to understand and serve their local communities. Participants pointed to the insight that local authorities already possessed concerning the demographic needs of their local communities and believed that this was far more comprehensive than any insight function within a CSP or Sport England. As highlighted in Chapter Nine, it is unclear how CSDW now engage with their communities in planning sports programmes and this would make useful further research.

There is little doubt that local authority sport has undergone significant change amidst a government rhetoric that has pursued public sector cuts under the auspices of austerity in the post-2010 era (Parnell et al., 2015; 2017; Widdop et al., 2018). The National Audit Office (2018) highlights that the current approach to public sector management is overly disconnected and process led, and that this collection of processes does not amount to the coherent strategic framework for planning and managing public sector activity that is needed. This lack of coordination and clarity from central government, coupled with public sector cuts has severely affected local authority sport and decimated local authority sports development services. An example of this was offered in Chapter Four by a CSDW who highlighted that an in- house local authority sports development service had recently been reduced from 60 staff to 5 within a 12-month timescale. Although respondents were highly complementary and supportive of local authority sport, it is safe to say that sport development within local authorities will cease to exist in its current format within the not too distant future, as a neoliberal agenda further promotes the contracting out of services and a strengthened social sector that focuses on delivery by social enterprises and charities (HM Government, 2018). How sustainable this new landscape will be in terms of community provision is yet to be seen. Indeed, it is questionable within the present political and economic climate whether people will have the time or inclination to initiate and drive services in the way that policy anticipates. Although the government agenda over recent years has focused on 'empowering' communities to take ownership of facilities and services within their localities (via the Localism Act, 2011; HM Government,

2018) central government's aspiration to initiate such change was viewed by the majority of CSDW respondents as lacking authenticity and realism. Rather, this notional shift of power from Whitehall to local communities was seen simply as a means by which to create the illusion of empowerment and engagement, when in reality power remained centralised and 'freedoms' granted within relatively narrow parameters (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). – A situation which, once again, bears witness to the ulterior complexion of hegemonic relations (Gramsci, 1971).

The Pervasive Amnesia of Sport Policymaking

Within phase two of the research sport policymakers referred to the 'feel good factor' typically present around a new policy launching and how this was positive for both government and the sport sector. However, those who had been involved with writing sport policy spanning several government administrations, found what they referred to as the 'revolving door of writing policies' frustrating (chapter seven). They further discussed the pervasive amnesia of sport policymakers in that policies were devised which often did not refer to previous strategies or policies and demonstrated limited reflection and learning with regards to what had gone before. There was a perception from some policymakers that when a new policy was launched there was a feeling that, as Frankie stated, "Everyone has seen the light and now it's gonna be fantastic". However, several participants highlighted that policy often whimpered out, as government invariably did not deliver on the specified targets of increased participation in sport and physical activity. In this respect, it was seen as not being in anyone's interests to reflect on previous policy targets, but instead to herald a fresh start and focus on a new policy rather than the failure to meet targets of previous ones.

There was also discussion within phase two surrounding the shift away from participation measures to a focus on outcomes. Some policymakers felt that by shifting the focus onto outcomes and by putting the measurement of achievement in that domain, there was increased room for manoeuvre and the ability to 'gloss over' non- achievement of quantified participation targets. Policymakers from phase two reflected that in focusing on outcome measures, the government could devise a narrative that says they have achieved those outcomes, whereas the narrative around increasing the number of participants who participate in sport leaves no room for manoeuvre if not achieved.

Therefore, utilising an outcome measure for participation in sport means that if a government has not delivered against its objectives it becomes less apparent and therefore easier to 'bury' the discussion around such non- achievement of targets. Several policymakers believed that to measure outcomes a longitudinal element to research and evaluation was required, which rarely occurred at a governmental level. Paradoxically, as policy has moved towards an outcomes focused approach to monitoring and evaluation, the measurement of success for practice has emphasised a quantitative paradigm via KPIs and specified throughput and engagement metrics. In one sense, this could be interpreted as the government avoiding responsibility for any 'failures' to achieve policy targets, whilst pushing the responsibility for achieving quantitative targets down to the grassroots.

There was a belief from policymakers who had progressed from the sport sector into higher level sport policymaking that the current strategy (HM Government, 2015) would last no longer than five years and that the following strategy would start to place more emphasis on the development of sporting excellence. In so doing, some participants believed that this would enable government to state that they were doing something new when in fact this was just the cyclical nature of sport policy development. Some felt strongly that in four years' time the likelihood that the strategy (HM Government, 2015) would have changed anything at a grassroots level was minimal and they believed that government would find a way of manufacturing figures and a narrative to report success, regardless of whether this was the case or not.

The current sport policy (HM Government, 2015) champions diversified funding and the latest social strategy (HM Government, 2018) places increased emphasis on the social sector as deliverers of community services (charities and social enterprises). However, both CSDW and policymakers raised concerns regarding how the most disadvantaged people within society are rarely the ones who know how to articulate and devise a successful funding application for new services. Therefore, there is a danger that the promotion of a social sector as deliverers of services (HM Government, 2018) will not be representative of marginalised groups. With the demise of local authority sport, the support available to prepare funding applications was also perceived as declining. There

was concern that only those who could eloquently devise a funding application would obtain funds and although support may be available via some CSPs, the likelihood of the more disadvantaged in society being aware of CSPs was perceived as unlikely. This resonates with discussions by CSDW in Chapter Four regarding community benefit and how the drive, via policy, for entrepreneurial organisations to take the reins of CSD may promote organisations that do not have the knowledge or understanding of how to work with and represent diverse communities.

Although several policymakers believed that sport policy was more concerned with casting a positive light on government rather than achieving specified outcomes, few were willing to voice concerns directly to government. We can reflect on Gramsci's work and the call for organic intellectuals to challenge and progress the cultural environment (Gramsci, 1971), noting that this research highlights that both CSDW and sport policymakers feel unable to challenge the system of which they are an integral part. We could reflect that this is hegemony in action. To be vocal or remain silent is a personal decision. To speak out against 'the system' and risk being a lone voice is a brave move. Underpinning these tensions is a discussion around structure and agency and the power that is vested within each. Participants operated within a particular social context and to examine their motivations we have to examine why they choose to remain silent. We can reflect here on the work of Wright Mills (1959) regarding the sociological imagination. Wright Mills (1959) argues that social outcomes are influenced by an intimate link between one's biography and the social conditions in which one lives. Shaping these social outcomes are social norms, social motives and the social context, all of which have been discussed throughout this thesis. For political parties to hear the voices of those whom they represent, they have to be receptive to dissenting opinion. If this is not the case, then voicing one's opinion may be seen as both risky and pointless; a personal struggle against a politics that will not listen and a personal cost to speaking out. In this respect, sport policy is neither challenged nor progressed as those within the policymaking arena feel compromised to articulate their concerns. Should they choose to do so, as we observed in chapter seven, they may face personal and professional loss. This enables the continuation of a sport policy agenda that is unlikely to meet its specified outcomes and risks missing the opportunity of

developing communities through sport.

The Metamorphosis of Community Sport

The diversity of outcomes that community sport is tasked with achieving has been discussed throughout this thesis and has been presented as contributing to a profession that has developed in a piecemeal and fragmented manner. Because of this fragmentation and instrumental use of sport to achieve policy aims, CSD is now situated within broad professional contexts and the roles and responsibilities of CSDW in these environments have become difficult to define (Bloyce & Smith, 2009; Mackintosh, 2012). Beyond this, the training and support for CSDW to operate effectively in these environments has been piecemeal (Pitchford & Collins, 2009; Collins, 2014).

Participants highlighted how they believed local authorities were best placed to coordinate and facilitate CSD. However, as time progresses and those who have worked in community sport retire and/or leave the profession, we may be left with very few people who have experience of local authority CSD. In this sense, local authority CSD could become a forgotten service with few people remembering its role and impact and even fewer championing it as the nexus for CSD. In fact, it is likely that the structure and delivery mechanisms of CSD will change so substantially (through policy, opening of markets) that the free market becomes the accepted norm, with those working in community sport, ceasing to question whether this is the best way to practice CSD. In this respect, the political ideology of neoliberalism drives a cultural change that is seen as acceptable and remains unchallenged. As this occurs, we are left, yet again, to reflect on an explicit example of hegemony in action (Gramsci, 1971).

Sport England has played its part in driving a neoliberal agenda to the heart of CSD. Both CSDW and policymakers believed that Sport England was increasingly a voice for government rather than a voice for sport. This was coupled with a perception that recruitment to senior positions within sport were increasingly drawn from the business community rather than the sporting community and this left those working in community sport feeling somewhat deflated and undervalued. The issues raised here resonate with Gramsci (1971) and his discussion of invested power and how the state ensures that at a

policymaking level it is surrounded by personnel who will broadly agree with its objectives and hence provide limited dissent regarding its proposals.

At a societal level, Widdop et al. (2018) highlight that due to austerity measures, spending cuts have impinged directly (and disproportionately) on the poor, sick and disabled. Indeed, evidence suggests that the inequalities that existed 50 years ago exist today and if anything, since austerity, the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer (Dorling, 2018). More specifically, key public services relied upon by those in-need and at risk have been curtailed, reduced or reorganised, impacting on access to libraries, children's centres and leisure centres (Blyth, 2013). As King (2014) highlights, despite a national strategy to target the 'hard to reach', it cannot be claimed that a sustainable investment in community sport is a core practice of local government, and the withdrawal of both central and local funding for these services is testament to this fact. In this respect, 'sport for all' has proven to be policy rhetoric rather than policy reality (King, 2013, 2014).

The strengthening of the role of sport to achieve social objectives has not been supported by a concerted effort to increase professional development opportunities for CSDW, who may find themselves in environments that are somewhat different to their anticipated career destination. This can leave CSDW ill prepared for the roles in which they find themselves (Pitchford and Collins, 2009; Mackintosh, 2012; Collins, 2014). Because of this, the community sport sector has seen the emergence of membership organisations and charities that aim to offer a 'voice' and support to the community sport sector. Among these organisations is Sported, which aims to promote sport for development, which they define as, "the intentional use of sport and physical activity as a tool to bring about positive change in the lives of people and communities" (Sported, 2018). Sported has a membership of over 3,000 community sport and youth centres across the country, highlighting the breadth of the community sport sector and environments in which it operates. Beyond this, there is also the Sport for Development Coalition, the Sport Alliance and the Sport and Recreation Alliance, all with an interest and membership base situated within CSD. The United Kingdom Sports Development Network (UKSDN) adopts a 'looser' approach to membership via word of mouth rather than promotion or an online presence, but

this organisation also has an interest in sport for social good, with its 2018 and 2019 conferences adopting a focus on community sport development. The increase in organisations serving to represent CSD in some ways highlights both a growing prominence of the sector and the increased fragmentation of services. However, as the volume of agencies representing CSD increases, this has the potential to prove confusing to CSDW and rather than serve to strengthen the voice for CSD could unintentionally dilute it. That said, as CSD becomes ever more fragmented now may be the time to think differently about the future and development of community sport. From the empirical findings presented within this thesis it is clear that the 'catch all' term of 'community sport' is unhelpful and rather than trying to accommodate every aspect of sports development that occurs within communities it may be time to fully differentiate community sport from elite sport development.

The emergence of several sport for development member organisations highlights that this bifurcation of CSD is already taking place organically, and yet it could be argued that a much stronger focus and coordination of the sport for development sector is needed. This was evidenced by Chris Grant, the former CEO of Sported, in an interview with ConnectSport in August 2018. Chris stated that the sport for development sector was 'an emerging sector' and a sector that is not recognised in the way that it should be. He spoke of the difficulty in getting the attention of the public, the media, sports agencies and Government to recognise the importance of sport for development. He also discussed a lack of a unified approach to measuring and evidencing the value of work that gets done across the five outcomes of the latest sport strategy (HM Government, 2015) and believed that a unified way of looking at the outputs and outcomes of what sport for development does, would be the tipping point that persuades government to take the sector seriously (Grant, 2018). However, this may be a complex task as services are increasingly fragmented and lack formal quality control mechanisms to display their credibility. If fragmentation of community sport is proving confusing for those working within sport, then potential participants within the community stand little chance in the current structure of establishing how they can fully engage and may find duplication of services confusing and off-putting.

It is worth pausing here to reflect on Gramsci's work regarding how the working

classes might be mobilised to achieve what historically only those in positions of power have been able to achieve. That is, to create a stratum of its own intellectuals which would offer, 'homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields' (Gramsci, 1971 p12). Gramsci spoke of organic intellectuals, those that rose from the ranks of the working classes to be the hegemonic class of tomorrow, intellectuals who paved the way to a critical self-consciousness of the masses as a form of enlightenment, an awakening; a new type of intellectual closely bound to the world of production. In this respect, Gramsci (1971) championed the autonomy of the political against that of economic determinism, believing that politics was a way of life and should not be conditioned by the economic structure of society (Gramsci, 1971, Shwarzmantel, 2015). Since the ultimate purpose of Gramscian critique and inquiry is one of emancipation, via the challenging and transcendence of structures of domination, it resonates clearly with the present discussion. Sport for development organisations could foster organic intellectuals that champion a different way of doing CSD. A way that offers centrality to community and is emancipatory in its attempt to challenge and transcend CSD structures that are embedded via sport policy but may not work in the communities or sports best interests. With these issues in mind, it is to a consideration of formal recommendations that I now turn.

Recommendations

It is clear from the findings of this research that there is a plethora of issues preventing community sport from achieving its full potential. That said, high quality programmes and initiatives do exist, that are run by dedicated and highly professional CSDW.

Given the increasingly fragmented nature of CSD, the emergence of membership organisations promoting sport for development should be welcomed. However, as it currently stands this organisational landscape is also competitive and fragmented, reflecting the sector that it represents. With an increased strength of focus, these organisations, working together, could be a force for good within the sector. Not only providing a unified voice to government, but also offering guidance and support for CSDW.

Sharing of knowledge regarding good practice within CSD is also piecemeal. There are examples of communities of practice such as the 'Sport for Development' online platform and the www.sportanddev.org website alongside trade journals such as Leisure Management and Sport Management that reach CSDW. However, how those working in community sport access information regarding best practice and issues that may concern them is variable and often non-existent. The industry lead body, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSPA) has yet to take a lead in this area but has instead focused on accreditation of courses and skills development, which it was tasked with doing in the latest sport policy (HM Government, 2015). Therefore, there is an opportunity for a focused organisation to emerge from those that currently exist and serve the sport for development community. This organisation could act as a central point for the advocacy of community sport, and training and development of those working within the sector. It would also be well positioned to progress appropriate and robust monitoring and evaluation methods.

Dissemination of knowledge from academic communities researching community sport is often unknown or ignored because it does not reach the contextual surroundings that inform practitioners (Houlihan & Green, 2013; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014). As Jeanes and Lindsey (2014) highlight, this results in such knowledge rarely being accessed in an industry-friendly way at the practitioner level, where its utility and validity would be most useful. Therefore, as several authors have highlighted, there is a clear need and opportunity to create a closer link between practitioner and academic knowledge (Kay, 2009; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Edwards, 2015). The informal organisation, UKSDN has worked over the past eleven years to bring academics and practitioners together for mutual benefit, however the nature of recruitment to this network (informal, word of mouth) may mean it does not fully reach those within CSDW but has instead been dominated by academics who have been involved from the outset. This may change as the UKSDN evolves and this network may be able to drive what has been termed the 'pracademic' nexus where practitioners and academics meet.

Chris Grant, the former CEO of Sported, highlighted in an interview with ConnectSport that he believed the key to the sport for development sector being

taken seriously by government was to progress how to evidence the social value of sport and physical activity for change (ConnectSport, 2018). It is interesting that community sport's ability to impact positively upon broader social objectives has been championed for some time (Wankel & Berger, 1991; Crabbe, 2007; Collins, 2014), but most studies investigating the impact of sports programmes on social objectives have been conducted over a limited timescale. While these authors may suggest that CSD is effective in achieving social objective outcomes, it has been questioned whether the development of communities through sport continues over the long term (Sugden, 2006; Vail, 2007). In this respect, longitudinal research is needed to establish the mechanisms by which participation in community sport programmes facilitates or hinders lifelong participation. Sustainability of CSD has long been emphasised as crucially important (Coalter, 2007; Lindsey, 2008; Collins, 2014) and it is therefore surprising that there has been little attempt at longitudinal research, despite the complexities this entails.

In relation to delivery of CSD, Harris and Houlihan (2016) highlight that it would be more helpful to have a primary agent closer to the point of implementation who understands the local community, is able to provide and promote the right mix of formal and informal activities, link with sports-specific structures such as clubs and NGBs where appropriate, and also support the community to take action itself. This resonates with an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach that starts from an assumption that residing within every community, regardless of the community profile, are assets (Kretzmann & McNight, 1993). These assets may take the form of spaces, such as green space, unused derelict land and buildings that may be reinstated. However, more essentially ABCD is concerned with the assets that reside within people, the local population and what they can offer (Green & Haines, 2016). The traditional deficit approach to sports development seeks to provide for those who 'lack' provision or target groups that may benefit from sporting activities. What this approach can overlook is that within communities we may have qualified coaches, skilled sports practitioners, those who would like to get involved. Yet the CSD structure does not easily facilitate such involvement, as we do not have methods to 'unearth' such talents, but instead opt to 'parachute' in professionals, often from outside the locale and who have limited knowledge of the community. Community sport could learn

from aspects of community development such as community profiling (Hawtin & Percy-Smith, 2007) that offers methods in which an asset-based approach to development can be facilitated. To concur with Harris and Houlihan (2016) a primary agent who is close to the community and can facilitate and coordinate local demand, as well as use of assets and input from sporting agencies, may prove to be a more coherent model for community sport. This resonates with commentary from participants who highlighted the importance of local authorities to community sport development, due to their knowledge and understanding of their local communities.

As local authority sport declines the need to explore a new model of community sport that embraces some of the advantages linked to knowledge of the political environment, the community, an asset-based approach and a clearer focus on engaging diverse populations becomes ever more crucial. The CSDF attempts to encourage policymakers and practitioners to reflect on the interconnectedness and intersectionality of all aspects of policy and practice. Such reflections could lead to a reconceptulisation of what CSD could look like in the future and it is hoped that the CSDF may help this discussion progress.

Reflections on the Research Process

At this point, I will pause to reflect on what I perceive are the personal, professional and research consequences that have been drawn from the research process.

Conducting this research has, at times, been somewhat depressing, with both those working in policymaking and at the grassroots seemingly resigned to the current situation. The extent of their feelings of powerlessness was a little surprising, especially policymakers. Although both CSDW and policymakers stated how the policy and delivery system did not best serve communities, there was reluctance to fully examine how this could change and the part they could play in enacting this change.

During the time of conducting this research I moved away from CSD and lecturing and into a teaching and learning role. Conducting the research has made me question whether I now wish to completely move away from sport as a subject

area, and I am increasingly of the opinion that I do. I find there is more scope and willingness within a teaching and learning environment to question the status quo and advance discussion and practice. Beyond that, I have worked for many years within sports development and to some extent, the completion of this thesis has served to confirm my thoughts that it is time to move on. I now have a sector wide role within higher education and the time for me to focus on sports development is increasingly limited too.

I think that the shift towards CSD being termed sport for development is a negative development. Sport for development, it could be argued, is even more nebulous than the term 'community sport' and does not offer a clear conceptualisation or direction for the sector. I believe that rather than moving away from calling what we do with communities, CSD, we should, instead, embrace this term. Yes, the term 'community' is often a catch all as has been discussed throughout this thesis. We should therefore concentrate on facilitating discussion with all of those involved with CSD to strengthen the conceptualisation and understanding of this term and the role communities play within the process of CSD. There is a richness and diversity within communities and to fully understand what we mean by this term is essential for those working in and around CSD.

There is currently no single point of contact or sector agency representing CSD. This I believe is problematic and creates a chaotic and fragmented delivery system. As we have seen, Sport England is perceived primarily as a funding body that has moved away from its advisory role for which it used to be well known and regarded. I believe there is scope for an organisation to emerge that focuses on the broader education of CSDW. This role could be embraced by a higher education provider that facilitated and validated 'bite size' provision that CSDW could complete at their own pace. In establishing micro-credentials of this type, a higher education provider could seek to gain Sport England approval and CIMSPA recognition. As CIMSPA is responsible for the professional and apprenticeship standards within the sport and physical activity sectors, they could be well placed to take on this focus too. CIMSPA have recently released the professional standard for 'Working in the Community Environment' (CIMSPA, 2019) and this would seem an excellent platform on which to build. In moving the training and development of CSDW forwards, this may assist in ensuring a baseline knowledge

of community development and its application to sport. In so doing, consistency of knowledge across the sector may be enhanced and quality of delivery assured. The demise of the quality assurance of CSDW, since the demise of LA sport, was perceived as particularly problematic by participants within this research.

Regarding the key research consequences, I think there is much scope to utilise the CSDF to shape research projects that further investigate the intersectionality of all sport development practice, not necessarily limiting this to CSD. There has been a tendency for research to focus solely on either CSDW, policy or politics, rather than examining the cross-cutting impact across all realms. Further focus could also be placed on how participants access and interact with the CSD offer, as well as examining reasons behind non-participation within CSD activities on offer. This could help establish barriers to participation which may be unique to the CSD environment.

Summary and Implications of the Research

From the findings of this research, we can observe that the ideological environment in which sport policy is devised exacerbates the difficulty of successfully achieving sport policy outcomes at the grassroots (Widdop et al., 2018; Parnell et al., 2019). Although well-meaning in intention, sport policy has been viewed by participants as primarily a means of framing government in a positive light, rather than a dedicated focus on achieving the outcomes of such policies. Beyond this, the governance, funding and monitoring and evaluation protocols of community sport, make specified sport policy outcomes difficult to achieve (Grix & Phillpots, 2011; King, 2014; Widdop et al., 2018; Parnell et al., 2019). The irony here is that, intentionally or not, government appears to create conditions that hinder the successful achievement of their own specified sport policy outcomes. As policymakers commented, this often results in sport policies rarely going full term as government realises that specified targets are unlikely to be achieved. Instead, a new policy is launched which serves to re-direct attention away from the failure to achieve the targets and measures of the outgoing sport policy. The practical implications of this are that it is rare for sport policy objectives to be fully realised and therefore the positive benefit to the community is reduced. However, both CSDW and policymakers within this study perceived that a governmental shift towards a focus on outcomes within sport policy, enabled a narrative

approach to policy evaluation and one that offered freedom of interpretation should targets not have been fully realised.

The UK government launched its Social Sector Policy in 2018 (HM Government, 2018) which emphasises the importance of the social sector such as charities and social enterprises as a means of delivering public services. As more emphasis is given to the social sector there is potential for the issues surrounding fragmentation of services, inadequate quality assurance and superficial monitoring and evaluation protocols, to become further entrenched within CSD.

I conclude my arguments by referring to the CSDF presented in chapter nine (see Figure 6). This framework recognises the importance of practitioners within the context of the community sport development landscape. It also highlights the intersectionality and interconnectedness between practitioners, policy, governance and organisations, and communities themselves. It brings strategic direction, delivery methods and target groups to the fore, whilst placing the community at the heart of the process. In so doing, it focuses attention on delivery, whilst recognising the importance of sport policy objectives as a driver for practice. Sporting governance and the organisations involved with CSD are a crucial part of the framework and may be highly influential regarding how community sport delivery is shaped. It is worth noting that the CSDF is not a process model, in that it does not aim to direct practice. Instead, the CDSF has utility in offering policymakers and practitioners a means by which they might consider and reflect upon the interconnectedness of policy and practice which, in turn, may encourage those within the sector to become more vocal and, to use Gramsci's terminology, affect a 'war of position' (Gramsci, 1971).

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APPENDIX 1 Phase One: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Community Sports Development: Principles and Practice

Dear participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study which is examining the rationale/s for community sports development work, and the role of sports development professionals in a community setting. This research will examine:

- How community sports development professionals view their role and their responsibilities
- Sports development professionals awareness of current political/policy shifts
- Reflections on how their role is evolving

Your participation will involve a 1:1 personal interview which will last no longer than one hour. You have been selected to participate in this study because of your experience of working within a community sports development environment.

The interview will be recorded and all transcribed data from the interview will be kept in a locked office. Only the researcher will have access to this data. It is likely that the results of this research will go forward for publication within an academic journal and be presented at conferences. When the findings are published, no participant will be identifiable by name, area or job title.

By taking part in this study you will give a voice to community sports development and enable funding bodies and those involved with devising sports policy an opportunity to understand the nature of community sports development practice.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage. If you are happy to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent section below.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to being a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant____________________

Signature of Participant ____________________

Date ___________________________________ Day/month/year

APPENDIX 2 Phase One: Discussion Guide

Discussion Guide: Community Sports Development

Introduction

- Info about interviewer and why research being conducted
- How long interview is likely to take
- Ground rules – no right or wrong answers
- Informed consent to be signed and consent given to record the conversation

Warm up – profile

- What is your job title?
- How long have you worked in a community sports development setting?
- How did you get in to sports development?

Probe: What level of qualification – Postgrad, degree, coaching qual etc

CSD - Attitudes to their job and role

- What groups do you work with within the community, and why?
- Why do you think you have chosen to work within community sports development, rather than elite sports development?
- What do you think are the key skills a community sports development professional needs to have?

Awareness of current political/policy shifts

- What do you think are the key drivers affecting community sports development? (If necessary, probe re: Sport England policy/strategy, funding issues, partnership working)
- Do you think the Coalition Government has had a positive or negative impact on CSD? Why do you think this? Can you offer specific examples?
- Why do you think Governments fund CSD schemes? (rationale for keeping CSD on the agenda)

Reflections on how their role is evolving

- How has your role changed, if at all, since you have been working in CSD?

Probe: change for the better or change for the worse?

- How do you think the CSD profession will evolve over the next five to ten years?

What will be the key influences on the industry?

Wind down
Summary of answers given – final thoughts – elaboration – thanks

APPENDIX 3 Phase Two: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Community Sport Development: Principles and Practice

Dear participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study which is examining the impact of sport strategy on community sport development work. This research will examine:

- Definitions of community sport development
- The positioning of sport as an instrument to achieve social outcomes/sport for social good
- The funding of community sport development
- How community sport is monitored and evaluated

Your participation will involve a 1:1 personal interview which will last no longer than one hour. You have been selected to participate in this study because of your influence within the sport sector, and substantial experience of high-level decision making.

The interview will be recorded via an MP3 file and all data from the interview will be kept in an encrypted file on the researcher's computer. Only the researcher will have access to this data. It is likely that the results of this research will go forward for publication within an academic journal and be presented at conferences. When the findings are published, no participant will be identifiable by name, area or job title.

By taking part in this study you will offer insight in to decision making within community sport development and how strategy affects community sport development practice.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage. If you are happy to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent section below.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to being a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant____________________

Signature of Participant ____________________

Date ___________________________________ Day/month/year

APPENDIX 4 Phase Two: Discussion Guide

DISCUSSION GUIDE: COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Sport Strategy

The Government released the new strategy, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation in Dec 2015.* I would like to ask you a few questions about this strategy:

- General opinion of the strategy?

…and specifically, your thoughts on:

- Positioning sport as an instrument to achieve social outcomes/sport for social good
- The emphasis on diversification of funding and seeking alternative forms of funding, in light of reduction of LA funding
- Emphasis on a more 'joined-up' approach to delivery and funding. How will this be enabled?
- How community sport is/will be monitored and evaluated

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation

What are your thoughts about Sport England's latest strategy? In particular:

- The emphasis on target audiences
- A stronger focus on investment principles

Definition of community

- How would you define community?

Organisations involved with Community Sport

- In your opinion, which organisations that you know of, do a good job of community sport development?
- Community sport development workers (CSDWs) found the focus on alternative forms of funding as potentially problematic, and likely to contribute to fragmentation of services and delivery. What are your thoughts about this?

Policy Making

- CSDWs believed that policy makers did not really have any understanding of how sport works at a grassroots level, and therefore policy did not always reflect the reality of community sport delivery. How would you respond to this statement?

- How much influence does the political party of the day have on sport? What key changes have you seen across Labour, Coalition and Conservative sport policy/strategies over the years?
- What are the constraints that policy makers face?

APPENDIX 5 Phase Three: Informed consent form (those who had participated within Phase One)

Community Sport Development: Principles and Practice

Dear ???,

In 2014, you kindly let me interview you for the first phase of my PhD, which examined the impact of sport policy on community sport development. Since then I have interviewed policy makers and those involved with sport at a governmental level. For my final phase of research, I would like to invite you to participate in developing a Padlet wall (see www.Padlet.com). You are one of 25 people I have selected, based on your experience within community sport. I would like you to post your ideas about:

Funding community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is funded?
Delivery of community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is managed and delivered?
Monitoring and evaluation of community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is monitored and evaluated?

What is Padlet?
The Padlet will be semi-private, in that it will not show up in a Google search, but anyone who has the link to the Padlet will be able to access it. You will be able to see and respond to other people's posts on the wall, however, to ensure anonymity please use a Pseudonym with the same gender as yourself (please let me know the Pseudonym you choose to use, so I can identify you). The Padlet is a creative collaboration in that it enables you to post text, links to YouTube, news articles, documents etc to make your point. However, due to ethical considerations please ensure that any visual images you post are publicly accessible and do not include anyone under 16 years old. Further information about Padlet and how to post to the wall can be found here:

https://padlet.com/support/whatispadlet

https://padlet.com/support/padlets_howtopost

The Padlet will be seen by other participants and myself. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw, and/or remove your posts to the wall at any stage. I will not 'police' the wall but I reserve the right to remove any inappropriate or offensive posts.

On completion of the Padlet we may collectively decide that we would like to share it with phase two participants who are responsible for devising sport policy. In so doing, this would enable policymakers to see first-hand how policy is influencing practice. This would be a collective decision and if we choose to do this, you would be able to remove any posts you did not want policymakers to see.

By taking part in this study, you will offer insight to community sport, and how policy affects practice.

If you are happy to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent section over the page.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to being a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant___________________

Signature of Participant ____________________

Date ___________________________________ Day/month/year

APPENDIX 6 Phase Three: Informed consent form (those who had not participated in Phase One)

Community Sport Development: Principles and Practice

Dear ???,

In discussion with ???, you have kindly agreed to participate in developing a Padlet wall (see www.Padlet.com) regarding community sport development principles and practice. This is the third and final stage of the research that has discussed the policy direction and operation of community sport with community sport development workers and policymakers. You are one of 25 people I have selected, based on your experience within community sport. I would like you to post your ideas about:

Funding community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is funded?
Delivery of community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is managed and delivered?
Monitoring and evaluation of community sport: What are your thoughts and experiences of how community sport is monitored and evaluated?

What is Padlet?
The Padlet will be semi-private, in that it will not show up in a Google search, but anyone who has the link to the Padlet will be able to access it. You will be able to see and respond to other people's posts on the wall, however, to ensure anonymity please use a Pseudonym with the same gender as yourself (please let me know the Pseudonym you choose to use, so I can identify you). The Padlet is a creative collaboration in that it enables you to post text, links to YouTube, news articles, documents etc to make your point. However, due to ethical considerations please ensure that any visual images you post are publicly accessible and do not include anyone under 16 years old. Further information about Padlet and how to post to the wall can be found here:

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By taking part in this study, you will offer insight to community sport, and how

policy affects practice.

If you are happy to participate in this study, please read and sign the informed consent section over the page.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to being a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant____________________

Signature of Participant ____________________

Date ________________________________ Day/month/year

APPENDIX 7 Open Coding Example (Excerpt from Transcript)

Data	Open coding
K: Background to me, overview of study, confidentiality and anonymity, and thanks for participating. A: Okay how confidential is confidential? Can I talk with you openly? K: Reassurances offered. A: I think if I tell you the senior civil servant for writing it, a chap called xxxx said to me that his priority was public value, not sport, and therefore the document is written justifying back to central government, back to treasury really, why they should invest in sport and it talks about those five outcomes, all of which are really interesting to treasury of course and the rest of the country. So what it does is it basically moves in to the world of, away from what you and I would think of traditional sports development and a much wider brief, including which I think SE have now included in theirs and its moved from sport to activity and its moved from sport for its own sake to sport to enable others to grow socially and lots of other ways, however, I think those of you that worked in sport development years ago did that anyway but you didn't abandon sport in the process and my great fear here is where we've ended up is SE wandering virtually in to public health and the PA domain and the questions I would ask is where is the sustainability in that structure. So alright, ParkRun's fabulous but if people only show up and run once or twice where is the sustainability? Is it sport for all and exodus by many or is it a sustainable	Priority public value, not sport[52] Sport strategy justifying public expenditure[53] Sport as social good [54] SE wandering in to public health remit[55] Is there sustainability in public health remit for sport[56]? Sport for all and exodus by many[57]

structure and I would have thought that there's a different way of going about it and we need to invest massively but not in a way in which they did in the last four years where they just said to governing bodies just rush out and get people participating without any help at all…I would have said, right what we're going to do is I want you to , let us know how many coaches you've got and we want you to train coaches to work with all these population groups in all these different areas and we'll invest in the development of those coaches and we'll develop and then we'll drive those coaches on to the ground and that will increase participation but it will also increase sustainability. Because the thing I constantly have to say is *who do they think runs this stuff?* You know, who manages it all, who leads it all, who oversees it all, if there starts to be any rules who's responsible for it all, it doesn't happen in a vacuum. When you abandon sport for sport as you call it you wander of in to a jiggle jiggle kind of thing I fear, not that that doesn't need doing, I'm totally supportive of it, but is that what a sport strategy should be about? So that I fear we've kinda abandoned I feel we've sold sport short really to actually essentially go down what is a health route. So that's where I would see it. If I go back to my time at UK Sport I was Chair of the other non-departmental public body with a responsibility for high performance, and what I did in that first couple of years was look at the systems and say, these are all crackers, these don't make any sense to me at all. Because they're all, we're all, we're telling these people what we want them to do but we're giving them no help to get there. We need to reverse this method. So we went from liaison officers to support teams. So, you've got a problem with coaching we'll send a team in to help you. You've	No help offered to NGBs for participation remit[58] Invest in the development of coaches to work with broad population groups[59] Who do they think runs this stuff? (sport as a PA remit)[60] Abandoning sport for sport sake[61] Sold sport short to go down a health route[62] Systems needed an overhaul[63] Telling CSDW what to do, not helping them to get there[64] CSDWs need support, support teams[65] Mentoring system[66]

got a problem with sport science we'll send someone in to help you. So what we created was not a menu or recipe book but a set of people who could educate the high performance system. You look at the high performance system now 10 years, 12 years on it's now self-managing and driving performance and that's what we should have done in the participation end, and we haven't done it, we've never done it. We've just said here's some money go do it, without ever really helping people understand how. K: I've spoken to a lot of NGBs and have NGBs been abandoned? Are they now in a wilderness?	Mentoring system could work at community level, not just high performance sport[67] Community sport given money but no help in understanding how to do it[68]
A: I don't know if you know the impact of the budget? 30% is going on the inactive , and what they mean by that, god alone knows, and whereas the NGBs used to get 38% of their budget out of a budget of £250 million a year they will now get less than 28% and the money in there for talent is ring-fenced. So that means core budgets are going to be massively hit, massively hit. Participation type budgets and central type budgets will be massively hit. So you're going to see some sports only focus on talent because that's all they'll be able to manage with the money they get and others, I think, possibly go to the wall.	30% of budget to inactive[69] NGBs core budgets are going to be massively hit[70] Some NGBS will only focus on talent, because that's all they'll be able to manage.[71] Some NGBs will possibly go to the wall.[72]

Memo

Instant rapport with this participant. We shared the same outlook and had similar working experiences. Couldn't help but agree with opinions on several occasions and probably missed a chance for further probing in some areas. Clearly highly sceptical of conservative's approach and both sport strategies. This is someone who was incredibly influential in sport but appears to have been somewhat side-lined over the past few years. This participant was strongly favoured by New Labour and this could be part of that side-lining. Clear frustration from outset and very willing to talk candidly about these frustrations, once assurances about confidentiality received. Not surprisingly given many years' experience with (organisation name withheld) and (organisation name withheld) a key advocate for NGBs and very much defending them at every opportunity. Nothing negative at all said about NGBs.

Political persuasion not stated but comes through with discussion about market forces - very damming of this approach. Key points made in relation to quality assurance issues once markets fragment and market forces pervade. I thoroughly enjoyed this interview and I think the participant did too. What is clear is that in being outspoken this has come at some personal cost over the years. This participant is not one to sit on the side-lines with their opinion and I wonder if there is an element of finally being beaten down with it all… Very negative outlook for the future of CSD.

APPENDIX 8: Example of Selective Coding

OPEN CODES	SELECTIVE CODE (Category)
SE used to have more autonomy, before national lottery funding	**Changing relationship of SE with government, and with industry**
SE used to be out there, advising, not now	
SE and government now a lot more interlinked	
More integration between SE and government re: policies and strategies not a bad thing as strategies are more aligned.	
SE has good intentions but overly ambitious	
Sport NDPBs give government what they want	
NDPB working for government facing sport, not sport facing government	
No challenge to government from NDPBs, juts giving them whatever they want	
Transparency important, and ability for sector to challenge government	
SE used to have more of a guidance role. It was well respected by LAs and those working in sector.	
With lottery SE role moved increasingly towards funding agency, which changed the perception in the industry. There are always winners and losers in funding so SE more likely to be less supported by industry.	
SE key control mechanism over sector is through funding	

Strategy is rhetoric but I am not too sure how much it philosophically and practically affects what happens at ground level.	**Strategy as rhetoric**
New strategies are purely about a new government putting their stamp/spin on sport.	
SE strategy patronising	
New strategies devised before the old strategy completed	**Strategy: out with the old and in with the new, but no reflection or learning about what has gone before.**
Not sure you ever complete a strategy, or reach an accountability point	
Insight teams, reading data sat in an office. What have we learnt from what's gone before?	
New strategies rarely refer back to previous strategies	
Very little reference or accountability looking back at previous strategies	
No memory in SE	
Don't refer back to previous strategies because they haven't delivered on the targets	
New strategy a chance to start again, sheet gets wiped clean	
Nothing new, behaviour change model, tell me something new	
Strategies generally only last 3,4,5 years.	
A new strategy and everything's gonna be fantastic	
New strategies, watershed moments – everybody's seen the light!	
New start, positivity surrounding new strategy	
Strategy as a political ideological tool	

Free market emphasis	**Political ideology driving sport**
Strong survive and weak go to the wall – pervades everything now	
Leave it to the market philosophy	
Private companies quadrupled serving school sport sector	
Does market forces work for sport?	
People leaving industry because they don't want part of a market forces approach	**Political ideology driving sport**
Labour was a devolved model that had a centralist vision	
Labour had a very clear vision for sport	
Devolving everything out from the middle to the lowest common denominator just creates massive confusion	
Lib Dems tempered Cons	
Opening up sport to other organisations to deliver that sport. Market forces	
Leave it to market forces, where market can do it, it will	
Sport as a commodity, with a focus on profit not a bad thing	
The dominant model has moved from sports development to a market-led approach.	
Mature state which means less government intervention	
focusing on these consequential social benefits, it makes sport in to an instrument of policy, rather than something that would be of benefit in its own right.	
Assumption that if something has to be open to the public should be paid for by public purse not true	
LG should be more self sufficient	

Open season, there's money, you can bid for it, what's the QA mechanism on your delivery?	**Quality assurance mechanisms**
Dependent on schools etc knowing what is good and bad sport delivery, and vast majority don't know bloody difference!	
Market forces, without any quality assurance mechanisms	
Where is the QA with StreetGames?	
In the 70s we invested in organisations that were trusted and had earned their stripes	
Sport as social good, nothing new	
Sport now a public health remit	**Sport for social good**
There's always been a welfarist aspect to sport policy	
Sport for all and exodus by many	
Focus on ascertainable social value pushes sport as a force for social good	
Desire to show public money invested sensibly pushes focus to a social agenda - sport as a force for social integration, or better health outcomes or reduction of crime etc	
No such thing as sport for sport's sake	
Saying sport for sport's sake is like saying food for food's sake, it doesn't make sense	
Even elite sport generates social benefits, so sport for sport's sake is a nonsense	
Abandoning sport for sport sake	
Sold sport short to go down a health route	

Concept of sport at government level is simplistic – still about competitive sport	**Conceptualisation of sport at government level overly simplistic**
Top doesn't understand the bottom	**Governance of sport**
Government shouldn't surrender sport policy to the sport sector	
Sector needs governmental direction, sporting organisations are important social institutions and some of their practices are exclusionary and need tempering	
Don't necessarily hand expert decisions about allocation of funding to the sector or to the public as they do not have depth of knowledge to make decisions	
government departments as competitive not collaborative	
Every secretary of state is fighting for their life all the time, right, so they don't want another department to get the glory that belongs to them	**Cross-departmental government agendas**
If Dept of Health (DH) was on board, do you not think it would have put some public health money in to this strategy?	
No magic bullet to enable joined up government	
Joined up government needs practical solutions such as ministerial working teams	
Joined up government needs to be actively managed	
Joined up government won't just happen on its own accord	
(Name Withheld) says that the new strategy is first time SE gonna look at outcomes	

Not the first time, it's the fourth or fifth time they've looked at outcomes	**Focusing on outcomes**
Outcomes not a new idea!	
SE and Value of Sport monitor focused on outcomes 15 years ago!	
APS: if you don't like the results, rubbish the survey!	**Participation rates versus outcomes**
Not about how many people take part any more, it's about the outcomes.	
Participation indicator changing to twice a month to make it easier to meet!	
We are in the business of getting more people playing sport because it's good for them. It has to be about a numbers game.	
Large numbers fine if it fulfils necessary social function	
SROI for large numbers of participants is focus	
SE is all about getting more people playing sport, that's not unreasonable	
Mixed results re: participation stats	
Measuring outcomes is nebulous, they can't do it, it will rely on anecdotal evidence	**Measuring outcomes problematic**
Setting bar higher by saying we're not just gonna deliver participants, we're gonna deliver outcomes!	
Outcomes require longitudinal measurement.	
Programme evaluation can't measure outcomes in a meaningful way,	
Measuring social inclusion, crime reduction etc , these things get problematic and complex	

Monitoring outcomes based on community development will probably focus on going to those that have received funding saying, did this project work, going to those that attended regularly and saying did this project work, and they'll all say yes! Method is flawed.	
Narrative around number of participants less easy to devise when you clearly have not met the participation target and we have categorical evidence of that.	**Outcomes - a means of not being called to account**
This latest strategy won't have changed anything. They'll manufacture figures to report success when there isn't any. It's desperate stuff	
Strategy should focus on more disadvantaged at a community level	
Strategy should focus on where the market fails and the disadvantage sits, and let the private sector get on with the rest of it.	
Equality of opportunity is key	
Do I need to create unequal effort to create equal opportunity	**Targeting sport programmes at a community level**
Are there reasons why certain groups in the community cannot access the opportunities or won't access the opportunities, because the opportunities we offer don't meet their needs?	
sometimes you have to start with segregated groups in order to give people the confidence to be part of an integrated group	
Can't assume some people will step in to integrated group without a stepway	
Need clear exit routes if segregated groups	

Segregated groups as a stepping stone, not an end in itself	Targeting sport programmes at a community level
Integrating segregated groups in to mainstream important as aim	
disadvantaged youth have under access to sport, and that's the issue	
We can achieve greater social benefit through sport by focusing on disadvantaged people.	
Labelling as positive when identifying with target group, i.e. This Girl Can	
Centrally located neighbourhood organisations as a root in to disadvantaged areas	
What programmes will emerge from the latest SE strategy? It's not clear which programmes will emerge.	
there will be a lot of things in the middle which are basically average or sensible, there'll be some off to the left-hand side which will be awful and there'll be some to the right that will be outstanding (bell curve effect)	
Local initiatives, whether they are successful or not, will be context dependent	
Each community has different resources so no one size fits all CSD	
New SE strategies big on where funding goes, light on mechanisms of what they're actually gonna do that's different.	Funding community sport
Organisations hamstrung to challenge as they rely on funding. Can't bite the hand that feeds.	
Have to be complicit even if you don't agree with strategic direction, because of reliance on funding	

It's not democracy, it's hypocrisy	**Funding community sport**
Distributing funding across whole country in this way means it gets diluted.	
Squeeze on public sector[4] Austerity causing squeeze	
Funding as a means of supporting local outstanding projects and government highlighting best practice to sector	
LA funding and county funding a mixed picture . Mixed picture allows innovation. Wouldn't want single model to dominate and kill innovation and learning	
CSDW automatically looked to state for funding and now having to act more entrepreneurially	
Most deprived most needy rarely ones who know how to articulate to win bids	**Funding allocated to most articulate**
Those that are articulate and can fill in the damned form will get funding! That can't be the right way to do it.	
Nobody challenging SE about how they are going to deliver on outcomes, and measure outcomes	**Nobody challenging SE**
There's a personal cost to speaking out. You would be totally ostracised.	
SE is the elephant in the room. Too difficult for government to sort out.	
Consultation as a tick box exercise	
SE strategy behavioural change model – feels as though they have to say something about theory, so they put it in there and then it isn't referred to again. Bolted on…	**Behavioural change model a misnomer**

It's about someone 'discovering it' (behaviour change model) and it being her focus/power	
Behaviour change model sets up a polarity against skills and drills, offers an alternative which is not the sport centric approach	
Nothing new, behaviour change model, tell me something new	
Focus on participants as consumers, very neoliberal.	**Participants as consumers**
The idea that sport is about consumption runs throughout the strategy	
A mismatch between sport as a commodity, and for consumers, and the social welfare agenda	
Better customer service isn't gonna make any difference to people who are sedentary and have no interest in sport at all	
Abandoning centrality of needs of sport and replacing it with needs of participants	
More likely to prioritise things you pay for, so having to pay for sport not necessarily a bad thing	
Stripping capabilities of LAs to deliver (reduced funding) then there's a gap for organisation such as SG	**StreetGames and new models of delivery**
SG as a broker and a lobbying agency	
SG not a delivery agency, someone else has to deliver it	
SG do keep the issues of inner-city kids and disadvantaged youth on the agenda	
SG defends those organisations and coaches that know skills and drills doesn't work	

New strategy not clear on role of NGBs moving forward. Not clear to me.	NGBs role in CSD
No help offered to NGBs for participation remit	
NGBs core budgets are going to be massively hit	
Some NGBs will only focus on talent, because that's all they'll be able to manage	
Some NGBs will possibly go to the wall	
Basketball NGB had to play the 'getting people active' card to retain funding	
Random participation targets for NGBs. No idea where targets came from, randomly plucked out of air	
NGBs scapegoats for poor participation figures…'we gave NGBs all this money and they didn't perform…	
You're the investor, don't blame it on NGBs. you obviously didn't invest in the right way or the right place with the right support structures.	
SE Chair has said NGBs are all a waste of time	
NGBs need to be structured to play a positive role in society.	
Need to strengthen NGBs	
High performance system has worked, where's the equivalent of those high-quality individuals running community sport?	
NGBs as social institutions that embody (sometimes) elitist and exclusionary practice	
SROI tool makes all sorts of assumptions. If you get a certain number of people participating in a certain context they are inferred to have certain outcomes.	**Flaws with SROI tool**

CSDW is about people skills	**Who delivers community sport (delivery system)**
You need a CDW that does sport not a CSDW that does community – we were saying that 30 years ago with the demonstration projects	
CSPs likely to have bigger role in future	
Invest in the development of coaches to work with broad population groups	
Delivery system needs an overhaul	
Football clubs/rugby clubs can mobilise communities. Well placed to deliver community sport	
Community venues that people know and visit as mobilisers for sport, not someone (coach) just turning up they don't know	
More focus on markets, more fragmentation, more small organisations doing random things	
Genuinely community-led sport may have less instrumental character Community-led sport about joy and amenity value	
Ironically, Community-led sport may have better social outcomes	
Community-led sport needs community buy-in	
Coaches are capable of delivering community sport, but they need more support and training to do so	**Lack of direction and support for CSDW**
They're telling CSDW what to do, not helping them to get there	
CSDWs need support, support teams	
A CSDW mentoring system could work at community level, not just high-performance sport	

Community sport given money but no help in understanding how to do it.	
Scope for further learning within sport sector about entrepreneurialism	
Community as a community of interest. People with like minds, cultures, ways of thinking.	
Communities as a geographical space, and not necessarily the same thing, but they can be.	
community as a population and subpopulations within a broader population	**Definition of community**
Community as everyone from young to old	
Idea that sport creates community, but sport happens in community, not necessarily creates it.	
Sport generally uses place as context	
People use the word community because it sounds good. You can't be against community can you?	
CSD I would put the other way around. SD in a community	
CSD - understanding your community and then mapping sport on to it	
when you call it CSD people think something about a sports community rather than sports development in the community	
Different strategies may be needed for different populations	
Sport as a roadshow these days	
We need to remember that it's about how you transform the lives of people in a community using sport	**Sport in community or sport as community?**
Transforming lives, making a difference	

Sport shouldn’t be about bringing the circus to town	
Community sport has to accommodate everyone in that community	

APPENDIX 9: Theoretical Memos

Theoretical memo 1: Community sport development: top down and not meeting needs of community (more context, intro and locating the study)

The tension here is that community sport is often parachuted in without the needs of the community taken in to account. This can be sports specific and the community do not want to participate in that sport. Competition between agencies for participants means that the participant base is limited and therefore numbers attending sports sessions can be low. Coupled with this sport has to increasingly compete with other means of entertainment such as digital technologies etc (not a new phenomenon). At the heart of this memo is the dislocation between the wants, needs, expressed demand of the community and the 'agenda' driving agencies involved in sports development. This then brings in to question whether sport should be the vehicle or whether a more 'leisure' focused offer should be brought in to play utilising sport and the arts as the potential offer. A one stop information and guidance opportunity to connect potential participants with what is on offer…

Memo 2: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY DRIVING SPORT THEME 1

Political ideology drives practice, yet practitioners are not aware of this…

It drives practice via strategy, funding mechanisms, policy and strategy. If practitioners are unaware of this then they are drawn in to operating in a way, which may be at odds with good community development practice. In this respect, hegemony is central as practitioners willingly deliver within a 'broken' system that does not meet the needs of the community. This is done in order to retain funding and increase funding for projects (and jobs!). Being aware that political ideology fundamentally drives practice means practitioners can 'play the game' far more effectively when it comes to funding – using appropriate terminology, language etc. From the findings of this research, it looks as though practitioners already do play the game to some extent but have limited knowledge around political ideology as a covert driver of sports development practice.

Memo 3: Monitoring and evaluation methods stifling good community development practice

Still driven by quantitative measures and still having to quantify aspects of service delivery which cannot always be quantified. 'We know the price of everything and the value of nothing' quote springs to mind… Links to themes 1 and 3

Memo 4: DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR COMMUNITY SPORT Agencies delivering CSD – who is best placed to deliver CSD. THEME 2

This links to commentary from participants about SG, CSPs, NGBs etc and how they deliver CSD. It also links to the increasing role of social enterprises as a means of delivery. What are agencies delivering, how are they delivering it/why are they delivering it in the way they do?

Memo 5 : Fragmentation of delivery

Uncoordinated and fragmented approach to delivery as more smaller scale agencies are encouraged to start up, but often without specialist advice and guidance. Duplication of service and of effort. Increasingly uncoordinated approach to delivery. Links to theme 2

Memo 6: Quality assurance mechanisms lacking

Linked to government encouraging anyone to set up on their own yet they may not have the knowledge and understanding of H and S mechanisms or other legislative demands. Where do they get this information? Some examples of 'white van man' in data to support this… The Localism Act giving the community more control in the way in which services are run and delivered (supposedly) also encouraging anyone to set up sport services, regardless of their knowledge or experience of the sector. Limited guidance available due to LA sports development being decimated. Links to theme 2

Memo 7: Sustainability

Three-year funding cycles mean that projects are often short term and because of this communities are wary to 'buy in' . Communities very used to 'here today gone tomorrow' service delivery and are often cynical of 'yet another' project staring up… Added to this CSDW often spend the latter part of a three-year contract looking for another job and hence commitment to the initiative potentially dwindles. Links to theme 2 and 3

Memo 8: COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE Community sport development practice THEME THREE

How to work with communities, it takes time to build relationships and understand communities. This aspect often overlooked by government. Three-year funded posts exacerbate this and lead to a lack of trust from community.

Memo 9: Funding driving practice

Linked to memo 1, but also drives HOW projects are delivered. Often focusing on large numbers of participants so that the scheme looks successful for funders, losing sight of the experience for participants and their needs. Links to theme 1 and 3

Memo 10: Sport in the community or sport as community?

This brings in discussions surrounding how CSDW conceptualise 'communities' within their day to day work. Beyond this, it examines how such conceptualisations impact on practice. It drills in to definitions of community, and its conceptualisation by CSDW and policy makers. Links to theme 3

Memo 11: CSD workforce ill prepared to cater for the way in which policy is heading…Advice and guidance lacking…

This links to an increased focus on entrepreneurship and university courses not necessarily embedding or embracing this… Demands by government/policy are

placed on the workforce to operate in a certain way but they are ill prepared to do so. What are CIMSPA doing? How is the workforce being prepared for an increased focus on the bottom line and a business-oriented way of operating? Links to theme 3

APPENDIX 10: Theoretical Coding/Relationship Between Selective Codes

MACRO LEVEL	MESO LEVEL	MICRO LEVEL
Political ideology driving sport Sport for social good Conceptualisation of sport at government level overly simplistic Outcomes - a means of not being called to account Cross-departmental government agendas	Strategy as rhetoric Quality assurance mechanisms Focusing on outcomes Changing relationship of SE with government, and with industry Fragmentation of market Participation rates versus outcomes Measuring outcomes problematic Funding community sport StreetGames and new models of delivery Participants as consumers Who delivers community sport (delivery system)	Targeting sport programmes at a community level Sport in community or sport as community? Knowledge of CSDW Diverse environments and target groups Uncertain career/work environment
Key Domain POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND POLICY	**Key Domain** GOVERNANCE, ORGANISATIONS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION	**Key Domain** COMMUNITY, TARGET GROUPS, PRACTITIONERS

APPENDIX 11: Screenshot of Section of Padlet Wall

APPENDIX 12: Excerpt from Padlet Wall Discussion

padlet padlet.com/kate_mori/8flbybjgcp3u

It's all about community sport

Funding. Delivery. Monitoring and Evaluation: Your Thoughts...

KATE MORI MAR 31, 2017 12:12PM

Local Authorities - know their ABCD's... (Wendy)

It's fair to say that over the past decade plus, LA's have been hit with progressively tougher efficiency savings than most of their counterparts. Many Politicians have 'gut reacted' and potentially underestimated their strongest asset base by culling their non-mandatory Cultural/Leisure Services (generally including Sports Development) as a quick fix - only then to discover the true impact of their actions/loss of pseudo NHS health and wellbeing in their communities. However, it's not all doom and gloom...there are many survivors and thrivers loitering with local government. From my perspective, as a survivor within a non-unitary county (and as one of six second tier district LA's), it all depends on how you ride the wave, box clever and remain fluid. The very essence of Sports Development was born out of finding new/effective and flexible ways to soft police communities and over time has morphed to become the leading conduit/catalyst for the more broader concept of whole community development. Many of us have amalgamated sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing development to bridge the gap. Austerity may have downsized capacity, yet it has also engendered opportunity - to flex our cross functional knowledge, foresight and ability to co-strategise. By ensuring that we sustain awareness and understanding of the benefits of Sport and the wider health determinants connected to it (to CEO's/politicians and the community that we serve) we can embed the broader sport and community development agenda into future funding or commissioning opps. By Aligning ourselves and inputting to genres such as Green infrastructure/Local Plans - Cil and 106 opps, Community Safety, Environmental Health, HR jobs and growth dev, mental and physical Health and Wellbeing (all of which exist within district LA's (and some county) we are able to sustain our position as being the best placed conduit to connect our communities and lead or facilitate key partnerships and/or hubs at local level (ie: schools, Town and Parish Councils, GP's, Social enterprises, neighbourhood projects, clubs etc) through to County/regional/national agendas with our County NHS, CCG, Public Health, PCC colleagues. We understand our communities and our communities understand us (from both a strategic and operational perspective). Connecting partners/orgs, whether we use sport as the tool, or embed the concept to other broader asset based community dev projects - enables less fragmentation and better working together in partnership. We can ensure delivery of the sport and health agenda, equally avoiding duplication of precious time/resource/funds.

Leisure Trusts, Private Enterprise, NGB's etc. (Luke)

Private enterprise might be ok e.g. https://www.manvfatfootball.org/ has good branding. Could/should perhaps be in every leisure trust/LA. I see it as a failing of the whole sector that stuff like this isn't more prevalent in our leisure centres.

I'd agree I think with several problems highlighted:
- M&E has previously restricted such creativity amongst professionals across the sector (I include NGB's in this, there are examples of things like this we have invented - but with M&E they'd historically have not been rewarded)
- Leisure Trusts could have long ago invented more things like this and branched them out nationally; who is influencing them to do such programmes now?
- Facility discussions don't overlap with health and youth sectors etc in my experience (and agree what an opportunity that could be)

NGBs... (Theo)

Completely understand and agree with your point about NGBs - I was thinking from an inactivity perspective.

Thinking outside of Sport England (Theo)

Completely agree with this.

LA connected? NGBs disconected? (Bob)

Building on a range of interesting comments I feel that the majority of LA are still well placed even if under resourced to deliver key elements of the new sport strategy. The majority of LAs are valued/principle led and have, for

decades been focused at providing services to the most at need. Alongside this LAs have clear structures and line of accountability with local councillors championing the health needs of their patch - which helps provide part of that moral compase. I have worked across many different LA areas and found that LAs are used to be innovative as they have had to face challenge times, in fact they have had to deal with a lot more change than sport baed organisations. in these challenging times I have often seen the sports development unit adapt to new the landscape and work differently with partners, often being the insitgators of change.

Can we actually say the same about existing or the new partners that SE want to invest into as key partners for delivery? or do

NGBs are potentially likely to miss out more than the LAs through the funding cycles. Oscar I agree that the small NGBs are more at risk of missing out on funding, this will be more likely that they are not able to meet the new code of governance rather than other organisations challenging their place as better providers of sport/physical activity. This will be a much bigger challenge for the larger NGBs where smaller organisations are delivering significantly better and higher quality opportunities. I have seen many large NGBs who have evolved where they are completely disconnected too the participant and have wrapped themselves up in their own image of what they think they sport is doing and is perceived by others. Through the new strategy we are now seeing a completely turn of ship with little to no investment in NGBs to grow the sport. This has been a one size fits all approach by SE and this could damage the sector further as some NGBs have grown the game e.g. RFU, W/C Rugby and being unfairly treated with those who have failed. We are anticipating themed funding shortly however there is no guarantee that NGBs will be successful

Local Authorities & Leisure Providers - an important partner but too focused on income (Dave)

In my experience of working across Local Authorities and NGBs, I believe a real opportunity lies with local authorities and their influence on the leisure providers who hold the contract for the delivery of services at their leisure centres. However, too often these leisure providers are focused on income generation and expanding gym and group exercise space rather than fulfilling the needs of the community by providing spaces to participate in multiple sports and ensuring a wider and engaging sports programmes. Some providers are focused on getting more people in the pen and paying their direct debits, rather than creating a positive experience that changes mindsets and enables longer active participation. These providers have also been missed by Sport England in all their historic strategic documents and, for me, are a key player in getting more inactive people doing something, it would also be interesting to see if and in how much detail Sport England have been talking to the big p;layers, such as the GLLs, Everyone Actives, PFPLs.

I also think although sports development services at a LA level have been reduced dramatically and combined into dual roles there is still a huge amount of work going on strategically, looking at built facilities strategies, needs analysis of leisure provision, refurbishing existing leisure centres and in some cases demolishing the old 1970s leisure centres to make way for a new wave of 2010s centres. The latter, in my opinion, is a full circle of what we have previously done and I have not seen one LA think differently about the development of their new centres. If we looked at integrating doctors surgeries, health clinics, youth services and others into these buildings, we could enable people (who wouldn't normally walk through a leisure centre door), to do so. This type of forward thinking would surely help relieve pressures on both NHS funding and also LA austerity. Sport has for too long continued to act in a one way, single track focused approach due to the strategy set out by DCMS and SE and now is, with health and inactivity being a major focus, the time for LAs to start to think differently and be the key partner in making this all work.

Thinking outside Sport England (Laura)

With the levels of uncertainty around CSPs' roles in relation to Sport England at the moment, CSPs are actually being forced to move away from this and consider other, more localised funding. CSPs were/are not encouraged to apply for recent Sport England funding streams, but instead enable others to do so. CSPs are now seen as the facilitators but not necessarily the fund holders so where does that leave them - seeking other funding streams.

Agree with M&E problems (Laura)

Again, completely agree with Theo and Kenny; I find it difficult to understand how Sport England are still rolling out programmes without any consideration given to M&E (Satellite Clubs for example). Programmes are still heavily centred on quantitative targets (whilst they decide what new methods may look like) in which case it means we are operating on a sport for social good strategy yet still employing M&E under the pretence of sports for sports sake.

NGB's (Luke)

I don't believe that any central/multi-sport organisation could cover areas such as those listed by Oscar - NGB's are

Changing LAs (Laura)

There is certainly an argument that LAs have the granular level of understanding to implement and deliver the sport strategy. They know their audience and community. That said, as a result of LA funding being squeezed, they are being forced to operate differently, with many now having their sport development arm as a function within a leisure provider. Whilst it is still within their remit to support local community sport development, their focus inevitably centres on increasing facility usage. Consequently the community sport options are now not as deeply entrenched within the community but are at times made to fit the leisure facility, regardsess of whether this is the right thing for the audience.

Bun Fight (Eric)

To address the bun fight statement, it is but thats because in so many cases it is the old guard supporting/sustaining themselves.

LA best placed morally but lack innovation and progression (Eric)

Having worked in most sectors and knowing people who have worked in LA Sports Development for a long time it has become clear to me that LA are socially and morally best placed to lead the sports strategy. Not only do they have the wellbeing and engagement of the whole community at the core of their philosophy but morally address the imbalance in participation. They are normally the champions of the disengaged and disadvantaged. The social enterprise model, of which my org would reside, does have a core belief in doing what primarily will sustain the organisation. Its what makes it an enterprise over a charity, though the same could be said here. Which does lead to a rob the rich to feed the less rich approach, but someone has to pay somewhere. But this has a counter position, where being enterprising to develop a service/product that allows one to do this can create efficiency, effectiveness, innovation and progress. I would question the ability of a LA to be these things when the culture restricts in many ways. The staff are not to blame, though face the brunt of it, but their hands are tied. Morally LA's should lead the sports strategy over any other organisation, that has been imposed or self imposes. But it is the partnership with the enterprising organisations that would implement a sports strategy that makes a difference and not just another cycle of the same rebranded intiatives.

The interesting part is that funding for local authorities is being squeezed and squeezed yet they're the best placed , potentially, to really bring the community together, understand the communities they work with and get people participating. They can deliver the sport strategy. Championing social enterprises and businesses is just creating a fragmentation and duplication of services. It's a bun fight...

Quote from Phase 1 of research. What are your thoughts? Do you agree or disagree?

Sports Development or Sport for Development (Kenny)

I think that we basically have two levels of roles in community sport development. 1. Sports Development which in my head is facts, figures, finance. 2. Sport for Development which is the people focused and more about sport for social development.

Funding and the role of Universities (Kenny)

I've used a mix of funders for all different projects. How much fund writing is to taught in Sports Degrees? This is a clear skill gap in the sector to help write funding bids for organisations which in turn will help sport become more sustainable and in some cases have a better commercial value.

Monitoring and Evalution (Kenny)

One of the challenges for funders is to monitor and evaluate the impact of their investment. What you often find is figures are fixed because the funders don't put enough resource into M+E and these are not well monitored across the sector. Projects are often double funded and organisations who are clever in the way they do this are sustainable. Funding community sport is about evidence basing something to reach an outcome, which can often be resolved with a little creative thinking rather than chucking money at it.

Moving away from Sport England? (Theo)

My experiences of working for a county sports partnership are that we appear to be moving away from the Sport

England, project based model of funding on the whole. We have, as many community sport delivery agencies, have however applied for the localities funding, which is slightly different from the previous project based approach, as it is more focused on overall participation rates within a locality. My personal role is actually funded by the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, and requires me to deliver a number of targets (which were actually just plucked out of the air). I find this approach difficult to work under as it means that I can find it difficult to remain flexible and adaptable to the needs of the clients I am working with. The localities bid and the CCG funding mean that I am constantly having to produce reports and business plans, which take up a pretty large chunk of my time, making my day to day job more difficult to do...

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