

**The paradox of English sport development policy and practice:  
Examining the mass participation agenda during an era of  
austerity and continued change.**

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## **Abstract**

This PhD by published work critically synthesises eight papers using a meta-ethnographic methodology in the field of community sport development. In particular, it provides an overarching critical analysis of mass participation sport development policy and practice in England using research with national governing bodies, county sport partnerships, local government and school-based sport development officers. Latterly, the synthesis centres upon the communities themselves that have been the focus of policy in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympics with its associated participation legacy. Research was undertaken using a predominantly qualitative research methodology, with varied methods including 58 in-depth interviews, 10 focus groups, five video diaries, observational and field note accounts. The meta-ethnographical methodology developed by Noblitt and Hare (1988) was utilised to provide the framework and conceptual approach to developing a critical meta-synthesis across the eight individual papers. The PhD offers a rare analytical insight across organisational boundaries, industry sub-fields (teaching, local government, County Sport Partnerships, National Governing Bodies) and professional-community binary oppositions. Findings from this study highlight key drivers limiting the mass participation agenda. These themes include the increased diversity and fragility of the delivery platform provision under austerity, challenge the industry assumptions of pathways of progression and question existing behaviour change assumptions. Further future explanatory themes that emerged from the meta-ethnography included divergence and widening in sport development delivery (“the haves and have not’s”), sport development workforce challenges in an era of modernisation (emerging skills, knowledge and expectations in the field) and finally what was termed in this study ‘the policy rhetoric gap’.

## **Abbreviations**

Chief Executive Officer	CEO
County Sport Partnership	CSP
Department of Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS
European Sport Development Network	ESDN
National Governing Body	NGB
Local Authority	LA
London 2012 Olympic Games	London2012
School Sport Partnerships	SSP
Sport Development Officer	SDO
Sports Council for Wales	SCW
United Kingdom Sport Development Network	UKSDN

## **Introduction**

This PhD submission is based on eight articles published over a period of six years, totalling over 60,000 words with a further meta-ethnographic synthesis. All articles within the submission are closely tied to the central public policy field of community sport development. They are unified in the way that they represent the consistent change, dynamic policy environment and fluid impact and implications for sport development practice. This unification became increasingly apparent throughout the period of fieldwork and the development of these eight academic papers. The fieldwork also encompassed transitions in sport development between governments from New Labour (1997-2010) through to the Conservative-led Coalition (2010-2015). In this sense it offers unique cross sector, organisation and community insights into the challenge of delivering mass participation agenda implementation in England. Likewise, the synthesis is a unique attempt to begin to draw out key challenges and a way forward for how government and agencies engaged with mass participation can work more effectively.

The work builds upon earlier critical analysis of sport development agencies under the ‘modernisation’ project of New Labour (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013; King, 2009; Lindsey, 2009; Lindsey, 2010; McDonald, 2005). In particular they link around a strand of critical policy analysis concerned with addressing the on-going challenge of increasing mass participation through sport development practice. It has been argued that “over the past 20 years one of the constant themes in sport policy discussions has been the fragmentation, fractiousness and perceived ineffectiveness of organizations within the sport policy area” (Houlihan and Green, 2009; 678). The analysis and synthesis that cuts across these papers supports this broad assertion. But, they also have garnered views, insights and day-to-day realities from the practitioners and participant communities engaged in the sport development policy and practice nexus. It is the attempt to begin to build a consensus for a way forward that provides the distinctiveness for this PhD.

This meta-synthesis will outline the parallel critical features of central debates and impacts of policy change in sport development present during the period that saw a change from the New Labour government (1997-2010) to the Conservative-Liberal Coalition (2010-2015). As a researcher my social

constructionist ontology facilitated the adoption of an interpretivist epistemological position in this PhD (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty; 1998 Hay; 2011; Sparkes and Smith, 2013). The research constitutes mainly qualitative methods exploring experiences of sport development policy action, inaction and change. Furthermore, a meta-ethnographic synthesis, as proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988), has been utilised to frame the analysis of 'translations' between qualitative studies to establish themes and strands of synergy between the different papers that form the core of the submission.

## **Autobiographical context for the portfolio of evidence**

The purpose of this section is to outline my own autobiographical evolution as a practitioner, researcher and then academic alongside the development of the core papers and critical synthesis that constitutes this PhD submission. Likewise, a parallel chronological description of the evolution of the eight papers is contained in appendix 1. As someone that has worked as policy maker, evaluator and academic since 1997, this positions me as having experienced 19 years of flux in what I have termed the public realm of sport development (Mackintosh, 2014). Undertaking this has given me a greater critical understanding of the organisations and policy context of sport development in England. Likewise, this is reflected in the cross section of papers submitted within this PhD that encompass National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), County Sport Partnerships (CSPs), local government sport development officers (SDOs) and the communities that receive and experience initiatives. Initially as a geographer I entered the sphere of life that is often labelled sport development after first graduating with a broad interest in sporting communities, identities, space/place and social research. Few fields are at the whim of policy makers and the politician like sport development (Houlihan, 2005; Houlihan and White, 2002; Mackintosh, 2012), a non-statutory policy area and one that often falls under the decision making of those with ideological rationales that shift with time (King, 2009; King, 2014; King, 2014a; Lindsey and Houlihan, 2012). Most public policy researchers start from a position of flux, ambiguity and divergence in policy motivations, and institutional and governmental ideological foundations (Waagenar, 2007). This was certainly true for myself.

I originally worked as a policy researcher within the sport policy evaluation unit at the Sport Council for Wales (SCW) (now branded “Sport Wales”). As a practitioner I observed and ‘did’ policy making, whilst at the time not really being cognisant of how these three formative years would come to shape my future career. This is perhaps neatly summed up by Best (2009) who suggests “there is inevitably something of a mismatch between what policy makers want researchers to tell them and what researchers think policy-makers need to know” (p.175). Politics and policy were never far from each other and as has been stated by others they are impossible to separate (Houlihan, 2005; King, 2014).



I have often grappled with the inherent tension of being an academic and, formerly, policy evaluator/practitioner and the complexity this brings. After working in policy making for three years in Cardiff I relocated to Manchester to be part of a research management consultancy company. Projects cut across organisations as diverse as charities, central government departments, NGBs and local authorities sport teams. Here, I began to develop a specialism as a sport development evaluator and researcher. This multi-sectoral experience has also been reflected in the diverse settings of the papers I have submitted in this PhD that encompass an important cross-section of such organisations, individuals and communities. As I moved into sport development public policy programme evaluations that feature heavily in this PhD by published work I seem to have possibly lost the people that matter. By this I mean that policy is not just about those that hold ‘policy administration positions’, run organisations and agencies in sport development. Policy evaluation is also about examining the meanings held by communities, individuals and networks of people that ‘receive’ public policy, interpret policy ideas, and consume, and re-produce such narratives, stories and traditions (Waagenar, 2009).

I moved in 2002 to my first lecturing post at Edge Hill College of HE (as it was then) and then returned back to study a self-funded MA in social policy at the University of Manchester in 2004. Here I completed a thesis examining multi-agency partnership working in sport and arts programmes used to address crime prevention in New East Manchester. I acquired theoretical insights that would later shape my position on sport policy as a tool in welfare (Coalter et al, 1988; Collins and Kay, 2003, Collins and Kay, 2015). It was also in this reconnection with academia that I began to formulate the ideas I would build on as the basis for the papers that comprise the collection of papers in this PhD submission.

During my time at Nottingham Trent University and then at Liverpool John Moores University I have developed a focus on responding more robustly to what Girginov and Hills (2008) refer to as the “sport participation puzzle” in England. I established the European Sport Development Network (ESDN) in 2008 through a small network of conferences, lectures and seminars (re-launched as UKSDN in January 2016). This network, now running for 8 years has also facilitated an opportunity to test ideas contained within my papers, critically debate with peers in academia and industry and foster new ways of looking

at existing substantive challenges. I hope in some ways this PhD stands as testament to this wider endeavour.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology used in this PhD to undertake a critical synthesis and offer an overview of the main methodological developments in the papers that contribute towards it. The chapter will firstly examine a justification and critical understanding of why a meta-ethnographic methodology has been employed. It will also position this analysis within the context of wider qualitative data analysis and contrast with other approaches to synthesis and analysis of qualitative research papers. Secondly, the chapter will go on to outline the epistemological and ontological position that underpins the PhD and has emerged from the process of undertaking the associated body of work. Finally, the chapter will outline the lessons learned and a brief reflection on my own development methodologically and philosophically as a researcher.

### ***Meta-ethnography methodology***

In undertaking a critical review of my work I have chosen to utilise a meta-ethnographic methodology to build a coherent and analytical account across and within the papers chosen. This method has become increasingly common within the field of health, nursing and social care (Atkins et al, 2008; Campbell et al, 2011; Lee et al, 2014). Topics and areas of evidence-based policy that have been considered using this method of qualitative research synthesis are as diverse as transformational leadership (Pielstick, 1998), concepts of caring (Sherwood, 1997) and adaption to motherhood (Beck, 2002; Clemens, 2003). To my knowledge, no studies have utilised this methodology in the public sector realm of community sport development policy and practice research. Therefore, it is hoped that this in itself will provide some innovative insights into this substantive area. The nature of this methodological synthesis is “a procedure for deriving substantive interpretations about any set of ethnographic or interpretive studies” (Noblit and Hare, 1988; 9). It aims to move beyond a traditional narrative or literature review synthesis through the nature of the comparison and interpretation and a rendering of the texts to synthesise the selected empirical studies. In recent reviews of wider methodological techniques for undertaking qualitative syntheses Noblit and Hare (1988) are seen as the originators of this methodological process (Campbell et al, 2011; Lee et al, 2014; Major and Savin-Baden, 2011). Noblit and Hare (1988; 13) propose that a meta-ethnography is intended to enable:

- More interpretive literature review and analysis;
- Critical examination of multiple accounts of an event and situation;
- Systematic comparison of case studies to draw cross case conclusions;
- A way of talking about our work and comparing it to the work of others;
- A synthesis of ethnographic studies.

The meta-ethnography is part of a body of methodological approaches aimed at offering procedures to facilitate the synthesis of qualitative research. This is as opposed to qualitative research methodologies that are aimed at developing primary qualitative research data and undertaking associated data analysis (Sparkes and Smith, 2013). Noblitt and Hare (1988) argue that the focus is on giving meaning to the studies themselves and then interpreting them as texts themselves or what they refer to as the ‘translation’ of these studies. The key analytical focus here is not to assume aggregative logic, but, instead to retain the uniqueness of the individual studies. They suggest this is then a “procedure for deriving substantive interpretations about any set of ethnographic or interpretative studies” (Noblitt and Hare, 1988; 9). In this sense, as others have argued there are broad parallels with aspects of qualitative data analysis to focus on the rich interpretation of data through induction (Campbell et al, 2011; Doyle, 20013). Through such ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), but in this case of the texts, accounts and research studies, it is hoped that the research can reveal themes, contexts and the meaning of events. The distinction here is that such analysis is not of the original data sets, but the original interpretations and explanations of this data. Meta-ethnography encourages the researcher to translate, transfer ideas, concepts and metaphors across the original different studies (Britten et al, 2002).

Qualitative data analysis itself is concerned with the processes, techniques and activities of using methods such as grounded theory, narrative, conversation or discourse analysis to understand, explain and interpret data derived from primary fieldwork (Silverman, 2010; Long; 2007). In each case careful use of methods of analysis must be aligned to the choice of data collection. In terms of the initial papers that comprise the wider collection of papers in this PhD a number use thematic analysis to examine the primary raw data (Gomm, 1998). In this PhD a number of research methods for data collection have been drawn upon to generate primary empirical qualitative data sets. However, the meta-ethnography

method is driven to support an interpretation of the findings from the individual studies. Data analysis here is not, therefore, about using analytical processes to unpick and disentangle primary data built from the initial data collection processes. The analytical shift in mind-set for the meta-ethnographer is towards using the analytical steps identified by Noblitt and Hare (1988) to not ‘over-bureaucratise’ what is essentially an open and creative process. This is a method of synthesis, which is not aggregative, but, instead one that hopes to build metaphors and codes in a similar way to other forms of qualitative synthesis. For example, coding here could be seen as coding of the interpretative themes of the original data (Campbell, 2011; Doyle et al, 2003; Noblitt and Hare, 1988) as opposed to coding in the well-established tradition sense of raw qualitative data from interviews, fieldwork and focus groups for example (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Silverman, 2010; Long, 2007).

A key feature of the meta-ethnographic approach outlined by Noblitt and Hare (1988) is the possibility and consideration of what they term ‘refutational synthesis’. Here, they define such a refutations as interpretations that for the researcher “have social meaning independent of the studies upon which they are based and can be considered as explanations distinct from those of the ethnographic accounts” (1988; 48). Indeed, Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) suggest such refutational synthesis “involves exploring and explaining contradictions between individual studies” (p.5). They go on to suggest that this aspect of meta-ethnography methodology is closely linked to analysing how such differences and contradictions may exist due to context. In the case of this PhD this is recognising the specific contextual case of sport development public policy In England. The value of such analysis is that it moves beyond further description, and can offer another level of conceptual development beyond the individual studies in addition to the metaphors developed through consensus (Campbell et al, 2003; Britten et al, 2002). Therefore, the refutational theme may refute, or contradict analysis identified within original studies, and themes present across studies. Such themes give the researcher the capacity to recognise conflict and lack of unity and coherence in themes as analytical spaces. Again, this offers a further distinction between primary qualitative data analysis focused on empirical data generated through a range of qualitative research methods (Bryman, 2004; Gomm, 1998; Hammersly, 2006; Sparkes and Smith, 2013).

From this perspective it has been argued that the strength of such a methodology lies in its ability to preserve meaning from the initial studies, create new ways of seeing and areas of overlap which may have been subsumed (Walsh and Davies, 2005). In contrast to this optimistic methodological stance Sandelowski et al (1997) propose that to summarise such qualitative studies at all is to undermine the very essence of such research and their desired 'thick description'. Likewise, Rist (1990) supports this critique by questioning whether meta-ethnography approach of Noblit and Hare (1988) can capture the qualitative data context of specific individual case studies. However, the focus of the meta-ethnography as originally designed by Noblitt and Hare (1988) was to not centre on the data of the specific individual studies. Instead, as stated earlier, they aimed to retain the unique and textured nature of the different studies through using the original interpretations of interpretative accounts/studies. It is this ability to use thick description and interpretation, across the texts, which remains crucial to the quality of the analysis. The researcher seeks to reveal metaphors and contradictions (or 'refutational themes') that may emerge through translating contexts, findings, settings and meanings. To allow space for the researcher to acknowledge, recognise and highlight such metaphors, is a central feature of this synthesis methodology.

This meta-ethnography has utilised the framework and broad methodological process established by Noblit and Hare (1988), itself a combination of three distinct and inter-related methods. Firstly, what they refer to as reciprocal translational analysis, which develops a translation of concepts from individual studies into one another to create overarching 'metaphors'. Or, as Doyle et al (2003) propose the driving force of the meta-ethnography is the use of findings from across existing case studies to develop new interpretations across these cases. Other researchers refer to these translations as themes, categories and codes but the key here is that:

"each translation is not a re-interpretation of the same question but rather becomes an interpretation of the interpretations through a new lens. It is these translations that meta-ethnographers use to synthesise case studies" (Doyle et al, 2003; 323).

Secondly, as stated above, a meta-ethnography may build a refutational synthesis where cases are analysed to explore contradictions. Finally, an overall ‘line of argument’ picture is built as a whole. The methodology is proposed as a seven stage process as outlined below (it should be noted that this may not be as neatly linear as a list or table can suggest).

- Step 1:** identify an area of interest (sport development policy and practice)
- Step 2:** Identify studies (collection of case studies and ethnographies by Mackintosh)
- Step 3:** Reading studies (iterative and on-going process as opposed to linear)
- Step 4:** How are the studies related (relationships, phrases, ideas, concepts in sport development policy and practice)
- Step 5:** Translation of the studies into each other (*first level synthesis* of meanings within texts)
- Step 6:** Synthesis of studies (*second level synthesis* comparing metaphors and themes to see if they cover/and encompass others).
- Step 7:** Expressing written form of synthesis (production of a written meta-ethnography and visual concept through a reduced critical summary).

**Figure 1: Applied seven step meta-ethnography process proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988)**

Figure 1 above perhaps looks an overly quantified and structured processing of meta-ethnography. As it has been well recognised by more recent critical researchers examining the ‘labour’ and process of such research that it is inherently experimental, non-linear and beyond a rigidly specified protocol (Lee et al, 2014). In their account of ‘doing’ such meta-ethnographies Lee et al (2014) recognise that step 3, ‘reading’ of texts is the most crucial in some ways, and, is in fact not confined to one phase at all but cuts across many. It has been suggested that it is the active and repeated immersion in the reading of texts that is fundamental to identifying themes. This coding process and the associated tensions in reading within and across texts is at the core of a productive and rigorous meta-ethnography. It is perhaps through this essence of this methodology that we can then truly bring together qualitative studies in this area of community sport development public policy and practice synthesis. It is the view

of Walsh and Downe (2005) that creating such a synthesis across a group of studies “enables the nuances, taken for granted assumptions, and textured milieu of varying accounts to be exposed, described and explained in ways that bring fresh insights” (p.205). Thus, the meta-ethnography in itself provides a further tier of insight and qualitative interpretation of the multiple studies selected as part of this PhD by publication. The methodology is also located within a wider growing debate to recognise the importance of qualitative data analysis in the context of the rise in evidence-based policy and practice (Hammersly, 2013).

### ***Research philosophy***

Research undertaken in this PhD comprises a synthesis drawing upon eight separate research publications and the meta-ethnography itself that is contained within this document. Underpinning this broad project is “an awareness on our part that, at every point in our research – in our observing, our interpreting, our reporting and everything else we do as researchers – we inject a host of assumptions” (Crotty, 1998; 17). It is essential therefore to outline our research philosophy and underpinning assumptions that inform our theoretical position, provide the context for our choice of methodology and then the methods used to gather and analyse data. A diverse range of methodologies and research method techniques have been employed to address and unpick diverse research issues and problems across the eight papers in the collection of studies within the synthesis. As identified earlier a social constructionist ontology has emerged through this research process (Blaikie; 2007; Hay, 2011; Crotty; 1998; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This ontological position underpins meta-ethnography and the focus on individual research papers being perceived as constructs of constructs. Furthermore, this aligns with the epistemological stance that has emerged for me as a researcher through this PhD journey, that is an adoption of interpretivism. This itself is perhaps best summed up by Crotty (1998; 17) as a belief that,

“social action is not mere behaviour but, instead, involves a process of meaning giving. It is the meanings and interpretations created and maintained by social actors that constitute social reality for them. Social reality consists of the shared interpretations that social actors produce and reproduce as they go about their everyday lives”.



Epistemology can be defined as “providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (Maynard, 1994; 10). Others have described it as the theory of knowledge embedded in theoretical perspective aligned to methodology (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Therefore as stated more explicitly in my papers I have developed an epistemological position located within the critical interpretivism paradigm.

Here as a researcher of sport development public policy I associate myself and my research with what some have called the ‘interpretivist turn’ in public policy analysis (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003; Hay, 2011; Wagenaar, 2003). Although, this recognition has emerged later in the research process and my own journey of undertaking this PhD. Sparkes and Smith (2014) argue how social reality is socially constructed consisting of fluid, multiple subjective realities. Thus, they argue that researchers in this sphere are ultimately interested in interpreting the interpretations of others from the perspective of the voices of participants. In this sense, they highlight the emergence of understanding and knowledge coming from interactions between investigator and respondent/participant. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) usefully draw on the notion of sensitizing concepts within interpretivism such as engaging with understanding meaning and situation specific constructions. Hay (2011) outlines why it matters in public policy, suggesting interpretations illustrate why research participants behave how they do and the understanding they hold. For Bevir and Rhodes (2003) the role and position of the policy orientated interpretive researcher is a “focus on the meanings that shape actions and institutions, and the ways in which they do it” (p.17). In this sense, there is a foregrounding of interpretation allied to the earlier stance of Geertz (1973) to explain actions and practices. To a lesser extent, interpretation is also important to understand the institutions they are located within.

Palmer (2013) has called for more interpretivist analysis of sport policy. In this sense, this PhD is in part a response to interest in the wider interpretivist turn in public policy analysis (Hay, 2011). Or, an emerging interest and direction of research that focuses on what Bevir and Rhodes (2004; 130) argue is how the interpretivist approach will “focus on meanings that shape actions and institutions, and the ways they do so”. Authors in this sphere have begun to suggest that we need to focus on building a

strong contextual understanding through accessing local knowledge, public spaces, policies and practices. In doing so we become better at establishing and exploring local actor meanings, beliefs, fears, ideas and interpretations around public policy interventions (Wagenaar, 2003; Yanow; 2000).

Methodology in the individual papers varies in terms of design, plan of action and strategy for data collection. But, what has become increasingly evident through the evolution in approaches to the research problems identified is that there is no single truly valid reality. Instead the ontological position underpinning this PhD is one that assumes multiple realities and one that Crotty (1998) argues is pregnant with potential meaning. It is how these multiple realities are constructed, reconstructed and sustained that can be enlightening for sport development public policy analysis. My methods used to engage with research participants have been as varied as participation observation, surveys, interviews and most latterly video diaries. Here, I now position myself as a qualitative researcher that employs ‘the emic’ (entering into) perspective through quality, texture and process not cause and effect (Sparkes and Smith, 2013).

Throughout my research I have employed thematic analysis as the core methodological tool of analysis, identified as a particularly useful tool to inform policy development (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, it has been suggested by Smith and Sparkes (2014) that such techniques do have clear weaknesses including, sometimes ironing out nuances and contradictions and a lack of engagement with what they call the fine grained use of ‘talk’. Or, what some refer to methodologically as conversation analysis in qualitative data (Bryman, 2004). Finally, the researcher can get carried away with over generalising and over-interpreting. But, whilst not countering all these potential limits of my analytical tools I have in part employed meta-ethnography as a vehicle for exploring contradictions and synthesised themes that may be hidden in my own initial interpretations. It seems that critical interpretivist research and meta-ethnography can offer strong new lines of enquiry for sport development public policy research. There may also be opportunities to utilise such philosophically grounded approaches to offer new inroads into a status quo policy sector yet to fully embrace this methodological framework. I hope that interpretivist public policy research in sport development in

particular is an area that I will continue to explore post-PhD and examine in further depth as an emerging academic.

## **Originality of outputs**

This chapter of the PhD will outline how the synthesis that forms the body of work in the submission has challenged some of the assumed orthodoxy in sport development, rhetoric, policy and practice. Through multiple empirical studies examining policy and practice interplay in the mass participation policy agenda arena in England between 2009 and 2015 themes of explicit originality have been identified. This section will examine the established themes of originality, both substantive and methodological, that the papers as a collective body of work and this synthesis document provide.

## ***A cross-sectoral sport development field of study and research participants***

It is now ten years since McDonald (2005) first began to question an apparent movement towards a modernised ‘strategic partnership’ led approach to increasing physical activity. He commented on the “contradictions, fissures and cracks presented by the rhetoric of empowerment and partnerships” (p. 597). Common within all the eight papers are insights, evidence and empirically informed nuances of the central policy process and its relationship with the sport development process and its outcomes. Structures, agencies and organisations in strategic delivery of the mass participation goal in England are of central importance (King, 2014; Robson, Simpson and Tucker, 2013). Sport development at national, regional and local level has the complexity of what Collins referred to as a ‘convoluted bowl of spaghetti’ (1995, 34, cited in Houlihan and White, 2002; 56). Others suggest in dealing with the ‘participation puzzle’ (Girginov and Hills, 2008) our shared understanding is at the very best nuanced. As a synthesis of studies this submission includes cross-sectoral examination of key sectors in sport development at key moments in time over the policy landscape evolution between 2009 and 2015. The study of CSPs in the East Midlands (Mackintosh, 2011) was one of the first of its kind to examine empirically what were at the time, an evolving structure in sub-regional governance and delivery of the mass participation legacy leading up to London 2012. Further insights have been provided through more recent work undertaken by Harris and Houlihan (2014) that have also engaged with interactions that the CSPs have with NGBs and local government.

The sport development workforce (Bloyce et al, 2008; Carter, 2005; DCMS, 2012; Mackintosh, 2012; Mackintosh and Liddle, 2014) are seen themselves as a key vehicle in delivery of the ongoing mass participation goal. The notion of a unified profession has rightly been questioned (Hylton and Hartley, 2012). The diverse sport development workforce encompasses the skills, abilities and also pressures and constraints that embody those working in local government, CSPs, NGBs and schools. There are original findings from NGB, CSP, LA and (former) SSPs that consider the multi-agency nature of implementation through partnerships. As the Big Society agenda became a growing mantra under the new Coalition government post-May 2010 this shaped how sport development priorities were affected (Devine, 2012; King, 2014a). Authors such as Devine (2012) and Ives et al (2011) commented on how changes in areas such as SSPs may roll out and affect provision and opportunities. However, the power of these collected studies and case studies in this PhD also lie in their unique analysis of change under this time period across related and interconnected subsectors. They do not attempt to assess the causal linkage between policy and outcomes. But, they do address the ‘sport development process’ (Hylton, 2013; 2) and how change, implementation and practice has affected those seeking to develop mass participation in the shadow of London 2012. This PhD study has illuminated layers of meaning, beliefs and understanding around the potential ‘emerging profession’ (Hylton and Hartley, 2012; Mackintosh, 2012) of sport development during the ensuing era of austerity.

### ***Context of study within sport development: policy change, evidence and an era of austerity***

In particular this synthesis has looked at the challenging dimensions of working in a new ‘research and insight’ evidence-based industry that is evolving (Mackintosh, 2012; Hylton and Hartley, 2012; Price, 2015). This challenge has been seen, experienced and impacted on in the CSP sector (Mackintosh, 2011, Mackintosh et al, 2014), NGBs (Mackintosh, 2012, Mackintosh 2014) and school and community sport partnership delivery infrastructure (Mackintosh 2014a, Mackintosh and Liddle, 2015). Originality of the work here is both in terms of identifying the specific challenges of working in these environments but then also seen in the meta-ethnography undertaken in this submission that has further highlighted this as a key theme for future research that is currently under examined.

These papers provide a direct insight into the policy changes and emerging policies and practices over this unique period in time. They encapsulate diverse spheres of the public management sport development nexus including local government sport, CSPs, NGBs and school sport development. Furthermore, all projects encompass a central interest in evaluating community sport participation development processes and activities and consider the challenges and fragility of such concerns in such a dynamic policy field.

The meta-ethnography also collectively frames the attitudes of individuals within families, sport development agencies and organisations targeted by the London 2012 mass participation legacy narrative (CSP, NGB, SSP, LA). This is done so within the wider social, economic and political landscape of austerity. This meets the call to arms by other researchers such as Hylton and Morpeth (2012) to avoid the ‘seductive narratives’ of London 2012 and seek out the unintended outcomes of such events (Spracklen, 2012). Perhaps most unique are the small scale, but fundamentally significant collection of voices, interpretations and recipients of the magical London 2012 ‘effect’ that were captured using video diaries and interviews, and other deliverers (teachers, CSP leaders, school games organisers) of the legacy messages in these papers. How they re-interpreted and continue (or not) to shape their activity and daily lived experiences through London 2012 offers lessons to learn and also a unique set of collective windows into mass participation leverage.

### ***Mass participation policy through the lens of local enablers of change***

Much has been commented on the emergence and growth in elite sport development as a policy concern (Green, 2004; Houlihan and White, 2002). It has recently been argued in a polemic by Grix and Carmichael (2012) that the rationale for government investment in elite sport development is often closely linked to the broad benefits of such ‘trickle down effects’ to the wider sport development sector. No other studies have captured the nuances and experiences of localised family context of London 2012 mass participation legacy as the studies in this PhD by publication (Mackintosh et al, 2014; Mackintosh, Darko and May-Wilkins, 2015; Darko and Mackintosh, 2015a). Similarly, the originality here is partly in the specific feature of framing legacy delivery through the lens of the family. Whilst other authors

have begun to examine family as a driver, and key context for participation per se (Kay, 2009; Wheeler, 2012) none to date have examined the London 2012 legacy from this distinct and crucial perspective. These two studies also add a valuable synergy with the other ethnographic and case study papers in this submission that relate to the wider sport development context in schools and NGBs as together they open future lines of enquiry in programme design, evaluation and implementation that need to recognise the family as a central factor in leverage of legacy for governments.

All papers locate individual meanings, interpretations and understanding of policy at the local level as central to the delivery of national policy outcomes. This synthesis analyses this across identified sub-sectors to indicate shared experiences but also some of the specific gaps, growing disparities and diversity in experiences of national mass participation policy and practice.

### ***Methodological originality***

This PhD submission also draws upon methodological innovations in the sphere of policy analysis in particular the use of meta-ethnography, ethnography and qualitative methodologies to capture rich data that considers evaluation from a critical interpretivist position (Hay, 2011; Palmer, 2013; Wagenaar, 2011). This interpretivistic philosophy offers further future options for other researchers of policy and practice in sport development but also other areas of the sport policy sector. The exploratory nature of these techniques is recognised in the studies (Mackintosh, 2011; Mackintosh, Darko and May-Wilkins, 2015) but should also be seen as part of the originality of the PhD and offers transferability into other sections of this realm of public policy. This could be in any of the three key spheres (Houlihan, 2011) of elite sport, sport for social good or the wider sport and physical activity mass participation policy agenda realm.

The meta-synthesis undertaken in this PhD by publication is unique in the field of sport development. Whilst increasingly drawn upon in public health research and education this is a novel methodological approach with some unique findings. The meta-ethnography has produced a visual representation for the overall 'lines of argument' (see Figure 3) based around the central theme of the delivery of a mass participation outcome in times of austerity for sport development policy and practice in England. This

offers an empirically grounded outline of the key factors shaping, constraining and influencing this policy agenda. Mass participation is at the core of much of the legacy development of the £9.3bn investment in London 2012 (Hylton, 2013), and at the heart of the current 2013-2017 Sport England *Creating a Sporting Habit for Life* (DCMS, 2012) as well as delivery of previous government visions (Sport England, 2008; Sport England, 2004). Research in these eight papers cuts across many of those agencies collaborating to deliver the challenge of increasing the number of participants, diversifying opportunity to participate and building improvements in quality of experiences. However, what the meta-ethnography offers is the identification of key challenges and factors that may be limiting the long established stagnant progress in participation increases in England (Carter, 2005; Devine, 2012; Harris and Houlihan, 2014; Rowe, 2009). It is possible to begin to then both challenge the orthodoxy, but also suggest ways forward for potential solutions, innovations and interventions. Meta-ethnographic driven studies can also offer some of the potential solutions themselves as has been suggested in others areas of public service provision such as health, nursing and education (Downe and Walsh, 2005).



## Findings

This section of the PhD will consider the findings presented from the meta-ethnographic methodology alongside highlighting how it contributes towards a growing international interest in systems of sport development to garner increases in sport and physical activity participation in diverse contexts including, but not limited to Canada (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Sam, 2011), New Zealand (Piggin, Jackson and Lewis, 2009; Keat and Sam, 2012), the Caribbean region (Darko and Mackintosh, 2014; McCree, 2009) and Scandinavia (Engstrom, 2008; Skille and Solbakken, 2011). This global interest in this realm of public policy has been well recognised but also identified as one that needs more socio-cultural focus (Palmer, 2013). It follows calls for the need to move away from a reliance upon the empirically and theoretically thin ‘cultural power’ of the sport participation pyramid analogy (Bolton et al, 2008; Green, 2005; Hylton, 2013). Sport development has been conceptualised as having three broad strands of activity and policy intervention that include elite talent development, mass participation and ‘sport for social good’ (Houlihan, 2011). But the boundaries of the field have been recognised as blurred, and notions of a clear professional sphere of practice and associated identities questioned (Hylton and Hartley, 2012). This said, in England there is a considerable historical and institutional architecture established in this realm of public sector sport management provision that dates back to the landmark 1960 Wolfenden Report (Houlihan and White, 2002; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013; McDonald, 2005).

The meta-ethnographic synthesis contributes towards a wider understanding of the contemporary and changing nature of sport development policy practice. Individuals and participants in studies include diverse agencies, such as NGBs, CSPs, local government sport development units, school-based development officers and the wider local community sector. There is a growing need to understand meanings, beliefs and wider processes around supposed government modernisation impacts on sport development agencies and their activities, be they voluntary (Adams and Deane, 2009; Harris, Mori and Collins, 2012), sub-regional governmental (Harris and Houlihan, 2014; Grix and Goodwin, 2010; Lindsey 2009; Lindsey, 2010; Mackintosh, 2011) or national level agencies such as Sport England and UK Sport (Houlihan and Green, 2009). During the scope of this PhD there has been a change in

government from New Labour with its Third way ideology merging old left and neo-liberal right ideologies (Giddens, 1997), to the Big Society driven politics and policies of the Coalition government of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties that came to power in the 2010 election (Devine, 2012; King, 2014). Two papers specifically considered the impact of London 2012 on very localised communities, indicative of both a new emerging approach to interpretivistic policy analysis (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003; Wagenaar, 2011) in sport development and a shift towards the central importance of local actor meanings, beliefs and understandings for those multiple agencies seeking to change and influence behaviour through public policy.

The sections below contain the meta-ethnographic synthesis, a matrix outlining the first phase of translating key metaphors and a second phase of new themes that are interpretations of the original interpretations as suggested by Noblit and Hare (1988). This second phase tier of analysis also contains refutational metaphors or themes which have emerged from undertaking the meta-ethnography. Finally, there is an attempt to draw this together into a 'lines of argument' or whole synthesis in the form of a visual representation of the factors in the delivery of mass participation policy implementation model. There is no set format for how this synthesis should be written, but the visual representation in this case is an additional attempt to draw the new themes together into a coherent analytical framework for understanding this area of sport development policy and practice. It is also an opportunity to draw out complex conclusions that can be applied to, drawn upon and utilised in practice as a framework for lesson learning in the area of mass participation policy and programme development.

The central research aims for undertaking this critical synthesis are:

- To outline the central factors influencing and shaping sport development mass participation policy in England;
- To gain new insights into the limits and constraints on the delivery of mass participation policy and programme outcomes; and
- To understand what the potential levers and opportunities are to generate policy improvements and practice innovations.

Below are the three tiers of translations that make up the meta-ethnographic analysis workings that have emerged from the three core research questions above.

**Figure 2: First tier mapping of original interpretational themes**

**CSP case study (Mackintosh, 2011)**

1. Misunderstood infrastructure partnership
2. Complex and fragile partnership environment
3. Evolving roles and relationship management
4. Lack of 'fit' in wider system of sport development
5. Regional variations in scope, size and role of CSP

**Local Government SDO case study (Mackintosh, 2012)**

6. Research skill set challenge of SDO
7. Evidence as justification of service provision
8. Changing agenda and distance from communities as an SDO
9. SDO professional identity and community interaction

**SSP case study 1 (Mackintosh, 2014a)**

10. Resistance to change in policy
11. Lost school-club link pathways and process
12. Lost specialist support with primary school clubs
13. Partnership as a network of support and communication

**SSP and SGO transition case study (Mackintosh and Liddle, 2014)**

14. Mixed economy of partnership provision
15. Increasingly autonomous and diverse, divergent delivery patterns
16. London 2012 Legacy participation concerns
17. Austerity challenges in sport provision
18. Shift away from centralised, standardised provision model

**NGB case study 1 (Mackintosh, 2013)**

19. Self-organised development vs traditional pathways
20. Participation but not development
21. No aspiration to exit into pathway club
22. Flexible participation community not a club
23. Evaluation process not impact (ethnographic insights)
24. Evaluation challenge for the NGB (targets/measure vs participate)
25. Social media and virtual communities
26. Unmet demand and infrastructure delivery modes

**NGB case study 2 (Mackintosh et al, 2014)**

27. Engaging communities of new participants
28. Embracing 'non-clubbable' participant pathway
29. Building an NGB community of participation (on own terms)
30. Opposition to club as ultimate outcome/outlet
31. User community juxtaposed with club community
32. Ethnographic hidden impact 'measures'
33. Marginal spaces to learn about increasing participation

**London 2012 case study 1 (Mackintosh et al, 2014)**

34. Socialisation of participation patterns
35. Parent as enabler, catalyst and constraint on legacy
36. Importance of local actor context
37. School-club pathway flow barriers and constraints
38. Austerity barriers in family setting
39. Inspiring media coverage doesn't alter behaviour
40. Multiplicity of local family experiences and 'levers'
41. Need for family friendly design
42. Family as underutilised lever in participation challenge

**London 2012 case study 2 (Mackintosh et al, 2015)**

43. Challenging and resisting legacy policy assumptions
44. Complex meanings of London 2012 to families
45. Regional exclusion from London 2012
46. Information and social media pathway weaknesses

### **Meta-ethnography second tier translations**

Each of the themes that emerged came from a grounding in the earlier interpretative themes from the individual papers, these cut across the papers and an illustration of the mapping of these themes is provided below. Where themes, metaphors and ideas do not ‘fit’ and perhaps provide conflicts, paradoxes and contrasts, these are identified as refutational themes from analysis across the existing eight studies.

#### ***Problematic ‘pathways’ and partnerships in community sport development***

CSP: (4), (5) SDO: (8), (9) SSP 1: (11), (13) SSP-SGO 2: (14), (15) NGB 1: (19), (21) NGB2: (30), (31), (34) London 2012: (38) (42) London 2012 (2): (45) (46)

Throughout the various studies and the themes that emerged within them was the presence of concerns, issues and problems with the assumed pathways and partnerships that are so core to sport development practice and the development of participation communities be they in clubs, schools, after school clubs, community-based provision or individually orientated activities. This was a strong theme grounded in considerable data from multiple studies and needs to be recognised as an area of future research, but also a field for policy development and programme design consideration.

#### ***Austerity context, limits and constraints on mass participation***

CSP: (NOTE: none – but pre-2010 CSR) SDO: (7), (8) SSP 1: (10), (11) SSP-SGO 2: (14), (15), (17) (18) NGB1: (24), (26) NGB2: (33) London 2012 1: (39), (40), (41) London 2012 (2): (43) (44)

Austere economic conditions, wider recession conditions and the increased financial accountability of the sport development professional community returned as a consistent theme across all papers. This ethnographic account illustrates how sport development is becoming a pressured area of public service provision and at a time when policy rhetoric commands increased profile for the importance of mass participation for other agendas of elite success, community cohesion and public health. What is clear is that the challenge of austerity conditions remain central to the limits of success in delivery of the agenda outcomes being demanded. This comes from the voices of local teachers, SDOs, NGB and CSP professionals and the local families spoken to. The picture is also highly fluid as the case of the SSP dismantling shows, and the longer term impacts of this are yet to be realised.

### ***Understanding the evidence and behaviour change narrative***

CSP: no reference SDO: (9) SSP1: (10) SSP-SGO 2: (17) NGB1: (19), (20), (21), (22), (23) NGB2: (27), (28), (29) London 2012 (1): (34), (35), (36), London 2012 (2): 42), (43).

There is an assumption present across many practitioners that changing participant behaviour requires an understanding of the needs, motivations and socio-cultural and environmental factors that may lead to increased mass participation. At the organisational, individual professional and policy levels it seems that clarity on the assumptions behind whether we can ‘change behaviour’ is needed. Equally, those working in the industry appear seem distant from the multiple notions of what ‘evidence’ may comprise. Likewise, there seem gaps in professional understanding on how different areas of theory, evidence and conceptual ideas could drive policy practice that could bring about ‘behaviour change’ or impact on the mass participation agenda. This theme recognises that a narrative around a model of behaviour exists, but that practitioners need to be better aware of the local complexities of many areas of the policy landscape and other theoretical options available to them. Instead, it seems a unified notion of a behaviour change narrative is being adopted, around which further research is needed to explore practitioner interpretations and use of this construct in the sport development landscape.

### ***Fragile, complex and unstable delivery infrastructure platform***

CSP: (2), (3), (4), (5) SDO: (6), (7) (8) SSP1: (11), (12), (13) SSP-SGO2: (14), (15), (18) NGB1: (24) (26) NGB2: (32) London 2012 1: (38) London 2012 (2): (43), (44), (45)

Linked to the above themes is the overarching essence of the fragile and increasingly convoluted delivery system for sport in England. With differential NGB, CSP, school and local government approaches and processes, how policy is implemented, re-interpreted and positioned is now increasingly complex. If austerity has provided a vehicle for further fragmentation, there is need now to recognise the potential gaps and inequality in what could be termed the existing delivery platform. Key agencies and organisations are seeing widening gaps in resources, funding and staff expertise to deliver the agendas. Instability and the concern of staff involved in this delivery platform may be contributing towards a lack of progress.

## **Refutational themes**

These were a set of themes that can contradict or refute themes (and ideas) present across other metaphors emerging from the meta-ethnography (Noblit and Hare, 1988). They are presented as further explanatory factors focused on the research aims of the meta-ethnography. As stated earlier these themes are meant to represent how a common contradiction can refute other themes and metaphors elsewhere in the meta-ethnography. They are also meant to be a space where the researchers can offer opportunities for future exploration of analytical aspects which do not neatly 'fit' into the existing more unified metaphors. A critical summary of these themes is outlined below that comes from a detailed and immersed re-reading and analysis of the interpretations across the eight papers in this process.

### *THEME 1: Divergence and widening variations in the sport development delivery system*

Interpretations across the studies of CSPs, NGBs, local government SDOs and schools built a picture of widening variations in multiple aspects of the infrastructure, experiences and approaches to delivering mass participation. Despite their being a national agenda, strategy and approach to increasing mass participation in sport it seems that local delivery varies incredibly. This theme is particularly present in the school sport changes experienced by staff across one county as it is by the local government SDOs in ten local authorities. This theme is characterised by multiple differences in funding, organisational resources, size and interest/approach to sport development delivery. The hybridity of organisations is testing the one time straightforward binary divides of public-private, voluntary-employed, community-individual. The increased pressure on the volunteer to deliver legacy and mass participation further compounds this theme. It is well established that there are existing considerable societal variations in volunteering in sport behaviour (Nichols, et al 2014). At the core of this contradiction is that as government assumes a 'mass' approach to participation, increased national approaches and strategies (HM Government, 2015) the local enabling options and systems of delivery are become increasingly diverse, fragmented and fractured. Thus, this questions the usefulness of the term 'mass' participation approach possible at all. Sport development has become more fragmented yet there remains increasingly centralised systems of coordinated funding, national strategy and

approach (Harris and Houlihan, 2014; Philpotts, Grix and Quarmby, 2011). This destabilises many of the assumptions of aspects of the system, such as assumed pathways, processes that ‘work’ and how practitioners and policy makers have the ability to ‘change behaviour’.

*THEME 2: Sport development workforce challenges in an era of modernisation*

The CSP study, local government SDO case study and both case studies exploring the experiences of SSP restructuring highlighted the importance but increasing challenges facing the paid professional workforce of sport development that cut across the varied ‘internal sectors’ in differing organisations. This is supported by the historic shift towards professionalization, evidence-based policy and the need to now draw upon research techniques to justify service provision and monitor effectiveness of programmes in addressing mass participation. This theme also points towards a conflict in the cross case interpretations, but one that could offer new and important insights in this field. Again, a further paradox exists in the increased need and expectation to be more evidence based, with less resources in an era of constant change, austerity and flux to develop skills in a workforce to do so. The contradiction I am recognising here is that evidence-based policy means very different things to different people and organisations in sport development. There do appear to be links to the current narratives around ‘behaviour change’ assumptions, but likewise how professionals interpret, emotionally invest in these terms remains grounds for further exploration. Likewise, this remains a challenge for researchers dealing with the view that multiple realities may exist, alongside multiple interpretations of policy narratives such as the need and ability for practitioners to use, develop and operate within political ‘evidence-based policy’ mantras.



### *THEME 3: The policy rhetoric gap*

Driven by the lens of the local family interpretations of the mass participation legacy and linked to the local participant and professional data interpretations in the NGB and London 2012 school games legacy programmes there seems to be a central set of tensions between policy rhetoric and the wants, needs and expectations of the potential participants and actors in sport development. This comes across in multiple ways, both in the pragmatic scope of information and social media gaps from sport development organisations. But, also in the paradox between differences in motivation and interest between what is wanted by those working with and in sport development policy and local actors at local community level. I refer to this as a ‘gap’ in the sense that policy makers, government, Sport England and national stakeholders use such language, meanings and ideas unproblematically whilst others with sport development and wider communities question and even challenge. For example, it seems that policy promises, ideas and the panacea of mass participation (and all it can bring in health, economic, political and social outcomes) remains a distant construct in relation to the experiences and beliefs of those engaging in everyday lives around such a policy agenda. This ‘gap’ theme in the visual model (Figure 3) permeates all other six key themes as it acts as a filter to the interpretations and meanings emerging from this meta-ethnographic analysis. Perhaps this is best viewed as a steer towards future research into what Fisher (2003) refers to as policy ‘storylines’. In the case of this research and this refutational theme it is the recognition of a policy rhetoric gap that can open up how, why and what ways such a gap emerges in sport public policy. It refutes the notion of a unified, concrete mass participation policy ‘agenda’ and the national strategies, plans and systems that supposed support it. Instead, it opens possibilities to explore counter-narratives and alternative visions of this policy sphere and expose the rhetoric itself that can be a distant feature from the practices of those in industry.

## Discussion

Figure 3 below provides a visual representation of the implementation challenges facing the policy agenda of delivering mass participation in sport development in England as the overall ‘lines of argument’ model (Nobiltt and Hare, 1988). It is a complex picture to summarise as other authors have suggested (Harris and Houlihan, 2014), with partnerships and at times multi-tiered organisational governance at its heart (Goodwin and Grix, 2012; Lindsey, 2009; Lindsey, 2010; Philpotts, Grix and Quarmby, 2011). Where this model is of use is in providing a visual representation of the challenges and factors that need to be addressed by the sport development policy and practice community in better understanding the mass participation agenda. This begins to unpick the underlying systemic issues that influence interactions between policy and practice that agencies and individuals need to better recognise and deal with. There is no simple solution. But as a critical synthesis it offers a unique insight and body of knowledge supported by wider research across key sub-sectors that encompass the increasingly disjointed ‘sport development industry’ (Hylton and Hartley, 2012). Potential next avenues of research and implications will be identified in detail in the conclusion and recommendations.

Given the themes that emerged from this critical synthesis using a meta-ethnography it is the status quo in levels of mass participation as a policy goal as well as how this is dealt with, researched and analysed that still remains the central challenge. Austerity, public sector cuts, new ways of governing and the curtailment of sport services as a discretionary area of spending in local government are key issues facing this policy problem (APSE, 2012; King 2014; Harris and Houlihan; 2014; Philpotts, Grix and Quarmby, 2011; PMPA, 2011). This PhD synthesis analyses a set of interlinked studies across multiple sectors within sport development that has illustrated the disjointed, fragmented and increasingly divergent geographical approaches, impacts and pathways that are currently emerging. Yet, equally, Jennie Price (CEO of Sport England) recently called for sport organisations to look towards driving further efficiency savings, broaden non-public funding sponsorship sources and increase the need to collaborate effectively (Price, 2015). Perhaps here lies the more central policy rhetoric gap identified in this study, a gap between what is being called for (or demanded) and the ability of those in communities and sport development to respond meaningfully. It is therefore a central

tenet of this PhD that it is necessary to recognise the current limitations of the existing policy mantras, programme pathways and service provision relationships. But, it is also important to explore such a policy rhetoric gap through the identified six key themes currently constraining the mass participation agenda.

The current system is increasingly not ‘fit for purpose’ and is now showing signs of considerable weakness in the assumptions of sport development processes around pathways, reliance on partnership working and resourcing of participation increases. A similar picture was painted fifteen years ago termed the “crowded policy space” (Houlihan, 2000) and later on as a disjointed organisational and policy environment in the National Lord Carter of Coles Review (Carter, 2005). More recent academic commentaries have also identified a trend towards an increasing “proliferation of agencies, charities, non-governmental organisations, partnerships and networks involved in the delivery of sport policy” (Goodwin and Grix, 2011; 546). This PhD has added into this complex institutionally layered mix the varied and diverse interpretations, meanings and beliefs held by varied individuals and agencies about programmes and policies in sport development.

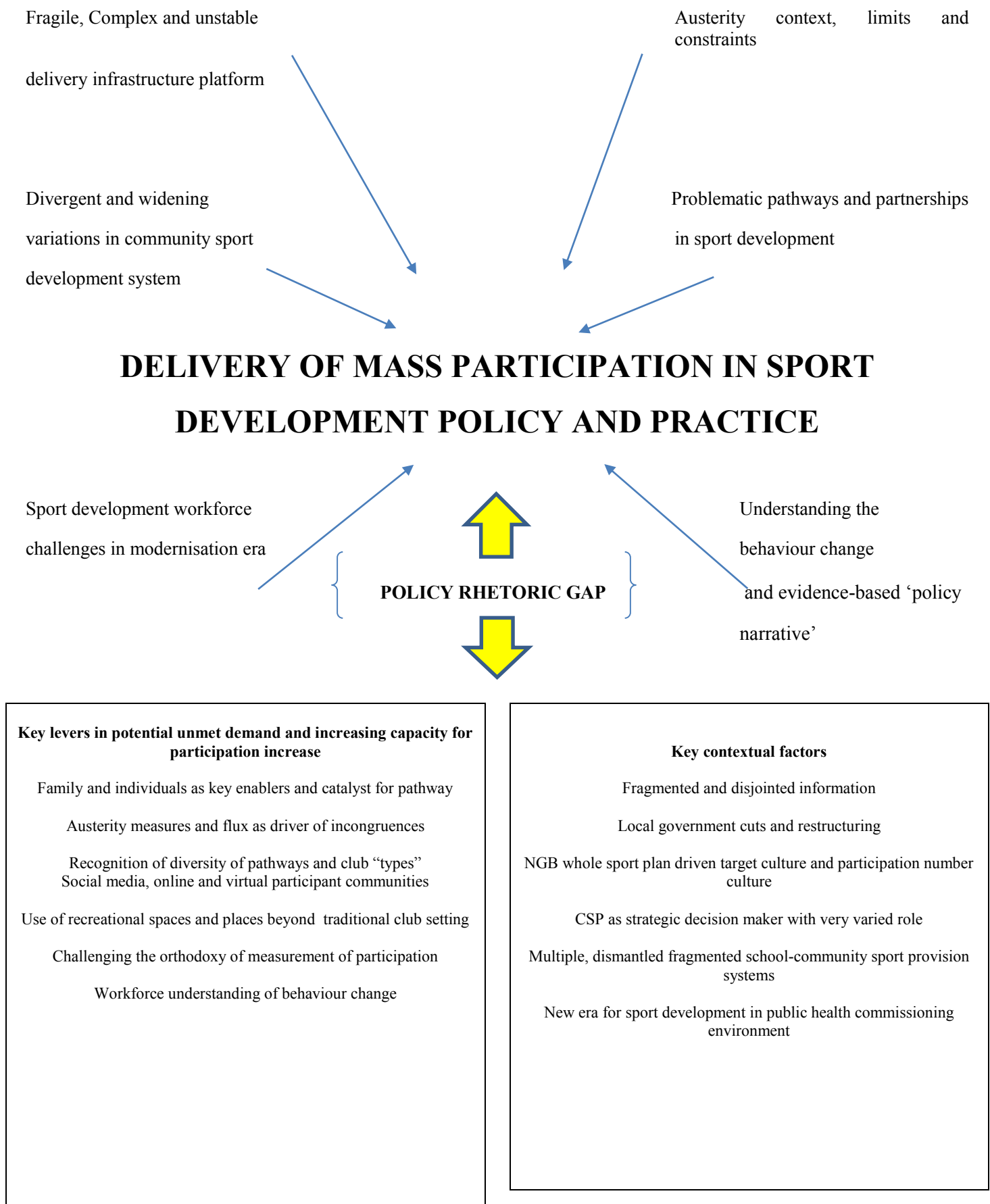
As Devine (2012) and Nichols et al (2014) have warned it is the seductive argument of a growing required role for volunteers solving a multitude of issues that could be our greatest challenge. Such a potential synergy with this body of academic research is the increased pressure on the voluntary sector to act as key delivery agent for national sport development policy (Harris, Mori and Collins, 2009; SRA, 2013). This critical synthesis has illustrated clear areas that need to be addressed in the sport development system of England. Future research needs to both be in place to monitor impact on community access to sport, opportunities for all to take part and the increasing difficulties of those working in this area local government relationships (APSE, 2012; King 2014). Furthermore, there is a declining capacity for the less profitable ‘business’ of addressing inaccessibility, barriers and challenging communities that are harder to reach (Flintoff, 2008; Kay and Collins, 2014; Snape and Binks, 2008). Under provision in those communities most in need is part of the hidden widening of gaps in sport development provision in England (Collins, 2011). Obsessions with mass participation are filtered through what has been termed in this critical synthesis the ‘policy rhetoric gap’ that masks

the realities of communities that may, or may not, wish to engage with participation for various reasons. An assumption is the communities and individuals should and must engage with mass participation. More direct engagement with challenging this rhetoric is needed (McDonald, 2005) if professionals and other partners involved in the delivery of community sport are to be genuinely transformed. Or, as Best (2009; 177) suggests in relation to sport development research “it is an area where policy makers tend to be looking for research to support rather than challenge perceived wisdom”. This also remains a central challenge for this researcher in how to present, re-present and engage with policy makers and practitioners that operate in what has been described here as a system filtered through policy rhetoric from central government and many national stakeholders. It also brings about a challenge as to how to engage with research collaborators that may feel uncomfortable with such public scepticism.

Implementation of policies and programmes have also been shown to have limitations in this synthesis of studies. This can in part be looked at through the interplay between what I have termed the policy rhetoric gap and the necessary levers, understanding and infrastructure required to deliver the aspiration of mass participation in England. In particular the timing of these research projects has contributed towards increasing the need to further question the assumed participation legacy of London 2012 (Bullough, 2012; Coalter, 2007; Griffiths and Armour, 2012) and notions that viewing leads to participation (Boardley, 2012). The changing role of local government has been well established in previous research (APSE, 2012; NLGN, 2011; Skeltcher, 2000; Stoker, 2005). But, where potential future opportunities lie are in the holes in provision that may emerge and analysis of the new infrastructure and participant pathways that will come to exist (Lindsey, 2009; Lindsey, 2010). Redefining the role of the public sphere of sport development has been questioned previously (Brookes and Wiggin, 2009; Hylton and Hartley, 2012; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013) as has the effectiveness of the CSP-NGB-local government interaction with the increasingly pressurised voluntary sector (Charlton, 2010; Philpotts, Grix and Quarmby, 2011; Harris and Houlihan, 2014). As we currently find ourselves increasingly navigating a ‘patchwork quilt’ of provision of organisations, programmes and approaches (Mackintosh and Liddle, 2015) the implications of this for users, communities and potential participants has yet to be fully explored. It is also in an era where 2012-2017 has seen an

allocated budget of £1 billion invested in a youth and community sport strategy alone (DCMS, 2012).

It is the assertion of this PhD that paradoxically as we focus more on targets, evidence and performance of organisations to ‘deliver’ outcomes more centrally governed by this vision we find the systems in place to achieve this change more fragmented and disjointed than ever.



**Figure 3: Model illustrating the key emergent factors shaping sport development mass participation impact in England**

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The synthesis has delivered five key areas of future investigation, recommendations and research grounded in the synthesis, findings and discussion from this meta-ethnography. Such focus should be directed in particular at policy makers, practitioner communities and key political decision makers with influence over the mass participation sport development agenda.

### *The everyday and local interpretation of national policy*

Firstly, it is in building a greater understanding of the everyday realities, meanings and beliefs of those populations, local communities and workforces that are experiencing, interpreting and re-interpreting policy rhetoric that some of the more illuminating insights can be gained (Bloyce et al, 2008). Sport participation still remains stagnant and has not seen the boom or ‘gold rush’ (Coalter, 2007; Vigor et al, 2004) suggested in the post-Games shadow of London 2012 Olympics. This meta-ethnography has examined the realities of individuals, in sport development organisations and individuals in local communities that could help unlock the mass ‘participation puzzle’ (Giginov and Hills, 2008). Clearer highlighting of the challenges faced by those implementing policy rhetoric is needed (Charlton, 2010).

### *Social media as a lever of change*

Potential areas of interest to examine in further detail to create leverage include the use of social media, web-based information alongside traditions of sport development delivery to address organisational limitations in understanding. But, we need to be aware of the wider societal barriers in using blanket, market-led advances and who may be the losers in such approaches. It has been suggested that there is already a lack of understanding and research into the role of sport development in this area (CIMSPA, 2012). Initial awareness explored by the original ethnographic studies show community participants are engaged in virtual clubs, Facebook led campaigns or individually motivated ‘behaviour change’. Feedback on mega-event website, the realities of their use and re-interpretation as social media tools are critical. For example, it could simply be that those that are already engaged simply benefit further. Perhaps the greatest lesson to learn here is from some of the young people and their families in the London 2012 legacy projects (Mackintosh et al, 2014; Mackintosh, Darko and May-Wilkins, 2015).

Ideas for innovation, new systems of engaging, alternative ‘virtual pathways’ in participation through online ‘clubs’ could offer a next generation of social media savvy members of communities a route through a very congested organisational maze of agencies all seeking to capture the next willing participant. Such processes are far more independent, organic, and operate firmly outside the strategic planning assumptions and evidence-based policy narratives of those working within an increasingly policy-facing workplace as SDOs.

### *Re-conceptualising sport development foundations of practice*

Part of this process means also reconceptualising what we mean by sport development, how it is positioned within government and the private sector, as well as the voluntary/Third sector. Traditional conceptualisation of sport development pathways, continuums and new partnership arrangements have been shown in this collection of papers, in the critical synthesis and elsewhere (Bolton et al, 2008; Collins and Buller, 2000; Green, 2005) to have clear limitations and gaps in understanding. Yet this development route is still assumed to be the culturally appropriate route for developing participation (DCMS, 2012; HM Government, 2015). Where mass participation does seem to be working is in sports such as cycling where they have adopted an online presence as central to their new delivery, recruitment and retention models (British Cycling, 2015). As they increase membership between 2012 and 2015 by 169% to over 100,000 members and refine further their use of research-led insight to shape ‘geo-targeted’ campaigns. Here, the language, skills set and workforce needs of sport development must also change. This is not just relevant to the NGB workforce, but those 600 or so strategic staff in CSPs (CSPN, 2015), and unknown numbers of staff in voluntary organisations, local government, charities and schools that comprise the blurred field of sport development professionals (Bloyce et al, 2008; Hylton and Hartley 2012; Mackintosh, 2012; Mackintosh 2012a). The language, skills and conceptual understanding of what comprises sport development has shifted during the six years of this study (Mackintosh, 2014). In parallel, alongside this, the delivery and implementation environment is in flux, and the constant change in strategies, plans and industry targets remains as the main commonality. For the communities and practitioners that share the sport development process finding new ways to collaborate effectively could be the clearest challenge and greatest opportunity. The current reviews of



the CSP system, future National Volunteer Strategy, changes in public funding arrangements and next round of WSPs offer a potent national mix of large scale change (again) (HM Government, 2015). From this research it seems that a more devolved, very localised community-embedded sport development focus is perhaps what is needed to deliver genuine changes. However, the next round of strategies and plans (HM Government, 2015) may yet yield a very different call to focus on national targets, commercially orientated models of delivery and scientifically proven evidence around the public health agenda.

### *Understanding the evidence and behaviour change narrative*

Throughout the PhD evidence-based policy has been a key term, source of discussion and area of policy debate with complex multiple meanings. In the sector specific context of sport behaviour change models of theory, evidence-building and a new reliance and interest in data have become prominent. Uptake by NGBs and CSPs of such theory-driven policy and programmes continues to be limited and emergent at best, whilst such calls were echoed in the Sport England Review of 2004 (Sport England, 2004). Skills and knowledge of the sport development workforce in such areas also remains embryonic. A very narrow focus on behaviour change and market segmentation approaches to dealing with policy problems are prevalent. Contesting such narrow understanding of addressing complex issues must be challenged. Finally, I would encourage those in positions of power that often generate the rhetoric of sport development policy drawing on narratives of ‘legacy’, discourses of community sport participation and ‘behaviour change nudges’ to stop and examine the reality of critical policy implementation and impact. National longitudinal data led by policy makers, participants and actors within the system needs to better capture contrasting, diverse and cross sectional understanding from different domains within the sport development policy and practice arena. There appears to be widening gaps in voluntary provision (Nichols et al, 2014), school sport development support (Mackintosh, 2012; Mackintosh and Liddle, 2014; Griggs and Ward, 2014) and CSPs (Harris and Houlihan, 2014; Mackintosh, 2011). It seems also that NGBs, one of the newest people to the direct delivery table (Hylton, 2013) within this infrastructure are the least well understood as a sector. There are examples of sport by sport case studies, including my own, but the next tier of research in this area needs to

encompass cross sector, cross organisational work that can capture how initial divergence and differential impacts of austerity and performance management based on results are impacting on communities. The new sport strategy launched in December 2015 and the forthcoming May 2016 Sport England Strategy (HM Government, 2015) clearly refocus on physical activity and sport (not just sport). It seems the need to better understand the narrative or what Fisher (2003) refers to as a public policy ‘storylines’ around evidence-based behaviour change is more crucial. Such areas of enquiry will open a fresh perspective on the policy rhetoric gap referred to in this study.

#### *Future research directions*

England’s sport development system appears in status quo at best, and fragmented and disjointed in many areas. The next phase of investment, disinvestment and restructuring that will be outlined in 2016 will be critical to the long-term position of the country on the world stage (HM Government, 2015). For as investment in elite events and elite sport system funding increases (Bailey and Collins, 2013; Grix and Carmichael, 2012) so we are also beginning to see a gulf in the ‘have’s’ and ‘have not’s’ of community-facing sport. This is both organisationally, and at a community-led opportunity and delivery level. Shedding light on this partially understood landscape of agencies and individuals is fundamental, as evidence to counter the increased focus on elitism fed by corporate sponsorship and market-led demands (Hylton and Morpeth, 2012; Silk, 2012). Genuine community sport infrastructures in England will need policy advocates, research to illustrate the emerging gaps and also highlight ways to mend an increasingly broken system (Charlton, 2010; Devine, 2012). Neo-liberal values driving the London 2012 Games (Silk, 2012) can be seen in the current infrastructure of local delivery and interestingly it is the young people and families in the later stage of this PhD that were some of the strongest critics of this trend. The key question is how to manage, navigate and rebuild the lost values of a community-led infrastructure over a market-orientated philosophy and increasingly incoherent system navigated by diverging NGBs, CSPs, local government and schools. It is the local family, school and voluntary sport club communities that are currently expected to fill such voids. The challenge for myself as a researcher is also how to inhabit the recognised multiple realities that this PhD has established in the sphere of sport development national policy landscapes. Alongside this, policy makers require ‘unified’, robust

agreed recommendations that 'fit' calls for evidence-based policy. This remains perhaps the most complex research challenge that I continue to navigate. I would suggest that persuading sport development organisations that such complex, multi-faceted realities exist, alongside national policy and require equally nuanced and careful research strategies specific to local conditions will develop more meaningful, if challenging research findings. This is partly about maintaining and continuing to establish improved dialogue between academic research community and policy makers and practitioners. A recognition of complexity and the paradox identified in this study is a good starting point for such dialogue. But as Best (2009) has argued it is this widening gap between the demands, interests and motivations of researchers and policy makers that largely continues to exist.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1: Chronological description of the submission and development of the work**

This section of the PhD by publication outlines the chronological development of the overall submission of eight papers as individual works and the linkages between them. It also establishes the central background, methods, findings, and conclusions of each paper. It is intended to provide a contextual overview that supports the meta-synthesis methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion contained in the main PhD document.

Mackintosh, C. (2011) 'An analysis of County Sports Partnerships in England: the fragility, challenges and complexity of partnership working in sport development', *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3: 1, 45-64.

This paper was one of the first papers to examine the CSP network in England, a key sub-regional tier of governmental sport development policy structures and organisational feature of the landscape of sport policy. Subsequent studies have examined governance under-theorisation in this sphere (Goodwin and Grix, 2011; Philpotts, Grix and Quarmby, 2011). But this paper examined the nuances of working in partnership working from the multiple perspectives of the leadership figures that 'run' the individual CSPs that now form part of the County Sport Partnership Network (CSPN). Data was collected from four out of five regional lead officers in the designated East Midlands region using semi-structured face-to-face interviews in 2009. The paper contains a literature review of partnership working to underpin the later analysis of the thematic analysis and coding of the verbatim transcripts. As the first paper in this submission it allowed a critical starting point for the multiple intersections of sport development policy at national and regional level and how realities of multi-agency working played out. This study examines one of the key tiers of sub-regional strategic agencies tasked by government and Sport England with growing mass participation. It highlighted key areas for concern, which developed an organic and emerging research agenda for my next papers that followed, looking at local communities, School Sport Partnerships (SSPs) and NGBs. It also subtly brought to attention the missing role for

local government and the local SDO and where they ‘fit’ within the public policy drive to get more people playing more often ‘mantra’.

Mackintosh, C. (2012) ‘The shifting dynamics of local government sport development officer practice in England: new identities and hazy professional boundaries’ in Harris, S., Bell, B., Adams, A. and Mackintosh, C. (eds.) *Sport for Sport? Theoretical and Practical Insights into Sport development*, Eastbourne, Leisure Studies Association, pp 113-130.

This book chapter formed part of a research monograph that was double blind peer reviewed in an edited collection of research papers for the Leisure Studies Association. Each individual book chapter was a submission in itself. As a co-editor of the collection I was subject to the same review process, acceptance, rejection and blind comments as all other authors. The research study comprised of a qualitative study of ten local authority SDOs in three different unitary authority areas of the East Midlands. It followed on from the previous study of CSPs as within this study it became apparent that CSPs were a relatively new quasi-public (and in some cases contracted out limited company) modernised vehicle for sport policy change in the regions (Mackintosh, 2011). This paper also examined how notions of evidence-based policy played out for the ‘professionals’ involved in the mass participation theme central to this PhD. It also questioned the notion of a unified ‘profession’ and the need to recognise the at times ‘fuzzy and hazy boundaries’ that played out for the SDO practitioner on the ground. What this study illustrated was that many SDOs were not in a position to respond to the calls for research and (theory-driven) evaluations of the participation orientated programmes they implemented. Thus a potential skills gap in the workforce was recognised, itself a further recognised theme that emerged from several of the papers presented in this PhD by published works.

Mackintosh, C. (2013) An evaluation of the outdoor table tennis initiative pilot programme in London: ‘ping pong in the fresh air how does that work?’, *Managing Leisure: An International Journal*, 18(3), 226-238.

This paper is an evaluation study of a London-based pilot of a sport development programme aimed at generating mass sport participation increases through the use of outdoor table tennis as a partnership

approach between local government authorities, a national governing body and other leisure partners in the project. It is the only published evaluation of this format of the game which has also gone on to be a growing programme area of 'alternative' provision and Sport England Innovation Fund investment for the NGB. In some ways this was a precursor to the later PING! project that was designated as a national Sport England participation innovation project. In addition it also began to challenge the NGB on how they monitor and evaluate and what 'evidence' means and how it can be used. It also moved my own PhD research from solely interviews to ethnographic evaluation methodology to capture the rich participation experiences of this informal form of sport participation. The study also presented NGB survey findings that ran alongside the ethnographic study. The insights both methodologically and empirically shaped future policy and practice for this NGB and arguably new areas of sport development emergent practice in non-traditional, non-club environments.

Mackintosh, C., Cookson, G. And Griggs, G. (2014) Reflections on the PING! table tennis initiative: lessons and new directions for sport development?, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27 (2), 128-139.

This paper was the outcome from a national Sport England Innovation Funding stream sport development evaluation project. This research study used Birmingham and Liverpool for detailed mixed methods case studies to gain an understanding of both process and impact evaluation insights. The study built on the lessons learnt from my earlier OTTI evaluation methodology and findings in the paper this produced by building in ethnography to this process. There was also a parallel quantitative user survey to help inform policy for the NGB and to compare findings between ethnographic observations and interview data and statistical responses. It was also used to challenge perceived thinking around policy and questions their existing understanding of evidence. This study was shaped, partly by the previous OTTI study undertaken between local government authorities and the NGB. Findings from this PING! study embedded the continued national roll out of the study and also benchmarked the NGB and shaped their future evaluation and research systems against other NGBs. Furthermore, this study conceptually challenges the nature and orientation of what the public sphere of sport development activity and policy constitutes. Traditional orientations to the sport club and progression pathways that had been inherently

assumed in much of my former work were questioned by this high participation/usage programme. If people do not want to have an end outcome of ‘the club’ or ‘progression’ at all, does this begin to question both the rationale and philosophy of sport development that is core to much of the work of the NGB, CSP and local government traditional partners. In the newly emerging political climate and environment of austerity this study adds much needed evidence to the critical questions NGBs are now asking about where their own policies and programmes lie. At the time of writing it has also become apparent that there are no other peer reviewed published studies of effectiveness and impact of the outdoor format of the game. Whilst a niche activity, it is a growth format and one that has attracted policy transfer interest from other NGBs aiming to capture the ‘alternative sport’ market (Griggs, 2011; Wheaton, 2004; Wheaton, 2013). Policy transfer interest has come from those sports that seek to engage with informality of sport to seek to address mass participation outside the traditional setting of more formal club environments (Mackintosh, 2013a).

Mackintosh, C. (2014a) Dismantling the school sport partnership infrastructure: findings from a survey of physical education and school sport practitioners, *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years*, 42(4), 432-449.

This study was a response to the New Coalition Government October 2010 policy directive to remove centralised funding for the SSP system in England. Whilst only a study of Nottinghamshire’s 400 schools, with a response from 70 schools in total, it provides a unique data set at a key point in time from those working in sport development. Whilst only a cross sectional case study it is inherently significant given the timing of the survey undertaken and the sphere of topic considered. The study also illustrates the sensitivity of national ‘evidence’ and data sets and how public policy can often be a decision not to carry on funding of a system that some claimed worked well (Mackintosh, 2014a; Mackintosh and Liddle, 2014). It extends from a practitioner perspective the critiqued evidence base such national claims were made on (Smith and Leech, 2012). Schools feature centrally in this paper and the school teacher is an often missed component in the cycles of sport development mass participation



implementation. This study began to unpick how professionals in schools and those other SDOs such as Partnership Development Managers (PDMs), School Sport Coordinators (SSCOs) and Primary Link Tutors (PLTs) viewed this major national shift in policy. As with much policy it was partially re-instated due to public and professional outcry. This paper captured the cross sectional moment of change and reactions to dismantling and some of the implications of such changes.

Mackintosh, C. and Liddle, J. (2015) Emerging school sport development policy, practice and governance in England: Big Society, autonomy and decentralisation, *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years*, 43, (6), 603-620.

This paper is a further empirical follow up to the earlier Mackintosh (2014a) Nottinghamshire study. The study began to unpick the next phase of change in sport development synergy between schools and wider sport development policy under the new Coalition government that removed the system in 2010. As a study it examined change in policy from the perspective of the school games organisers and staff left in the wake of the dismantled former system. Based on in-depth interviews it also developed a comparative model of the emergent governance framework for school sport development. Findings from this study point towards the potential ramifications of policy change for the school sport sector and indications of a growing gap between agencies but also potential youth participants under the mantras of the new Coalition government and Big Society. It also led to the recognition of the complex, multi-agency context of the working patterns of the professionals, volunteers and participants that this PhD has now outlined as crucial to delivery of this policy agenda during the era of austerity. Crucially, having consolidated the earlier findings from other papers that showed the creaking capacity of sport development system to deliver mass participation it also led to the development of my next phase of research from the perspectives of local communities that are targeted in mass participation policies and programmes.

Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., Rutherford, Z. and Wilkins, H-M. (2015) A qualitative study of the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on families in the East Midlands of England: lessons for sport development policy and practice, *Sport, Education and Society*, 20, (8), 1065-1087.

This paper analysed the localised family context and dynamics as a social determinant and driving force in sport participation leverage linked directly to the assumed beneficial ‘virtuous cycle’ of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Originality in this study also lies both in the comprehensive literature review in this area that sets out potential areas for future investigation but also the empirical component. The study also looks at legacy leverage beyond London 2012 into the East Midlands region of England. The crucial link back to earlier papers contained within the PhD by publication lies in how this study returns to the potential participant community. Thus the paper stands in stark contrast to the central tenets of much sport development policy rhetoric and practice since the 2005 winning of the London 2012 project built on an assumed participation legacy. This is one of very few studies to have specifically examined the family context as a key leverage factor in developing participation changes resulting from London 2012. The study also used innovative video diary and interview methodologies before, during and after the games to capture rich insights from the day-to-day realities of policy recipients. It supported other research in the cultural legacy research field in identifying a ‘legacy deficit’ often lost on policy makers and sport development practitioners that uncritically assume positive benefits to mega events. The paper is chronologically significant as it shows my own research reconnection with local communities as ‘recipients’ of sport development public policy.

Mackintosh, C., Darko, N. and May-Wilkins, H. (2015a) Unintended outcomes of the London 2012 Olympic Games: Local voices of resistance and the challenge for sport participation leverage in England, *Leisure Studies*, published online, iFirst article, 1-16, awaiting publication edition allocation.

This final paper was a further output from the earlier study undertaken with five families before, during and after the London 2012 Olympic Games to examine and explore everyday reactions

to sport participation assumptions by families in the East Midlands region of England. The aim of this paper in contrast to the earlier paper was to build localised accounts of the multiple interpretations, potential impacts and reactions to the Olympics in everyday family household settings. It were these unintended policy outcomes in terms of local views, perceptions and interpretations of the Games. The paper also highlighted the potential of this methodological approach in generating original findings grounded in the realities of potential participants as opposed to policy makers or sport development professionals. Findings included resistance to policy interpretations surrounding this mega event and a strong sense of regional and financial exclusion from the event. This paper added further contrast to the policy evaluation and implementation papers from earlier in the PhD submission collection to illustrate lessons that can be learnt. In particular it offered insights for both policy makers and event managers in the design of future mass participation programmes and events that encompassed the more localised perspectives of those communities and individuals who are the targets of such interventions.

## **Appendix 2: List of refereed papers and monograph chapters appended**

Mackintosh, C. (2011) An analysis of County Sports Partnerships in England: the fragility, challenges and complexity of partnership working in sport development', *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3: 1, 45-64.

Mackintosh, C. (2012) 'The shifting dynamics of local government sport development officer practice in England: new identities and hazy professional boundaries' in Harris, S., Bell, B., Adams, A. and Mackintosh, C. (eds.) *Sport for Sport? Theoretical and Practical Insights into Sport development*, Eastbourne, Leisure Studies Association.

Mackintosh, C. (2013) An evaluation of the outdoor table tennis initiative pilot programme in London: 'ping pong in the fresh air how does that work?', *Managing Leisure: An International Journal*, 18(3), 226-238.

Mackintosh, C. (2014) Dismantling the school sport partnership infrastructure: findings from a survey of physical education and school sport practitioners, *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years*, 42 (4), 432-449.

Mackintosh, C., Cookson, G. And Griggs, G. (2014) Reflections on the PING! table tennis initiative: lessons and new directions for sport development?, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 27 (2), 128-139.

Mackintosh, C. and Liddle, J. (2015) Emerging school sport development policy, practice and governance in England: Big Society, autonomy and decentralisation, *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years*, 43 (6), 603-620.

Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., Rutherford, Z. and Wilkins, H-M. (2015) A qualitative study of the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on families in the East Midlands of England: lessons for sport development policy and practice, *Sport, Education and Society*, 20 (8), 1065-1087.

Mackintosh, C., Darko, N. and May-Wilkins, H. (2015) Unintended outcomes of the London 2012 Olympic Games: Local voices of resistance and the challenge for sport participation leverage in England, *Leisure Studies* iFirst 1-16.

### Appendix 3: Letters of statement of co-authored work



Dr Natalie Darko  
(PhD, MPhil, HEA Fellow,  
PGCHE, BSc)  
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Sports Education,  
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Tel: 0115 848 5535  
e:  
[Natalie.darko@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:Natalie.darko@ntu.ac.uk)

Date: 15/10/2015

To whom it may concern,

I can confirm that I worked with Mr Chris Mackintosh as a co-author on the following articles:

- Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., and May-Wilkins, H. (2015) Unintended outcomes of the London 2012 Olympic Games: Local voices of resistance and the challenge for sport participation leverage in England, *Leisure Studies*, 35 (1): 1-18.
- Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., and Rutherford, Z. (2014) A qualitative study of the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on families in the East Midlands of England: Lessons for sports development policy and practice. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-50.

I can also confirm that Mr Mackintosh was lead author, lead project officer in the project and lead editor of the collaborative aspects on both papers.

Yours sincerely

Dr Natalie Darko

Miss Hetty May-Wilkins

.....

Date: 15/10/2015

To whom it may concern,

I can confirm that I worked with Mr Chris Mackintosh as a research assistant on the following articles:

- Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., and May-Wilkins, H., (2015) Unintended outcomes of the London 2012 Olympic Games: Local voices of resistance and the challenge for sport participation leverage in England, *Leisure Studies*, 35 (1): 1-18.
- Mackintosh, C., Darko, N., and Rutherford, Z. (2014) A qualitative study of the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on families in the East Midlands of England: Lessons for sports development policy and practice. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-50.

I can also confirm that Mr Mackintosh was lead author, lead project officer in the project and lead editor of the collaborative aspects on both papers.

Yours sincerely

Miss Hetty May-Wilkins

Faculty of Education Health and Wellbeing  
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01902 323324

23th September 2015

To whom it may concern

I am happy to confirm that Christopher Mackintosh was the Principal Investigator on the PING! Project and responsible for its academic direction.

He also took the lead in the research outputs and in conducting and analysing the qualitative research. Christopher was the lead co-author of the following research output with which I was involved:

Chris Mackintosh , Graham Cookson , Gerald Griggs , (2014) "Reflections on the PING! table tennis initiative: Lessons and new directions for sports development?", International Journal of Public Sector Management, Vol. 27 Iss: 2, pp.128 - 139

Should you require anything further, please get in touch.

Regards

*G. Griggs*

Dr Gerald Griggs  
Senior Lecturer  
Institute of Sport



**From :**

**Professor Joyce LIDDLE**

**IMPGT**

Aix-Marseille Université  
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13625 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 01  
France

**To :**

**Head of Graduate School**

Liverpool John Moores  
University  
LIVERPOOL LI,  
U.K

Aix-en-Provence, le 30 septembre 2015

Dear Sir / Madam,

This letter is to confirm that Chris MACKINTOSH was the lead author on the following academic paper :<sup>1</sup>

Mackintosh, C. and Liddle, J. (2013) PE and school sports development governance in England : Big Society, autonomy and decentralisation in new network relationships, *Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years*, 1-20.

Yours sincerely,

  
Professor J. Liddle



09<sup>th</sup> October, 2015

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing to confirm that Mr Christopher Mackintosh was the Principle Investigator and lead author on the paper 'A qualitative study of the impact of the London 2012 Olympics on families in the East Midlands of England: Lessons for sports development policy and practice.' He lead the application for the funding for the associated project, managed the research assistant who collected the data, analysed the main bulk of the qualitative data and drafted and edited the paper.

If you require any further information, then please contact me using the information below.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Zoe Rutherford

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21 September 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am happy to confirm that Christopher Mackintosh was the Principal Investigator on the PING! Evaluation project, responsible for the project and the academic direction.

He also took the lead in drafting and editing the associated reports and research outputs, and in conducting and analysing the qualitative research. Christopher was the lead co-author of the following research outputs:

Chris Mackintosh , Graham Cookson , Gerald Griggs , (2014) "Reflections on the PING! table tennis initiative: Lessons and new directions for sports development?", *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, Vol. 27 Iss: 2, pp.128 - 139

Mackintosh, C, Cookson, G & Shearer, B 2012, 'A national evaluation of PING! table tennis programme'. in *European Sports Development Network (ESDN) Conference*. European Sports Development Network (ESDN) Conference, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom, 5 September.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Professor Graham Cookson  
Head, Centre for Health Care Management & Policy  
Surrey Business School

