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The UK School Games and the competition structure of selected participating sports: A study of policy implementation

By Sarah Elizabeth Melville

Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University April 2012
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Appendix I
1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives and research questions

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the process of policy implementation in relation to the objectives of the UK School Games (UKSG). The objectives of the thesis are:

a) To locate implementation of the UKSG within a broader analysis of the policy process for youth / school sport;

b) To gain an understanding of the relationship between the UKSG sports and the Youth Sport Trust (YST); and

c) To explore the outcomes of the UKSG and its six objectives.

Three research questions were developed from these objectives:

1). What are the key impacts of the UKSG on the competition structures of the eight sports (athletics, badminton, fencing, judo, gymnastics, table tennis, swimming and volleyball)?

2). What is the relationship between the key organisations involved in the UKSG and the National Competition Framework (NCF)?

3). What is the role of each of the organisations involved in the UKSG and the NCF?

The research objectives were formulated by the YST and Professor Barrie Houlihan (thesis supervisor) as part of a research studentship. With this in mind, the author of the thesis (who was required to formally apply and competitively interview for the studentship research post) did not contribute to early decision-making regarding the development of the research topic.

1.2 Overview of the UKSG policy

The UKSG was a government-funded initiative that provided a high-quality, multi-sport event for the UK’s elite young athletes of school age over a six-year period. The event was established in 2006 with five sports: gymnastics, fencing, swimming, table tennis and athletics. The last three sports included both able-bodied and disability disciplines in their competitive programme at
the UKSG. In 2007, volleyball, badminton and judo were added, with hockey and cycling joining the event in 2008 and 2009 respectively. The event had witnessed a gradual increase in scale and reputation since its introduction in 2006. In the 2010 UKSG approximately 1,600 athletes competed. These athletes were supported by over 350 volunteers, of which 77% were under the age of 25 and 67% had never before volunteered in sport. In addition to these volunteers, 440 technical officials controlled the competition environment, 18% of which were under the age of 25 (www.ukschoolgames.co.uk accessed 7th October 2010).

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, there is mounting evidence of integration between elite and youth sport policy motives with the consequence that as elite sport policy advances, there is increasingly a corresponding impact on policy for youth sport. From this realisation of the fruitful link between elite and youth sport policy, came the development of the UKSG policy.

The concept of the UKSG was developed by Richard Caborn, the then Minister of Sport. Mr. Caborn believed that the event could provide talented young people with the experience they needed to perform well at high-profile multi-sport competitions. In addition, the UKSG presented the Labour government with a viable legacy to link to the 2012 Olympic Games. The policy connected strongly with existing areas of youth focus and although not intentionally, the UKSG became the driving force behind modernisation initiatives such as the National Competition Framework (NCF) and the development of cross-sport and cross-country relationships.

The NCF was introduced in 2005 across a wide range of sports in England (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are still in consultation regarding the uptake of the framework). The framework, which has been tailored to the specific requirements of the 21 sports involved, was ‘established to increase the amount of inter-schools competition available to young people and to improve the quality of existing competitive opportunities’ (www.youthsporttrust.org accessed 19th November 2011). The aim of the NCF is therefore to rationalize the competition structures of different sports (regardless of size, history and complexity) in order to promote positive
competition, sustained participation and prevent early ‘burn out’ and exhaustion of young talented sportsmen and women. The NCF was developed as part of a collaborative project involving Sport England, the National Council for School Sport and the Youth Sport Trust (YST).

In addition to the NCF, the YST was also delegated responsibility for coordinating the UKSG by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The YST worked with the event management agency Fast Track to deliver the operational aspects of the event. The £3m annual average cost of the UKSG was supported predominantly by the charity ‘Legacy Trust UK’. Additional, but limited funding was provided by the ten sports included in the event and by the YST itself. In 2006, 2010 and 2011, the UKSG event also benefited from sponsorship, however it failed to find a willing sponsor for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 UKSG.

The UKSG took place annually until the end of its agreed government funding period in 2011. From 2012 onwards, as a consequence of the country’s change in political administration in May 2010, the UKSG policy has been altered slightly to give greater emphasis to inter-school competition, rather than talent-development. The new event follows very similar principles to the original UKSG, however has expanded in significance with more sport partners supporting its development (the YST, Sport England, DCMS, Paralympics GB, Department of Education and Change 4 Life). The main difference between the original UKSG and the new ‘School Games’ is its qualification structure. The UKSG selected its athletes through club-based competition. The new School Games will continue to do this, however will only be able to choose from athletes who represent their schools successfully at intra-school, inter-school and county-school competitions. There is now greater emphasis placed on school team competition than in previous years.

Given that the School Games is still in its planning stages of development, this research concentrates only on the original UKSG policy. This thesis therefore ends its analysis at a time when school sport is in a period of financial and policy uncertainty (May 2010). The ten sports included in the UKSG worked closely with the YST and Fast Track to deliver the UKSG event.
annually. Each sport employed a ‘UKSG coordinator’, whose salary and expenses (between £30k - £50k annually) were supported by Legacy Trust UK UKSG funding. These ten coordinator roles are currently supported by 450 part-time School Games Organisers (SGOs), funded by the £22m reluctantly released by Education Secretary Michael Gove (www.telegraph.co.uk Kelso, P. [2011] accessed 5th October 2011). The SGOs have been responsibility for coordinating School Games qualification events across the 450 School Sport Partnership (SSP) areas (Roberts 2011).

1.3 The UKSG objectives

The original UKSG coordinators were asked to work across the relevant bodies of their sport to address both ‘operational’ and ‘developmental’ targets. Operational targets related directly to the development of the UKSG event. These targets ensured that athletes were informed, selected for, transported to and accommodated at the UKSG. Developmental targets were indirectly linked to the event and made use of the UKSG profile and publicity to drive forward other youth related projects, such as the NCF, new school competitions, young volunteer and official training programmes, team manager training days. The UKSG also supported the work of Competition Managers (whose role was very similar to the previously mentioned SGOs, but was more focused on the introduction of sustainable inter-school competition as opposed to organising the qualification for a national-level multi-sport event). Developmental targets were supported by separate ‘UKSG Development funding’. This funding was actioned, monitored and evaluated by the ‘UKSG Development Steering Group’ which comprised the UKSG coordinators, representatives of YST and sport development consultants.

Both operational and developmental targets were set in relation to the six UKSG objectives. It is worth acknowledging that these objectives (Table 1.1) were created without any consultation with the home country governing bodies and the school sport associations (SAs) of the ten UKSG sports (discussed in Chapter 5)
Table 1.1: The six UK School Games objectives with comments reflecting the expectations of the Youth Sport Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK School Games objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ongoing planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Encourage sports to learn from the planning and delivery of the UKSG in order to develop and transfer competition ideas to regional competitions where viable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Make use of the UKSG’s profile to encourage a positive change in the content and structure of competitive sporting opportunities for young people. The UKSG is the ‘end goal’ for which sports developing their NCF can work towards, therefore the objective is deemed important in terms of identifying the UKSG as a driving force for change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions, to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve P.E. and school sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In continuation from objective two, the UKSG presents an opportunity for home countries to work together to raise the profile of youth sport. In particular, through the enhancement of cross-sport and cross-country relationships, good practice and youth development ideas have been promoted across different sports organisations, NGBs and SAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UK School Games by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athletes’ Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In addition to sporting competition, the UKSG offers a cultural and educational programme to young people. For example, local entertainment is included in opening and closing ceremonies, multi-sport preparation documents are provided for athletes, anti-doping workshops are conducted for competitors, volunteer and team manager training is provided for 16-25 year olds and athlete ambassadors and past Olympians are available to answer questions from the UKSG competitors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(This objective relates not just to the UKSG, through its young volunteer and officials training programmes, but also at sport specific regional events / UKSG qualifiers. The objective aims to advance the sport’s database of reliable and competent volunteers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robust safeguarding documents are developed by the sports themselves and the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

Source: www.ukschoolgames.co.uk accessed 7th October 2010

The implementation of the UKSG policy in reference to these six objectives did not happen without problems. As will be explained later in chapters 5 to 8, the implementation of objectives 1, 4, 5 and 6 proved to be more straightforward for the sports in comparison to objectives 2 and 3. Sport representatives have explained that the former set of objectives are more intimately linked with the UKSG event itself and therefore can be combined more efficiently with operational related work and funding.

The UK-wide scope of the event, for some sports, proved challenging. As will be discussed in the empirical and conclusion chapters of the thesis, the UKSG coordinators that worked across devolved sports such as swimming, table tennis and volleyball had to liaise with English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish governing bodies in order to transfer development work from paper to practice. However, due to differences in organizational structure, strategic priorities, tradition, wealth and home country policies (discussed more fully in chapters 6 to 8) each home country NGB wanted to achieve different outcomes through the UKSG. Managing these varying agendas demanded a significant amount of UKSG coordinator time, which in turn impacted on the effectiveness of the UKSG policy’s implementation.

1.4 Importance of the topic

Although the UKSG have been replaced by the School Games, it became a popular national initiative that proved capable of challenging, and in some cases, changing NGB behaviour. The UKSG therefore related more broadly to the Labour government’s agenda of modernisation, although this was not openly stated as part of the six UKSG objectives. The UKSG was a programme that supported the positive development of NGB and SA communication and working practices, and as a consequence, the policy became intimately linked with the previously mentioned NCF (competition structure rationalisation and modernisation) agenda.
The UKSG was also set during a time frame that complemented the development of the School Sport Partnership programme (discussed more fully in Chapter 2). The YST utilised the UKSG as a way of facilitating the introduction of Competition Managers (CMs) to the SSP network. Whilst the significance of the SSPs has diminished since the change in political administration (May 2010), the use of a high profile multi-sport event has been continued as a way of directing the work of newly employed SGOs.

The UKSG also proved significant to several NGBs as a way of identifying and developing their young talented sportmen and women. The evolution of the UKSG to the School Games has resulted in a slight change in policy focus (with team qualification process being driven by both schools and NGBs, as opposed to the NGBs alone), however the outcomes of this research highlights the value that sports placed on the event’s capacity to develop talent.

In addition to this focus on youth talent development, research findings also describe that the NGBs valued the UKSG’s capacity to improve their internal relationships and build momentum that supported the sport’s development of youth policy. It should be noted, however, that as explained in chapters 5-8 this positivity was often only noted by members of NGB senior management, who were able to recognise the UKSG’s impact and potential to support progress to broader NGB strategic objectives. With these findings in mind, the exploration of the UKSG policy and its implementation could serve as a useful point of comparison to the new School Games in future research projects.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 ‘sets the scene’ for the UKSG policy and explores, chronologically, the political, social and cultural context through which sport policy evolved, with specific attention directed to the development of elite and youth sport and the increasing inter-connection between them.

The theoretical basis of the study is presented in Chapter 3. First, the importance of theoretical analysis is explained, with particular emphasis
placed on how the use of theories, frameworks and models can help to analyse the policy process and provide insights into policy implementation. The thesis does not seek to test one particular theory of the policy process but uses a number of theories and frameworks to provide a series of lenses through which to undertake analysis. The chapter explains how the selected theories act as ‘heuristic devices’ or useful points of comparison in the analysis of stages of policy process. Meso-level theories and prominent perspectives on power are detailed in relation to existing UK sport policy in order to fully explain their relevance to the analysis of the UKSG. The second half of the chapter examines three meso-level frameworks and assesses their strengths and weaknesses. In particular, the approaches, theories and frameworks’ capacities to analyse not just how policy decisions are made, but also how they are implemented are summarised. It is this latter element of the policy process that is of particular interest to the study and consequently top-down and bottom-up perspectives on policy implementation are discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 outlines and examines the methodology adopted for the study. Following a discussion of the study’s ontological and epistemological assumptions, the chapter continues with a more detailed discussion of the critical realist research paradigm and the implications of its adoption for the project’s research strategy and case study design. The focus then turns to the discussion of this study’s research methods. Methods (interviews and participant observation) are discussed and evaluated in terms of their suitability, strengths and limitations. This is followed by a discussion of the various data analysis methods available to the researcher and their appropriateness to the present research. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study’s overall research protocol and its capacity to generate valid and reliable data.

The fifth chapter moves onto the analysis of the data collected. This chapter relates to all eight UKSG sports explored. It does not delve into the level of detail provided in sport-specific case-study chapters 6, 7 and 8, but provides an analysis of the involvement of the eight sports in the UKSG and thus
provides a context for the more detailed case analysis in the next three chapters. The chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, a brief introduction to each of the eight studied sports is presented. It is here that data are analysed with regards to why the sports were included within the UKSG, and their organisational and cultural characteristics. The chapter then moves on to discuss the UKSG’s six objectives, with particular mention of how they were formulated and how they were subsequently addressed by the sports. This analysis is then used to form a 'sport cluster model' whereby the eight sports are grouped based on their approach to the six objectives and their NGB’s organisational context. This clustering of the sports determined the selection of the three case studies explored in the thesis. The third and final section of the chapter analyses the perspectives of non-sport specific UKSG stakeholders such as Fast Track, the YST and UK Sport. Throughout the chapter, analysis is supported through reference to the concepts and analytical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapters 6-8 present the findings of the three case study sports: swimming, table tennis and volleyball. In each chapter, a common structure is adopted. Firstly, the sports are introduced. Each sport’s organisational structure, presence of separate SAs, history, popularity, and extent of home country devolution are summarised. In relation to Chapter 2, the interconnections between elite and youth sport programmes are highlighted through an exploration of the sport’s competition structures. Analysis then moves on to specifically consider the UKSG objectives and how the sports have attempted to address them using the UKSG funding. Findings are then used to support the analysis of how the UKSG policy has impacted upon the sport’s relationships between their home country NGBs, their SAs and with larger sport organisations such as the YST.

In the final chapter the empirical contributions made within chapters 5-8 are brought together to review the impact of the UKSG in relation to its six objectives. The policy theories introduced in Chapter 3 are utilised to explore how the eight sports have individually interpreted, negotiated and delivered the UKSG objectives in different ways to suit their sport. The resulting policy
outcomes are then compared with YST’s policy expectations. The second section of the chapter provides cross-case conclusions and comparisons, which are informed by insights from the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3. The analysis then addresses the original three research questions (mentioned above in section 1.3), and identifies potential avenues for future research. The final section of Chapter 9 presents a brief summary of important issues arising from the study as a whole. In particular, methodological issues are discussed in relation to the data collection and analysis processes used in the study.
2. The development of sport policy since 1960 -the changing salience of sport to government

5.1 Setting the scene

British sport policy since the mid 20th Century has been a period of turbulence. This has been confirmed by the growing literature within the area, which has emphasised the shifting interconnectedness of politics, policy and sport (Houlihan 1997). Sport policy is distinctive in that it lacks clear legislative boundaries and sharpness in definition found in many other policy areas such as education. Unlike sport, education policy has clearer definition of focus and boundaries and has received more consistent governmental attention over time, despite changes in political administration and values. Houlihan & White (2002) attribute the blurring of sport policy boundaries and its overlap with other political areas to several factors. Firstly, the policy area has only relatively recently been accepted by the government as a ‘legitimate focus’ of public agenda. Secondly, a common characteristic of sport policy is its instability of objectives highlighting the government’s tendency to utilise sport in order to achieve a range of political objectives. The policy area therefore experiences difficulty in developing continuity in practice. This leads to Houlihan & White’s (2002) third suggestion that sport policy over the past fifty years has witnessed varying degrees of salience from the government, with views from particular political administrations ranging between proactive and reactive.

Three specific interests have emerged through the unstable environment that characterises sport policy, elite sport, youth sport and mass sports participation. In particular, elite and youth sport agendas have received increasing governmental attention since the turn of the millennium. As will be discussed below, there is mounting evidence of integration between elite and youth sport policy motives and hence as elite sport policy advances, there is increasingly a corresponding impact in relation to youth sport. The subtle
aligning of agenda suggests that policy-makers perceive it to be more fruitful to interlink the objectives of both elite and youth sport policy, rather than to treat them as competing and distinct policy areas. There is also the realisation that youth sport has the potential to unearth future sporting talent (Houlihan & Green 2005). It was from these assumptions that the UKSG was developed.

It is important to acknowledge that the UKSG policy-making process, which provides an example of elite and youth sport policy collaboration, has been influenced by what has happened in past decades. This chapter will therefore explore, chronologically, the political, social and cultural context through which sport policy has evolved, with specific attention directed to the development of elite and youth sport interests and how the two have progressively become intertwined.

5.2 Timeline

In order to fully comprehend the sport policy that exists today, a periodised timeline will be employed that outlines the main activities since the 1960s that have contributed to the evolution of the policy area. It is important to consider that historical watersheds can be categorised in relation to their economic, political or sporting impact and deciding which of these have most relevance can be challenging and there is little agreement between authors regarding sport policy periodisation. It is therefore important to acknowledge that whilst this study will adhere to one model of periodisation, there are alternatives (see Houlihan & White 2002 for an example). Therefore, what may appear to be a significant shift in policy for this analysis, might be perceived as being far more incremental when other criteria for determining periodisation are adapted (see Hoyer, Nicholson & Houlihan 2010 for further explanation).

The preferred approach for this study will emphasise the political impacts upon sport policy. This conceptualisation relates to the work of Henry (1993), who identifies ‘policy change as structural shifts in the nature of the state’s role’ (cited in Green & Oakley 2001:75). In this respect, Henry links identifiable periods of differing political administration to specific activities within the sports development field. Three of these periods, detailed in Table
2.1, will now be concisely discussed, with specific reference to both elite and youth sport developments. It should be noted that this style of periodization is able to highlight surface or superficial change (for example, changes in the way National Lottery funding is distributed to sport and how this impacts on the administration of NGBs) as well as changes that occur at a much deeper, societal level (for example, actions by the state that change societal values regarding the importance or role of sport policy) (Houlihan et al. 2011).

Table 2.1: The periodization of sport policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early 1960s - Mid 1970s</td>
<td>The dominance of the East German and Soviet Union Olympic teams highlighted Britain’s declining international performance, which was attributed to the country’s lack of sport facility provision. This initiated a gradual realisation that it is the responsibility of the government to provide such facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 1970s - Early 1990s</td>
<td>The build up to and the implementation of the ‘new right’ Thatcherism administration which emphasised pro-market policies and deterred welfare initiatives. This leads to disinvestment towards sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1990s - 2010</td>
<td>The ‘Post Thatcher’ era, whereby welfare orientated goals made some return (Green &amp; Oakley 2001). Strategies and practices of commercial companies were continued in an attempt to ‘modernise’ and ‘join up’ the British government, which impacted upon the activities of NGBs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from the works of Henry (1993)

5.3 Early 1960s to early 1990s

- Overview

The period between 1960 and 1975 has been described as an era of welfare. A distinctive drive towards equality was evident through the targeting of disadvantaged groups. This was also a period of increasing government involvement within sport, accompanied with the emergent belief that sport was a legitimate aspect of welfare provision. It was the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) that was proactive at encouraging the government to intervene within sport from an arms’ length, ‘rather than simply as an arm of the state’ (Roche 1993:81). The rapid transformation of government attention towards sport, however, left some governing bodies feeling suspicious with a belief that the increase in welfare policies and government interference could lead to inferior uniformity and an undermining of the NGB role (Houlihan & White 2002).
The Wolfenden Committee (established by the CCPR) and its 1960 report that aimed to eliminate the policy vacuum that existed within youth sport policy and generate suggestions that would improve sport’s profile, represented a milestone for sport policy. It was the Wolfenden report that helped to establish the Advisory Sports Council (ASC), that later transformed into the ‘GB Sports Council’ in 1972.

The decision to alter the structure of the successful ASC into the GB Sports Council signified a change in the then Conservative government’s attitude towards sport. There was a growing realisation by central government that sport policy had the potential to enhance Britain’s wider social environment and therefore it should fall legitimately under its remit. This was reflected in the 1975 White Paper Sport and Recreation, which Bramham & Henry (1985) identify as a watershed publication for sport policy due to the importance it placed upon combining sporting objectives and a social agenda. Prior to this, the role of sport in society was considered to be more ambivalent, with wavering government support leading to sporadic and disjointed policies (Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan 2010).

Whilst the introduction of the GB Sports Council and the 1975 White Paper increased communication and resource dependencies between sport organisations and the government, no unified voice emerged to dominate sport policy and determine its direction (Houlihan & White 2002).

The change in prime minister from James Callaghan to Margaret Thatcher in 1979 introduced ‘New Right’ conservatism as a new style of political administration for Britain. The approach criticised the previous political emphasis placed on welfare and argued that it had only hindered, rather than helped Britain to address its growing economic crisis (Timmins 1995; Houlihan & White 2002). The twelve-year Prime Ministership of Thatcher was a period of relative neglect towards sport. The new right administration perceived sport as only a ‘quick fix solution to urban unrest… [and] a source of national embarrassment through soccer hooliganism’ (Houlihan & White 2002:28). These perceptions led to weakened links between the government and the GB Sports Council.
The new right style of political administration aimed to limit state expenditure through market fundamentalism (the adoption of private sector partnerships). It was not long before the performance-based appraisals and target-driven behaviour evident within the private sector, were introduced to the voluntary sector of sport (Henry 1990; Houlihan 1991).

In addition to the strong move towards privatisation, the Conservative government also dramatically reduced the role of the local government. There was a belief that this would help to remoralise organisations that had previously depended upon the activities of local authorities, effectively encouraging a more self-reliant culture (Houlihan & White 2002). This action initiated the crumbling of the ‘entitlement culture’ that had for years characterised the world of sport. Sports organisations were forcefully persuaded to become more aware of their responsibilities as NGBs and move away from their traditional expectation of financial support (Deakin 1994).

- **Elite sport development summary**

It was during the late 1950s that the British Government first became aware of the UK’s steady decline in success in international competition. This was partly stimulated by the increased dominance of the East German and Soviet Union as part of a new ‘systematic’ approach to elite sport development (Anthony 1980). The decline in success prompted discussion within the elite sector of British sport, which would eventually lead to its emergence as an important and separate interest within sports development.

Moving to the 1970s and the agenda of the newly created GB Sports Council was largely influenced by the CCPR, whose expertise and skills were relied on by the government (Houlihan 1991). The dependency resulted in a skewed allocation of funding towards elite sport and coach development, as opposed to the mass participation focus anticipated by the government (Houlihan & White 2002). This skew in expenditure supported ‘high performance athletes [with] a greater share of the Council’s resources than had ever previously been the case’ (Pickup 1996:20), and reflected the Council’s increasing degree of investment selectivity.


- **Youth and school sport development**

The recommendations of the 1960 Wolfenden report subtly raised the profile of youth and school sport, but as a consequence, caused Physical Education (PE) to be viewed as an integration tool for less academic pupils, rather than a subject with its own academic value (Hargreaves 1986). PE was a subject subsumed within other social objectives. To summarise, the area of PE, school and youth sport was ‘at best, only of peripheral value in the school experience’ in the 1960s to the early 1970s (Quant, 1975:77 cf. Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan 2010:102).

Moving through to the 1980s, and the number of young people within society was gradually reducing. For NGBs the consequences of this demographic change was a smaller sized pool from which talent could be drawn from (Houlihan 1991). Once this issue was coupled with the Conservative government’s desire to broaden the school PE curriculum, NGBs soon were pushed to address their traditional reluctance to become involved in school sport development. There was a gradual realisation that in order to progress their individual sports, the governing bodies would need to utilise their own resources to link with schools and identify school-aged talent (Houlihan & White 2002).

The reluctance of NGBs to support school sport was not the only challenge facing school sport policy-makers. The emphasis that then PM Margaret Thatcher placed upon market-based solutions was quickly applied to education, with power devolved from Local Education Authorities and placed in the hands of individual schools (Simon 1991). This proved to be problematic for many schools since they did not possess the necessary skills to manage their own affairs and budgets and imitate the processes of the private sector (Riley 1998; Tooley 1996). Schools that failed to maintain financial control or were simply under-resourced soon resorted to the sale of under-utilised playing fields, which impacted later on the quality of PE and school sport once the National Curriculum had been finalised in 1992.
Similar to the 1970’s, no unified voice emerged to direct school and youth sport policy throughout the 1980s. It seemed that any policy headway that was made was a result of ‘activism prompted by defensiveness rather than confident advocacy’ (Houlihan & Green 2006:74).

- **Link between elite and youth sport development initiatives.**

The lack of intent by the government towards sport in the 1980s made it difficult to combine the aspirations of school and elite sport. Despite the disinterest of the Conservative government, Kirk suggested that one consequence was to cause ‘the debate over the relationship between school physical education and elite sport [to enter] a much more public arena’ (1992:3). The publication of the six-year ‘TOYA’ (Training of Young Athletes) study in 1992 provided the first tangible effort made by the GB Sports Council to address youth and elite sporting concerns in an integrated manner (TOYA 1992). It was not until the mid 1990s, however, that government took concrete action to address the link between school, club and elite level sport, when the receipt of public funding to NGBs was linked with the enhancement of grass-roots development systems,

5.4 **Early 1990s to 2010**

- **Overview**

The ‘Post Thatcher’ era was much more supportive of sport. The election of John Major as leader of the Conservative Party in November 1990 instigated a relative explosion of initiatives centred upon the enhancement of British sport (refer to Table 2.4). As Houlihan & White confirm:

> ‘John Major, an enthusiast for sport, brought sport and sports development closer to the centre of the political stage.’ (2002:2)

John Major’s positive outlook towards sport bode well for GB Sports Council’s previously released corporate plan, *Sport in the community: Into the ‘90s* which announced a ‘progressive switching of resources towards activities at
the Performance and Excellence end of the spectrum’ (Pickup 1996:58) with a reduction of financial support at foundation level. In addition to the attention directed towards elite level performance, the Sports Council also mentioned a desire to ‘redefine its relationship with its governing body partners on a more contractual basis’ (Houlihan & White 2002:61). Such ambition highlights the continued emphasis given towards professional managerial activities that were evident within the era of Thatcherism.

The establishment of the National Lottery in 1994 was arguably the single most important decision within the recent history of British sport policy. From its conception, sport was identified as one of the five good causes that would each benefit from 20% of the funds generated by the Lottery (Green & Oakley 2001). This estimated £300m annual allocation provided sport organisations with the much needed financial support and also gave government considerable leverage over the direction of policy. The Lottery had been eagerly anticipated by British sport organisations which, over the previous decade, had been under increasing financial pressure (Houlihan & White 2002). The optimism generated by the Lottery was unfortunately short lived when sports organisations became aware of the funding application criteria. As Houlihan & White (2002) revealed, the government’s initial rules to access lottery funding were often demanding and left some poorer sports and areas of Britain unable to finance the required 35% ‘match funding’ for their project.

Since its introduction, the National Lottery has contributed to a variety of sport projects across the UK, including some established by the Youth Sport Trust (YST). The Trust, founded in 1994 by the businessman Sir John Beckwith, quickly emerged as the main organisation that influenced both youth and school sport, mainly due to the entrepreneurial skills of CEO, Sue Campbell and her close links to both Estelle Morris (former Secretary of State at the DfES) and Kate Hoey (former Minister of Sport) (Houlihan & Green 2006). The organisation’s early success (discussed later in the chapter) resulted in a rapid increase in funding opportunities in the form of successful Lottery applications, Sports Council grant aid and support from the then Department for Education and Employment (Houlihan & White 2002).
The establishment of the Lottery, Department of National Heritage (DNH) and the YST helped to ‘set the scene’ for the UK’s first sport policy White Paper in twenty years. In 1995, the Conservative Government published *Sport: Raising the Game*, which presented an agenda that focused on both school sport and excellence, however, not interdependently (see Table 2.2 for further detail of the main suggestions generated from the White Paper).

The clear emphasis that the White Paper placed upon elite development can be attributed to the actions of the then Minister of Sport, Iain Sproat. After visiting and exploring the elite systems of both Canada and Australia, Sproat announced the Government’s intention to engage in a form of policy transfer which would see the development of a similar national institute (Green & Oakley 2001). Unfortunately, due to the White Paper’s lack of guidance on the finance and management of the institute and the lengthy debates between government and the NGBs, the ‘British Academies’ did materialise for a further four years (Theodoraki 1998; Pickup 1996).

**Table 2.2: Summary of key points from ‘Sport: Raising the Game’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject heading</th>
<th>Policy / Recommendation</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1). Mass participation</td>
<td>Little mention of Sport for All policies. Withdrawal of the Government and the Sport Council from the provision of opportunities for mass participation given that increases in participation had reached plateau. Houlihan associates the silencing of the Sport for All lobby with numerous factors such as policy fatigue, blurring policy objectives, budget cuts associated with Compulsory Competitive Tendering and the increasing detachment between mass and elite sport segments in the sports development continuum (see Houlihan 1999:9).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2). Development of Excellence</td>
<td>Policy transfer from Australia and Canada - focus towards elite development, via elite academies and institutes. Little advice on how these academies might be financed or managed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3). Development of Excellence</td>
<td>Development of the role of Higher Education institutes in the fostering of elite athletes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4). Sport in Schools</td>
<td>Target of four extra hours each week of sporting opportunities at lunchtimes, in the evenings and at weekends. The report remained silent on how this target might be achieved.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5). Sport in Clubs</td>
<td>The introduction of conditional requirements for NGBs receipt of public funding.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6). Sponsorship in Sport</td>
<td>Encouragement of business sponsorship at a time when sport was frequently associated with negative imagery such as violence and doping.</td>
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</table>

**Sources:** DNH 1995; Pickup 1996

The general election of 1997 brought the Labour party to power, a change in political administration that followed eighteen years of Conservative
government. In relation to sport policy, a high degree of continuity was observed between the two political administrations, which positively impacted on the sports world through minimising the level of expected policy disruption. The main element of Conservative sport policy that was reiterated by the Labour Government, was the emphasis placed upon combining sport in schools with elite development in order to facilitate British international success (Houlihan & White 2002).

During this time of political transition, the Government opted to restructure the GB Sports Council dividing its responsibilities between the English Sports Council (ESC), which would work in parallel to the other home country Councils and UK Sport. The ESC would focus upon the advancement of sport across the development continuum. The ESC would work alongside the ‘UK Sport Council’, which would be responsible for the progression of elite athletes and related policy objectives (Houlihan & White 2002). The restructuring of the Sports Council was viewed in a negative light by other sport organisations. They perceived the bifurcation between ‘British’ and ‘home country’ sport as an increase in jurisdictional complexity. NGBs in particular were frustrated that they were now expected to deal with an additional body and cope with increasingly confusing procedures to secure funding (Houlihan & White 2002). This period of flux highlighted the need for the implementation of another Labour policy intention that aimed to create ‘joined up’ government and reduce previous departmentalism that characterised central government. Labour’s ultimate ambition was to move towards clearer partnerships at all levels of the government.

The election of Labour in 1997 replaced the political ideology of the ‘New Right’ to that of the ‘Third Way’. The New Labour perspective, described as a clear compromise between the Conservative’s ‘free market’ right-wing solutions and Labour’s traditional state welfare, left-wing focus, provides a logical explanation for the level of continuity observed between the two administrations (Driver & Martell 2000). The Third Way fashioned a ‘stakeholder society’ whereby all members of the public would be represented, however it also implied that any entitlement to welfare support
would now be linked to responsibilities. This latter theme, combined with the introduction of the ‘Best Value’ policy, would impact upon NGBs via a further increase in conditional funding. The entitlement culture that had previously existed within the voluntary sector of sport in the 1960s and 1970s had been effectively rejected.

The Best Value scheme emerged as a strategy for modernising a broad range of public services including sport, through improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery (Houlihan & Green 2005). Sport England incorporated the policy as part of its ‘priority sports’ criteria, whereby only prioritised sports could be in receipt of financial support, and only upon addressing welfare related goals (such as improved social inclusion).

‘Whereas previously, a governing body was often a small concern, run by committed volunteers, it can now be a multi-million pound business. This brings far greater responsibility for efficient management and financial propriety’ (Sport England Annual Report 1998-9, 1999:34).

NGBs adhered to these socially linked responsibilities, if only reluctantly, due to the risk of losing public funding. The culture that now existed amongst NGBs was not one of entitlement and expectancy, but one of resource dependency and conditional funding.

The turn of the millennium saw the publication of A Sporting Future for All, in which the Labour Government outlined their future intentions regarding sport policy and its continued focus on the social agenda. Again, the level of continuity that existed between the document and the previous Conservative policy document, Sport: Raising the Game was notable, as both strategies highlight a dual prioritisation of school sport and elite development (Houlihan & Green 2005) (see Table 2.3).

Table 2-3: The level of continuity between ‘Sport: Raising the Game’ and ‘A Sporting Future for All’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Focus on school’s PE curriculum, emphasis</td>
<td>Focus on school’s PE curriculum, emphasis towards the expansion of sports available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards traditional competitive team sports</td>
<td>Reduction of competitive sports dominance</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sportsmark and Specialist Sports Colleges policies introduced</td>
<td>Policies continued, with an emphasis of increasing the number Specialist Sports Colleges obtaining the Sportsmark standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Club links encouraged</td>
<td>This focus was formalised through PESSCL, an initiative that would follow the White Paper. The desire to enhance relationships between schools and sports clubs was indirectly linked to the development of elite talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellence British Academy of Sport plans formalised</td>
<td>Academies finally implemented, however, renamed as the UKSI. The effectiveness of the network of institutes was focused on in the Labour White Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlete funding mentioned through the established World Class Performance programme</td>
<td>World Class Performance programme continued and built upon, along with the wider influence of sport development networking. Attempts to reduce the fragmented nature of sport organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excessive focus directed to the enhancement of talent identification systems</td>
<td>Talent identification focus again dominated the White Paper, with suggestions of how Britain can become more systematic in its approach to elite sport and development pathways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Lottery established, however Local Authority expenditure was reduced</td>
<td>Lottery support towards sport continued, with little sign of increased Local Authority expenditure. Funds available to sport appear to be eroding</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport for all The White Paper outlines a gradual move from ‘Sport for All’ agenda towards targeting specific minority groups</td>
<td>Replication of the mass participation methods, with greater emphasis towards achieving equality in practices through a reduction of participation barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim to bring more mega-events to UK</td>
<td>The document introduces a new initiative for Local Authorities which involved the production of cultural plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continued, as clearly evident during the 2012 London Olympic bid</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting ban introduced, the only true evidence of disharmony between Conservative’s ‘New Right’ and Labour’s ‘Third Way’ ideologies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policies introduced that would aim to protect the interest of sport fans</td>
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</table>

In comparison to *Sport: Raising the Game*, the Labour document provided further detail in terms of its expectations and methods of implementation. The document also stated that ‘the Government does not and should not run sport’ (DCMS 2000:3), suggesting that it will merely facilitate those who are responsible. Many governing bodies viewed this statement as contradictory given the increasing use of conditional funding. Further evidence of the strategy’s inconsistencies was observed in the document’s forceful comments directed by the Government to the sporting bodies. *A Sporting Future for All* asserted that in order to receive public funding, NGBs should develop ‘a clear strategy for participation and excellence; and commit themselves to putting
"social inclusion and fairness at the heart of everything they do’ (DCMS 2000:20), which appears not to represent the ‘arms length’ approach that the Government claimed to prefer.

The Labour strategy was complemented in 2002 through the release of *Game Plan*, a more ambitious and better researched document generated by the DCMS and Government Strategy Unit. *Game Plan* presented the sporting world with an eighteen-year strategic framework, which directed the implementation of sport policy based upon research evidence. Despite the distortion of policy following London’s successful 2012 Olympic bid the document continued to be the key reference for policy concerning international success and enhancing participation pathways until Labour’s loss of power. A significant element of *Game Plan*, when comparing its content to *A Sporting Future for All* was the importance placed upon reducing jurisdictional complexity within sport development. The document refers to a need for more ‘direct’ funding pathways in order to minimise confusing liaison networks and inefficient administrative bureaucracy:

‘This report is about how to get more cash to the front line and spend less on bureaucracy, on box ticking and procedures’ (DCMS, Strategy Unit 2002:6).

Houlihan & Lindsey (2007) view the development of the ‘County Sport Partnership’ (CSP) initiative as a direct response to the criticisms of fragmentation expressed in Game Plan. The CSPs were progressively established across the country from 2001 with an original core function of contributing to the Governmental target of an annual 1% increase in participation up to 2020. CSPs were intended to enhance sporting opportunities for minority groups, simplify the local sporting infrastructure and develop more efficient links to clubs across a community (in conjunction with the PESSCL strategy, which will be discussed in greater depth shortly). Unfortunately, due to the changing nature of targets, there is limited evidence that the CSPs are proving to be effective in achieving central Government sporting aspirations (Houlihan & Lindsey 2007).
A number of the 58 recommendations stated in *Game Plan* (and the key recommendations of the subsequent Carter Report 2005) encouraged the further use of performance management systems sport. Quangos (Quasi autonomous non government organisations), such as UK Sport were encouraged to develop performance indicators (PIs) as part of an efficient policy monitoring process. This had daunting implications for many of the under-developed and old-fashioned NGBs within British sport that had never before tackled principles of strategic management. Robinson (2004) highlights four main challenges experienced or barriers erected by sport organisations in relation to the modernisation agenda of Third Way Labour administration. These included the limited understanding or appreciation of performance management processes by sports organisations; the use of poorly clarified PIs; the inadequacy of existing organisational structures; and finally the defensive attitudes of sport organisation management who were threatened by the prospect of change. It is this final barrier that has tended to be most restrictive in the application of performance management systems within sport. However, the increasing of dependency of NGBs on public funding for their survival and/or expansion and the criteria for receiving public funding, slowly forced attitudes to modernise and incorporate more professional managerial approaches.

Although in recent years significant progress has been made to direct NGBs towards the adoption of professional management systems, NGBs continue to be criticised for their focus on output, as opposed to outcome based goals. This critique prompted Sport England to produce *The Framework for Sport in England* (Figure 2.1) in 2004, which identified seven key generic PIs that NGBs should work towards as part of an effective policy monitoring process. These seven indicators (mass participation; club accreditation; membership numbers; coaching qualifications; volunteer loyalty; international success; British representation) required NGBs to put together a blueprint for their sport as part of a ‘Whole Sports Plan’ (WSP). NGBs were required by Sport England to develop a thorough and robust WSP in order to receive funding. WSPs articulate long-term goals, agreed outcomes and delivery plans for individual sports, whilst also outlining the level of investment required (over a
four year period) and exactly how funding will be spent, monitored and evaluated (Sport England 2004; 2008). Whilst the overall aim of WSPs was to rationalise the behaviour of NGBs when forming sports specific PIs and prevent any unnecessary trade-offs between cost efficiency and effectiveness of practice (DCMS, Strategy Unit 2002), in reality, they have hindered NGBs due to their cost of preparation and auditing.

Figure 2-1: The Framework for Sport in England

Source: Sport England 2004

The upsurge in government interest that characterised sport development since the early 1990s was also accompanied by changes in the organisational structure of both quangos and sport-related government departments. This has often added to the confusion regarding the policy network of sport.
Houlihan & White have suggested that when politicians are confronted with ineffective policy, they too often ‘turn to administrative reform as a highly visible solution when a more effective response might be to improve leadership capacity of management’ (2002:223). Although interventions by the DCMS have been viewed as an ‘intrusion’ by many NGBs, they have been forced into a position where they can do little to voice their opinions. The performance management culture that exists in the 21st century, combined with the heightened dependency of governing bodies on public funds has greatly reduced NGB autonomy (see Table 2.4).

More recent examples of government intervention in sport development can be seen in relation to the successful bid process and preparation associated with the London 2012 Olympic Games. In particular, the Labour and Coalition government’s concerns regarding the Olympic legacy programme ‘Places People Play’ has shaped the direction and focus of the programme and how £135m Lottery funding is allocated. The Places People Play programme aimed to protect playing fields, stimulate volunteer programmes and improve participation in Olympic sports between April 2011-April 2015 (www.telegraph.co.uk accessed 22nd November 2010). The latter aim is linked to the previous Labour government’s ambitious promise to ‘get 1m people doing more sport by 2012, delivered through Sport England’ (www.guardian.co.uk accessed 5th October 2010). However, Hugh Robertson (the Minister for Sport and Olympics) has expressed disappointment at the slow progress made by Sport England towards its target. The slow progress is perhaps in accordance with the claim that all ‘evidence shows that past Olympics failed to bring with them a sustained increase in participation’ and therefore the assumption that an Olympic legacy of increased participation is possible is perhaps unrealistic (Vigor et al. 2004:xiii).

This level of control was confirmed in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. The review proposed changes to centralized expenditure that would save in the region of £83bn in order for Britain to financially manage the implications of the economic downturn (HM Treasury 2010). Whilst the budget for the Olympic Games in London remained unscathed, it is likely that the
proposed changes to the sport councils\(^1\) and YST\(^2\) administration and funding will have a significant impact on the feasibility of the *Places People Play* legacy programme.

It had been argued by Oakley & Green (2001) that since the publication of *Sport: Raising the Game* there had been a clear increase in government intervention through selective reinvestment in sport policy initiatives. The late 1990s saw a shift in emphasis from mass participation to elite promotion is a clear example of this, as was the conceptualisation of Sport England’s ‘priority sports’. As a consequence to the current economic climate, the recent emphasis placed by the government upon selective re-investment (across many industries in addition to sport), has certainly encouraged NGBs to think more strategically. This, in turn, has helped the government to rationalise its expenditure and ensure that suitable returns are received in the form of contribution to social policy objective (Green & Houlihan 2006; Price 2011).

\(^1\) Sport England will see its funding cut by 33% over four years, while UK Sport faces a 28% reduction ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) accessed 26\(^{th}\) December 2010). It is anticipated that any financial deficits will be filled by lottery funding, commercial sponsorship and savings through reduced administration costs as a result of moving the two organisations under one roof in March 2015. It is worth noting however, that at times of economic stress and uncertainty, it is possible that lottery ticket sales will decline in years to come (Jennie Price, CEO Sport England, speaking at YST & Sport England combined conference titled ‘Challenges and Opportunities’ 18\(^{th}\) January 2011).

\(^2\) Youth Sport Trust will see a funding reduction of 30% with no alternative funds offered through the National Lottery. This 30% reduction was a welcomed revision to the Comprehensive Spending Review given that initially the YST were set to lose 100% of the funding that supported the School Sport Partnership network.
Table 2-4: Timeline of UK sport policy developments between the early 1990s and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key political event</th>
<th>Organisational and administrative implications</th>
<th>Funding implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990: John Major replaces Margaret Thatcher as PM</td>
<td>Increased positivity towards sport, with specific structures put in place to facilitate sport policy development. Major’s passion for traditional British sport gave focus towards elite development. Linked British success to national pride</td>
<td>Increased salience towards sport represented an increased understanding for sport policy’s need for public funding. £55m government commitment to support Manchester 2000 Olympic bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992: DNH Formed</td>
<td>New department bringing together arts, sports, broadcasting and tourism interests. This gave sport policy a clearer strategic purpose, whilst raising its profile at cabinet level</td>
<td>Much greater funding available compared to proceeding PM, however further centralised funding allocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992: Sports Match scheme introduced</td>
<td>Continued momentum of New Right pro-market policies in which competitive bidding for LA leisure services becomes compulsory</td>
<td>Sport organisations expected to generate a set percentage of public funding to support their nominated projects. Some organisations struggled to achieve the match funds. Revenue funding was excluded from the scheme, meaning that athletes and coaches could not draw from funds to support themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994: National Lottery</td>
<td>Crucial – largely for capital projects in early years. Sport was identified as one of the five causes that the Lottery would benefit</td>
<td>Sport to benefit from additional £200m - £250m pa by 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994: YST Established</td>
<td>Created a body to manage the development of youth sport within the UK. Established better communication between schools and NGBs</td>
<td>The organisation provides additional funding for sports and schools willing to participate in its numerous programmes. This funding comes from a variety of sources, mainly the Lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995: Sport: Raising the Game</td>
<td>Two emerging themes 1). Elite development and the creation of elite training centres 2). Youth sport and Schools</td>
<td>Grants to NGBs became conditional, evidence based practice introduced, with criteria for funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996: Atlanta Games</td>
<td>15 Olympic medals, 1 gold. A crisis for British success and national pride. Poor performances increased the pressure to implement elite training centres.</td>
<td>The World Class Programme (WCP) introduced as a result in 1997. This was to be financed by the Lottery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 – 1999: ‘New’ Labour administration elected (1997 specifically)</td>
<td>Introduction of ‘Best Value’ policy. This aimed to modernise Local Authority services. The DNH was also renamed as the DCMS, with new sports minister Tony Banks. The Sports Council was also reorganised into five bodies</td>
<td>Increased link between sport funds and social objectives. £100m of Lottery funds committed to developing facilities. The wishes of the sports community finally come to fruition after 4 years of debate. UK Sport created and became the distributor of lottery funds for elite development. Continuation of elite sport institute support via creating a network of centres renamed the ‘UK Sport Institute’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999: Sport England strategy doc: Lottery Fund Strategy 1999-</td>
<td>Twin objectives: 1). Local projects for all and 2). To improve international competition</td>
<td>Two funding strands: 1). Community Projects Fund (£150m) and 2). World Class Fund (£50m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1999: Active Sports</th>
<th>A pathway created to bridge the gap between foundation sport to the elite performance within the WCP programmes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000: A Sporting Future for All</td>
<td>Reiterated rhetoric that was set in <em>Sport: Raising the Game</em>. Refers to best Value policy and specialist sport colleges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NGB funds directly linked to P.I.s. Increasingly contractual relationships. NGBs required to produce national talent development plans identifying pathways from grass roots to international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000: Sydney Games</td>
<td>Prior to the Games, critics stated that there was too much Olympic sport focus, with non-Olympic sports left unsupported. The success of the Games did not help this matter: 28 medals won, 11 gold. Legitimated the increased level of government support towards elite sport</td>
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<td></td>
<td>World Class Fund/Lottery highlighted contributions to improved Olympic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001: Elite Sports Funding Review</td>
<td>The review highlighted a need for increased cooperation between UK Sport and Sport Councils. NGBs to expected to produce one integrated performance plan for their sports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommended that the three tier world class funding (Performance, Start, Potential) should be rationalised. Greater focus on coaching education. More effort pushed towards talent identification and development systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002: The coaching Task Force: Final Report</td>
<td>The report emphasised a need for Professionalisation of coaching. The role of Sports Coach UK was therefore to be reviewed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Extra funds allocated to develop, train and educate more full time coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002: Game Plan: A strategy for delivering the government’s sport and physical activity objectives</td>
<td>Major review of all levels, structure and sport financing. Symbiotic links established between sport, education and health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highlighted a need to simplify the fragmented funding arrangements in sport. Stated that further prioritisation of NGB funds would take place for elite sport, based upon twin track approach: 1). Medal potential and 2). Public popularity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002: Learning Through PE and Sport – PESSCL Strategy</td>
<td>Focused on enhancing poor relationships and structures that existed between NGBs and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over £1bn injected into the scheme which would benefit every school across the country in some form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004: Restructure of Sport England</td>
<td>Reorganisation of Sport England’s 75 funding programmes, to just 2 (community and National) streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced admin costs have released £12m more into sport investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005: Carter Report</td>
<td>A review of national sport effort and resources. Five key recommendations to develop UK sport systems that were ‘fit for purpose’ 1). Introduce robust monitoring systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efforts to encourage sports organisation to generate more funding from the commercial sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2). Secure commercial partners through marketing campaigns
3). Introduce a single community sports system involving the public, private and voluntary sectors
4). Reduce bureaucracy and administrative costs
5). Provide targeted incentives and commercial assistance - via a new National Sports Foundation (NSF) – to encourage individual and corporate support and to ‘help sport help itself’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005: IOC awards 2012 Olympics to London</td>
<td>Seven year LOCOG preparations begin.</td>
<td>Radical increase in elite support systems in preparation for the Games and in order to realise the target of 4th place finish for GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006: Change in economic climate</td>
<td>Announcement that Britain enters a period of economic recession</td>
<td>Funds redirected away from other sport projects and lottery causes to maintain Olympic preparations (for 2008 &amp; 2012 Games)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007: Gordon Brown replaces Tony Blair as PM</td>
<td>PESSYP strategy announced in 2008 as a follow-on strategy from PESSCL. Discussed in greater depth later in the chapter.</td>
<td>Further £100m made available for youth sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008: Beijing Games</td>
<td>4th place: 47 medals won, 19 gold. Legitimated the level of government support towards elite sport. 4th place target for 2012 Olympics achieved four years ahead of schedule</td>
<td>World Class Fund/Lottery highlighted contributions to improved Olympic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010: Coalition Government elected</td>
<td>General elections form a coalition government between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. David Cameron as PM as Britain gradual exit the economic recession. Comprehensive spending review announced, which has significant implications for sport organisations and projects</td>
<td>Sport England and UK Sport sees its funding cut by 33% and 28% respectively. These cuts are to be offset through changes in Lottery funding and savings in administration costs by housing the two organisations under one roof. YST initially sees all SSP funding withdrawn (£162m), however this is renegotiated following heavy protesting. SSP network now reliant on £60m funding pot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Houlihan & Green 2005: 55-8; Green & Oakley 2001: 79-80
- Elite sport development summary

Since the publication of the White Paper *Sport: Raising the Game*, a clear Government preference towards the development of sporting excellence has been apparent. The 1995 document consistently made reference to the development of British sporting talent, which at the time generated a supportive climate which was echoed in subsequent policy documents such as *A Sporting Future for All* in 2000. *Sport: Raising the Game*, detailed the Government’s intention to create an elite sports centre known as the ‘British Academy of sport’. Houlihan & White note that the objective of the Academy was ‘to provide top-class training facilities coupled with a concentration of supporting services such as coaching, sports science and sports medicine’ (2002:67).

The poor performance of Great Britain at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games provided a focusing event that prompted the Conservative government to increase the level of funding directed towards elite sport. In the four years that followed the Games approximately £100m of public funds was devoted to the support of around 600 athletes (Green 2005). This activity implied a realisation by the government that success requires significant investment, an action that was later justified through the significant improvement in British competitive performances at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

Britain’s failure at Atlanta also triggered the establishment of the ‘World Class Performance’ programme in 1996, which was later complemented by a further two subsidiary programmes, ‘World Class Potential’ responsible for providing resources for talent identification, and ‘World Class Start’ which focused upon systematic youth talent development (Houlihan & White 2002). The three tier programme was further supported by the changes made to the National Lottery application criteria, which enabled funds to be drawn to cover revenue costs and support athletes’ living expenses, effectively providing an opportunity for talented sports people to train full-time.
The publication of *Game Plan* in 2002 presented British sport with a methodical approach to elite development and talent identification, which built upon existing World Class Programmes and other Lottery funded projects. The document encouraged the reduction of devolved competition across the home countries and the enhancement of grass roots level participation in sport, in order to broaden the UK’s pool of talent. Talent identification systems have since been explored in greater detail and hence there is a growing realisation that Olympic hopefuls can be identified more systematically through projects such as ‘Sporting Giants’[^3], ‘Girls4Gold’[^4] and ‘Pitch2Podium’[^5]. Talent identification and support within the school environment has been encouraged through programmes such as TASS (the Talented Athlete Sponsorship Scheme which supports the transition between school sport and world class performance programmes) and the YST’s ‘Gifted and Talented’ initiative which will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.[^6][^7][^8][^9][^10]

Since the election of John Major in 1991, the government has become much more involved in British sport by comparison to the Thatcher period. The high level of commitment largely prompted by the embarrassing performance of the British team in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, provides an explanation for the sudden plethora of elite sport policies that emerged in the last fifteen years or so (See Table 2.5 below). The government’s heightened level of interest in sporting excellence continued as illustrated by the decision of the Labour government to contribute an additional £200m in March 2006, £200m[^6] in May 2007 and £65m in June 2008 to allow athletes to prepare for the Beijing and

[^3]: Sporting Giants: A UK Sport initiative in 2007 which sought to identify potential handball, volleyball and basketball athletes taller than 5’11” (women) or 6’3” (men).
[^4]: Girls4Gold: A UK Sport initiative in 2008 which sought to identify highly competitive sportswomen with the potential to compete in cycling, bob skeleton, canoeing, modern pentathlon, rowing and sailing.
[^5]: Pitch2Podium: A UK Sport initiative that identified ‘young football and rugby players who have been unsuccessful in securing a professional contract, with a second chance opportunity to succeed in a new Olympic sport’[^6](www.uksport.gov.uk accessed 10th January 2011).
[^6]: UK Sport’s ‘Mission 2012’ programme (launched by the Government in 2007) announced a £600million funding package (Between April 2006 – March 2013) to allow British Olympians to reach their 4th place medal target for the London 2012 Olympic Games. It was the original intention that of the £600m package, £200m would be provided from the Exchequer, £300m through the National Lottery and the remaining £100m through commercial sponsorship. However, given the economic climate at the time, commercial sector funds proved difficult to find, therefore a further £65m was provided from the Exchequer. Funding is distributed to sports based upon three key areas of concern: the athletes, the system (facilities and coaches) and the climate (the culture within each sport) [www.uksport.gov.uk accessed 11th January 2011].
the London Olympic Games when they were unable to secure commercial support during the economic recession (Houlihan et al. 2011; www.uksport.gov.uk accessed 25th June 2008); More recently, the coalition government in 2010 announced that the budget for Olympic Games preparation would not be reduced (HM Treasury 2010). However, as the 2012 Olympics draw closer the continuation of financial support post-Olympics is more doubtful.

Although in comparison to mass participation and school sport policies, elite level sport remained relatively insulated from the financial pressures associated with the economic recession between April 2008 and October 2009, there have been several Olympic sports that have ‘felt the pinch’. In April 2009, during the peak of the economic downturn, UKSG sports such as table tennis, volleyball and fencing experienced a significant cut in UK Sport funding for the London 2012 Olympiad. Although admittedly the sports did not meet medal targets at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, the sports were unprepared for the extent of funding withdrawal.

Whilst some sports strongly criticised the funding allocation decisions of UK Sport (which reflected the ‘no compromise’ stance that the organisation had adhered to since 2004) other UKSG sports such as swimming, athletics and gymnastics revelled in the finances made available at a time of financial uncertainty.

A further criticism that has grown in volume since 2007 is the perceived disproportional funding that central government (via UK Sport) has directed towards elite sport. Journalists in particular have made claims that the £264million budget of UK Sport for 2009-2013 (www.uksport.gov.uk accessed 11th January 2011) combined with the cost of hosting the Olympic Games in London (which rose from £2.4bn in 2003 to £9.3bn in 2007) has sucked the financial life out of non-elite sport projects outside of the capital city. Welsh politicians and project leaders in particular have stated that their central government and lottery funding has been diverted away from areas of community need towards supporting elite level (and more specifically

Table 2-5: Summary of elite focused policy initiatives since 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Policy / Initiative Title</th>
<th>Policy / Initiative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>National Lottery ‘Good Causes’</td>
<td>Introduction of revenue funding via the National Lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Priority Sports</td>
<td>Selective reinvestment directed towards NGBs who would now only receive public support through the achievement of set conditions linked to schools, grass roots schemes, elite sport and social objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>WCP (World Class Performance Programme)</td>
<td>The programme focused on the funding of elite level athletes, as part of the ‘no compromise’ philosophy of UK Sport. Successful athletes on the WCP would receive funding, coaching, training and competition support. Those athletes that failed to deliver results would have their funding withdrawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>WCP extension</td>
<td>Introduction of World Class Start and World Class Potential programmes that would together aim to systematically identify and develop talented athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>UKSI (UK Sports Institute)</td>
<td>World class facilities made available to top-level athletes. The institute was introduced at a time when increased National Lottery funding allowed some athletes to train full time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Priority Sports emphasised</td>
<td>Swimming fell victim to the ‘ruthless’ approach of Sport England. Their failure to meet funding criteria at the Sydney 2000 Games resulted in a demotion in priority status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LTAD (Long Term Athlete Development Programme)</td>
<td>A ten-year plan, that would aim to develop beginners to elite level. Programmes were specified to suit individual sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>IOC awards the 2012 Olympic games to London</td>
<td>Heightened public support for the development of elite systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Beijing Olympic Games</td>
<td>Target of 8th place exceeded. Final positioning for UK: 4th place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>London Olympic Games</td>
<td>Target of 4th place for UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Youth and school sport summary

Similar to sport development policy as a whole the agenda of school sport and PE over the previous two decades has witnessed a significant increase in government-backed initiatives. As Sue Campbell, the cross-departmental government advisor stated:

‘If you truly want to move policy, a lot of it’s about passion but an awful lot of it’s about evidence against objectives…they [the government]
haven’t suddenly decided that PE is a jolly good thing, they have decided that PE and school sport can help… improve standards, a change in school ethos, tackling behaviour, reducing truancy, creating kids with a strong sense of citizenship, increasing creativity and curiosity in kids’ (Houlihan & Green 2006 from study transcriptions).

It was in 1993 that the initial statement of the potentially fruitful links between the social and the youth sport agendas were identified. Young People and Sport: frameworks for action was a Conservative Party policy statement that connected the government’s non-sport specific social agenda priorities (for example, improved attendance a school and improved academic achievement) with the benefits associated with PE and school sport (DES 1993). Although the policy document helped to advance the political profile of PE and school sport, it also according to theorists such as Penney (2000) and Kirk (2004) weakened the subject area’s intrinsic educational value.

The Young People and Sport statement anticipated the importance that would be directed towards school sport in Sport: Raising the Game which identified school sport as an issue distinct from education, significantly enhancing the policy area’s political status. Despite the importance placed upon school sport and PE, the investment that followed the policy document was modest. It was this disappointment that prompted Sue Campbell, who at the time was head of the National Coaching Foundation, to begin her lobbying campaigns that would later create school sport initiatives such as Champion Coaching and develop the ‘TOP Sport’ resources that supported the delivery of sport by school teachers (Houlihan & Green 2006).

Although it lacked essential follow-up investment, Sport: Raising the Game helped substantially to generate an accommodating climate for the establishment of the Youth Sport Trust (YST), a body that quickly emerged as the lead organisation for youth sport development. After an initial period of struggle for policy leadership with the Sports Council, the Trust swiftly began to fulfil their ambitions of implementing ‘quality physical education and sports programmes for all young people aged eighteen months to eighteen years in
The change of political administration to Labour in 1997 reinforced the importance government placed upon education. The emphasis was accompanied by a stronger link to social inclusion and equality, which added profile to YST’s efforts to address the startling decline in the number of school children engaging in over two hours of PE per week (Houlihan & White 2002).

* A Sporting Future for All, published in 2000, reflected the Labour government’s commitment to education through school sport policy initiatives. The emphasis placed upon school sport was made clear from the outset with, for example, Tony Blair declaring in the foreword that ‘it is in school where most of us get our first chance to try sport. It is here that children discover their talent and their potential’ (DCMS 2000:2). Unlike the previous Conservative policy, *A Sporting Future for All* was much more direct in its approach. It not only set targets for school sport and PE, but it also suggested a five-point plan that would accomplish specific goals such as the expansion in the number of the Specialist Sports Colleges (SSC). The SSC initiative was later complemented by the extensive network of SSPs (see Figure 2.2).
Unfortunately, as with most policy initiatives, the successes associated with the SSP network (which included the significant rise in young people taking part in at least two hours of school sport a week from 25% in 2002 to 90% in
2009) did not come without challenges (YST 2008/9; DCSF 2009). One problematic area that remained unresolved into the 2000s related to the internal 'youth development systems' of many NGBs. These systems tended to exclude the SSCs (and SSPs) from their performance pathways, effectively encouraging young athletes to avoid competitive school sport participation (Houlihan & White 2002). More recent initiatives such as the employment of CMs and the creation of the NGB NCF attempted to address the missing link between school sport and club sport and create a logical pathway from grass roots sport, to elite sporting success.

2003 saw the publication of *Learning through PE and Sport*, a cross-departmental document from the DfES and DCMS, which summarised the objectives of PESSCL (Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links). The PESSCL programme implemented activities that would bring closer together the ambitions of schools and clubs (see Table 2.9 for detail of the programme’s elements). The level of exchequer funding that supported the programme was substantial:

*The Government is investing £459m to transform PE and school sport. This funding is on top of £686m being invested to improve school facilities across England. Together, this means that over £1bn is being made available for PE and school sport, and all schools in England will benefit in some way* (DfES/DCMS 2003:1).

The increase in public support for school sport has been described by Houlihan & Green (2006) as a political attempt to compensate for the level of neglect faced in previous years. In 2007, the PESSCL strategy was extended until 2011 in the form of PESSYP (Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People) by then PM, Gordon Brown. In total, £733m was committed by the Labour government to ‘give every child the chance of five hours of sport every week…[through] greater emphasis on competition within and between schools, a network of competition managers and a new National School Sports Week’ (www.culture.gov.uk accessed 13th July 2007). At time of writing, the coalition government is drastically reducing funding from the PESSYP strategy from 2011. Additionally, it is felt that the end of PESSYP is
justified in terms of returning discretion to head teachers. Other YST-led initiatives such as the SSP staffing and organisational infrastructure are also set to experience significant financial cuts as a consequence of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. The discontinuation of ring-fenced funding for the SSP infrastructure and the demise of Specialist Sports Colleges, coupled with the increasing autonomy schools have over their budgets and rising pressure on schools to excel in subjects other than PE, is likely to leave the subject of school sport battling for financial support and timetable inclusion.

The impressive progress made between 1991 and May 2010 with regards to raising the political profile of school sport and PE can been attributed to the, perhaps fortuitous coincidence of ‘policy, political and problem streams’ to use Kingdon’s terminology (1984). As part of their efforts to account for the increased momentum and profile of school sport and PE policy, one senior DfES civil servant concisely attributes success in the area with several key factors such as ‘a ‘passionate’ Prime Minister; an understanding within government that PE and school sport is about more than PE and school sport; increasing behavioural problems in schools; the emergence of the YST on the national stage; and a political awareness that investment now will be of value for a home 2012 Olympics’ (cited in Houlihan & Green 2006:88). In essence, government support for school sport and PE was more heavily dependent on its capacity to demonstrate an impact on general educational objectives than on improvements in pupil participation. As one senior DCSF civil servant commented:

‘It’s not simply about PE and school sport. If what we end up with at the end of this is lots of kids having lots of fun [but] making no bigger difference perhaps to behaviour, attitude, motivation and achievement, then actually we will have failed’ (cited in Houlihan & Green 2006:86).

It is worth highlighting that not every aspect of school sport experienced the same level of political uncertainty or had been treated as simply a means to broader school / educational ends. One aspect that has been perceived relatively positively throughout the economic downturn and by successive
governments is youth talent identification and development. The sustained level of interest by governments and sporting quangos towards the fruitful link made between school sport competition and elite development suggests that policies such as the ‘National Competition Framework’ and UKSG (and the new School Games) and perhaps the Gifted and Talented element of PESSYP are set to survive the funding cuts. Kirk’s observation in 2004 is still valid today, that ‘it seems that it is nowadays impossible to speak about physical education, in the UK at least, without reference to sport, and specifically, elite sport’ (2004:185). In order to appreciate the foundations of Kirk’s statement, attention will now turn towards exploring the link that has increasingly been made between school and elite sport.

Table 2-6: Summary of youth and school sport policy initiatives between the early 1990s and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Policy / Initiative Title</th>
<th>Policy / Initiative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>YST set up</td>
<td>Early introduction of several youth-centred sport initiatives such as Champion Coaching and TOPs programmes that helped to combine teaching resources with training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Sport: Raising the Game</td>
<td>John Major made clear within this White Paper that school sport would be a central theme within British sport policy. The statement aimed to make PE a compulsory subject for students aged between five and seventeen, which would complement the additional focus towards extracurricular school sports. In spite of national survey evidence which identified a decline in competitive team sports, the Conservative Government chose to re-emphasise these sports within the National Curriculum. The strategy clearly prioritises competitive team sports within the National Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Sportsmark &amp; Challenge Fund</td>
<td>Sportsmark awards were developed as a way of identifying and recognising schools that have particularly good policies for sport. The award was also accompanied to the £1million ‘Challenge Fund’ which provided financial incentive to schools that made effort to work with NGBs to strengthen school and club links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Active Schools</td>
<td>Launched by Sport England as a complementary scheme to the World Class Performance Programme. An attempt to create clear pathways to elite level sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>A Sporting Future for All</td>
<td>The White Paper clearly emphasises the need for performance pathways via the ‘From playground to podium’ school based agenda. The achievement of this pathway is prescribed through five key initiatives, financed by Lottery funding: 1). Rebuild school sports facilities; 2). Create 100 specialist sport colleges by 2003 (this target was raised to 200 by 2004); 3). Increase after-school sport; 4). 600 school sport coordinators; 5). Provide coaching support through a network of specialist sport colleges linked to regional UKSI centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>School Sport Alliance</td>
<td>Group formed to facilitate partnership development and coordinate stakeholders’ approaches. The group comprised of – YST, DfEE, DCMS, Sport England, and the National Lottery ‘New Opportunities Fund’ distribution board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Sport Partnerships introduced

School Sport Partnerships are groups of schools (and sport specialist employees) working together to develop PE and sport opportunities for all young people.


A cross-departmental publication from the DfES and DCMS which aimed to improve the links between schools and clubs via eight initiatives:
1. SSCs
2. SSCos
3. Gifted and talented
4. QCA PE and school sport investigation
5. Step into sport
6. Professional development
7. School/club links
8. Swimming

2003 Gifted and Talented – branch from the PESSCL strategy

Aims to enhance school and club links through improving teaching/coaching quality and increasing the self motivation and esteem of young talent sports people

2003 Building Schools for the Future

Sport was included in this biggest ever school facility investment programme that sought to rebuild or renew every secondary school across. This programme helped to reverse the decline in playing fields and indoor facilities

2005 National Competition Framework & Competition Managers

The National Competition Framework for young people is a YST initiative that sets to realize the following vision: development of a world-class system of competitive sport for young people through the transformation of content, structure and presentation of competitive opportunities. In addition, the framework should heighten the profile for school sport. £6.75m government investment has been made to appoint 225 competition managers across England to help establish a national competition framework for a wide range of sports (21 in total) and deliver clear consistent and progressive competitive opportunities for all young people

2006 UK School Games

A multi-sport event for the UK’s elite young athletes of school age. The event is discussed more fully throughout the thesis

2007 PESSYP

An extra £100m on top of £633m made available to youth sport in 2007 was used to extend the PESSCL strategy until 2011 in the form of the PE and School Sport strategy for Young People. PESSYP maintained the YST and Sport England’s combined work programmes through a multiple focus of sport development (elite talent), social agenda and educational values

2008 National School Sport Week introduced

This weekly school sport week in July aims to engage more than three million school children involved in PE and school sport at any one time (The most at any time of the year in England). The programme is managed by YST and existing SSP staff through intra and inter school competition

2010 Comprehensive Spending Review

This government-led spending review evaluated in October 2010 the expenditure of centralise departments and explored ways in which this expenditure could be reduced

Source: Adapted from Houlihan & White 2002; DfES/DCMS 2002; www.youthsporttrust.org accessed 2nd February 2011)
- **Link between elite and youth sport initiatives**

The growing interconnectedness of elite and school sport policy over the past two decades, reflects the steady realisation by politicians that the two agendas possess a degree of compatibility. The ‘Active’ programmes implemented by Sport England in 1998 is a prime example of this policy interconnectedness. Figure 2.3 portrays the perceived logical connection between the Active schemes and how they have incorporated other fully developed programmes in order to reduce the gap between the World Class Programmes (WCP) and foundation level sport (Houlihan & White 2002).

**Figure 2-3: Diagrammatic representation of the ‘Active’ programmes launched by Sport England**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Communities</th>
<th>Active Sports</th>
<th>World Class Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Incorporated initiatives such as Awards for All, School Community Sport Initiative, Women and Sport Advisory Group, GirlSport, Sporting Equals and the National Federation of Disability Sport)</td>
<td>(Incorporated initiatives include: Millennium Youth Games, Volunteer Investment Programmes, Quality Accreditation for Sports Development, Sports Leader Awards, Champion Coaching)</td>
<td>(Potential, Start, Performance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: Adapted from Houlihan & White 2002:87**

In addition to the Active Programmes, several policy documents also reiterated a growing interconnection between elite and school sport objectives. *A Sporting Future for all and Game Plan* along with the *Learning through PE and Sport* document identified targets that were specifically designed to enhance the processes of NGB elite selection, through ‘tapping’ into school sport youth talent. Kay (2003) suggested that the growing interplay between the two policy areas resulted in a blurred distinction between PE and sport. This suggests that the traditional value dissonance that existed between the two terms has reduced allowing a more synchronised approach to emerge.
The previously mentioned PESSYP strategy and its predecessor PESSCL provide other examples of government funded initiatives that combine elite and school sport agendas. Both strategies included the YST ‘gifted and talented’ programme that sought to provide talented young people with support systems (such as mentors) for their training, lifestyle and academic demands.

Since 2005, the YST have steadily extended their focus on talented young sportsmen and women through encouraging twenty-one sports to develop a NCF (mentioned in Chapter 1). The frameworks produced by the sports aims to clarify the pathway for young people to enter a sport, appropriately and optimally compete and train in a sport and progress towards elite level performance. The framework is reviewed by an assessment panel prior to its implementation where representatives from Sport England, YST, UK Sport, NGBs and schools determine whether it suitably enables ‘a step change in [the] content, structure and presentation of competitive opportunities for young people’ (DCSF/DCMS, 2006:1). To achieve this step change, sports are expected to modernize their competition structures and formats in a way that merges the competitive outlets provided by SAs and NGBs representing the same sports. The grass roots end of the competition pathway is delivered in the form of inter-school sport by a network of 225 UK-wide CMs which are the connecting link between school intra-school sport and club level sports competition.

Whereas intra and inter-school sport competition features heavily at the bottom of the NCF, the multi-sport UKSG is positioned at the performance end of the competition pathway. The YST’s efforts to provide elite-level multi-sport event experience to talented young people through the UKSG displays yet another example of how youth and school sport policy agenda was aligned with the aims of performance sport policies.

Although the election of the Coalition government in 2010 resulted in a reduction in government funding for youth sport, the integration of elite and youth sport policy goals has not appeared to have lost priority or momentum. The School Games has been proposed as a larger, multi-sport replacement
for the current UKSG. Although the scale of the event has expanded, the overarching aim to impact on NGBs’ approach to youth sport has not changed. Moreover, that aim has been further encouraged through efforts to increase the critical mass of people being introduced to sport. By increasing the ‘talent pool’ through the NCF and School Games initiatives, it is hoped that more talented young people will progress through the competition structures of the twenty-one NGBs. This systematic approach to talent identification at a young age has caused representatives of physical activity lobby groups to voice concern. Tam Fry, spokesman for the National Obesity Forum has suggested that the £10m directed towards future School Games could be more fruitfully spent on the promotion of physical activity, rather than an elitist event. ‘This government is only interested in champions, and to hell with everyone else’ (cited by Moss www.guardian.co.uk accessed 22nd November 2010).

In consideration of the increasing number of youth sport initiatives that incorporate elements of talent identification and development into their aims and objectives, it could be suggested that the cross cutting agenda of school sport and PE has evolved since the early 1990s, when the subject area was more closely associated with enhanced academic development.

5.5 The key sport policy actors – a complex array of interrelationships

The development of sport policy through the past half century has witnessed an increase in public and commercial sector interest within an area that has traditionally been dominated by volunteers. The pattern of policy development would suggest that there is growing receptiveness to, if not advocacy for, sport policy amongst many government departments within the UK, due to the increasing realisation that sport has the potential to accommodate social, economic and political agenda. As Houlihan has argued, ‘the triangular relationship between government, the governing bodies (or voluntary sector) and the commercial sector has become more intense and more significant in shaping the development of sport’ (1997:147). Incorporated within these
sectors are four main groups of organisations and individuals with varying forms of interest in the way in which sport policy is developed (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: Groups of sport and leisure interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Those involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport and leisure consumers</td>
<td>Members of the public who create the demand for a sport and leisure service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and leisure providers</td>
<td>Leisure managers, PE teachers, coaches and sport development officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct sport and leisure support organisations</td>
<td>Schools and NGBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect sport and leisure support organisations</td>
<td>Local authority community development and land use services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Houlihan & White 2002

These four interest groups underline just how complex and dynamic the infrastructure of sport policy truly is. As observed through Game Plan’s ‘map of sport’ shown in Figure 2.4, the infrastructure of sport in the UK is far from straightforward. The numerous national, regional and local organisations that are directly or indirectly involved in sport policy have generated a complex array of interconnections and resource dependencies.
It has been suggested that jurisdictional complexity was introduced to sport policy in the 1960s as a result of the establishment of the ASC. Quangos have
been described as ‘organisations that are not under direct parliamentary control but are clearly linked to the government by, for example, financial arrangements, lines of accountability, or statutory obligations’ (Houlihan 1991:82-3). Quangos provide the government with the opportunity indirectly to influence a particular policy area or chose to take a step back should they not wish to be directly involved. This latter behaviour is commonly seen in relation to sensitive policy issues, whereby the quango acts as a buffer for the government (Houlihan 1991).

The interdependencies existing between the numerous sport organisations, quangos and government departments involved in the design and implementation of sport policy, make the creation of policy a difficult process that rarely satisfies all those concerned. Whilst the network of sport organisations is well established, a consensus between them is absent. Each organisation will have varying interests in relation to sport policy with regards to objectives and means of achieving them in relation to mass participation, youth sport, or elite development. When this characteristic is combined with the increasing tendency for sport to be ‘cross cut’ with other policy agendas (for example, school sport delivery as a tool for academic development), it is no wonder that sport has difficulties projecting a coherent profile, for example in relation its intrinsic value.

5.6 Motives behind government involvement in sport

As previously implied, Britain throughout the past fifty years has observed period of flux with regards to the level of government commitment towards sport. The motives that lie behind this varied involvement have, in general, linked to other political agendas, rather than being limited to sport. When referring to Table 2.8, the noticeable flexibility of sport policy can be observed in relation to other political agendas.
Table 2-8: Representation of the varied motives of government involvement within sport policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health related objectives</th>
<th>Political related objectives</th>
<th>Social related objectives</th>
<th>Economic related objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aging population</td>
<td>Military fitness</td>
<td>Protect class</td>
<td>Urban regeneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity epidemic</td>
<td>International relations</td>
<td>Social control – prevent delinquency and vandalism</td>
<td>Failure of private markets to provide facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve health and living standards</td>
<td>Boycotting Olympics – international statement of disapproval</td>
<td>National Prestige</td>
<td>Workforce productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier workforce – lower NHS expenditure</td>
<td>Social integration – redistribution of opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Gratton & Taylor 2000; Coalter 1988

This versatility of sport policy reaffirms Houlihan’s statement that ‘it is one of the common clichés associated with sport that sport and politics should not mix. Showing the naivety of such a distinction is fast becoming a sport in its own right’ (1991:5). There is growing comprehension that it is an impossible task to completely insulate sport from politics and it is therefore probable that government motives will always have the ability to shape sport’s policy direction.

With specific reference to elite sport development, there has been significant expansion of governmental interest since the early 1990s. The concern was initially triggered by the perception of a steady decline in international performance since the mid 1980s but, similar to all other areas of sport policy, the motives for involvement in elite sport have extended the sport-sub-sector. This was confirmed in the Sport and Recreation White Paper in 1975 in which international sporting success was described not only as an achievement for UK athletes, but also as a ‘great value for the community not only in terms of raising morale, but also by inspiring young people to take an active part in sport’ (DOE 1975, cited in Gratton & Taylor 2000:112).

In comparison to elite sport policy, the underlying motives of government interest towards youth sport are less clearly defined. A likely cause for this ambiguity is due to the issues and objectives being intimately associated with
two governmental departments, the DCMS, which has a firm advocacy position towards sport development and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (previously the DfES) whose interests are focused on the education and the broader development of children (Houlihan 1991).

The underlying motives of Government towards sport policy intervention have varied over time as social, economic and political circumstances have altered in Britain. Changes in political administration such as that between Margaret Thatcher and John Major, have dramatically impacted upon the level of government involvement in sport policy. Major’s enthusiasm towards sport development saw the policy area evolve from a perceived public threat in need of control to a social benefit that encouraged cohesion and inclusion.

5.7 The Context of the UKSG

In consideration of the above discussion, a brief description of how the UKSG came about now follows. This description is supported by the findings collected and analysed as part of research method described in Chapter 4.

The event emerged at a time when elite and youth sport objectives were gradually aligning and motives of the government towards sport were generally positive, with state involvement in sport policy development rising. The increasingly ‘hands on’ approach of the government did at times see sport policy’s traditional weakness and openness be taken advantage of, leaving the objectives of policies such as the UKSG vulnerable to reinterpretation.

There was a consensus among the UKSG stakeholder interviewees that the event came about fairly rapidly and consequently, insufficient time was allocated to the consultation process.

‘When it started it came about out of the blue, so there wasn’t a planned approach of ‘we are going to have the UKSG and this is its purpose’, it was almost like that was written after the event’ (Sue Maughan, Senior National Governing Body Services Officer for the Sports Council for Wales, interviewed 20th April 2009).
Richard Caborn (Founder of the Games, ex Minister for Sport and President of the UKSG) explained that the policy came about through the disbanding of the Millennium Commission, and the need to allocate £25m of the Commission’s surplus money. £6m was therefore ring-fenced for the coordination and development of a multi-sport event for young people, which was associated with the London 2012 Olympic legacy. The distribution of these funds has since become the responsibility of the ‘Legacy Trust UK’, an independent charitable trust. The Legacy Trust UK therefore effectively inherited the UKSG and its six underlying objectives that were formulated by the DCMS and the YST. This short-term planning associated with the creation of the UKSG resonates with the ‘Multiple Streams’ analysis of the policy process, whereby solutions are linked to problems through a chance meeting of three political streams (discussed further in Chapter 3). In the case of the UKSG, the multiple streams were connected through the support of ‘policy entrepreneur’ Richard Caborn, who saw the value of providing a Labour-owned London 2012 Olympic legacy which was financed by the soon expiring Millennium Commission.

The perception of the purpose of the UKSG varied between interviewees, however the majority agreed that the event proved beneficial for talented young people with aspirations to succeed at international multi-sport events.

The YST, which had been charged with the task of coordinating the event and delivering on its accompanying intended policy outcomes, perceived the event as an effective promotional tool for other areas of their work. For example, the UKSG have proved beneficial in raising the profile of the YST’s Competition Manager (CM) network and the National Competition Framework (NCF) focus.

Whilst the YST promoted the UKSG through linking it with pre-existing work around bridging the competition frameworks of schools and NGBs, other perceptions of the policy’s main area of focus are less clear.

‘Initially it [UKSG] was sold on school competition. So some of them [NGBs] came into it a little misled because they thought it would raise
Most interviewees representing the first five sports to be included in the UKSG associate the early years of the UKSG policy with confusion and disorder. An early lack of clarity, and a misleading policy title, caused some initial tension between NGBs and their relevant School Associations (SAs). Whilst some of these tensions were resolved, problems still remained in the more traditional sports such as swimming and gymnastics, which will be discussed in more depth later. This early misconception of the UKSG’s purpose has allowed for some leeway in how the sports have approached the event. Consequently the scope of the policy has widened with the policy outcomes deviating from the initial policy intentions and evidence of ‘street level bureaucracy’ (localised altering of policy discussed further in Chapter 3) has been observed.

Given the speed at which the UKSG policy was developed there is limited evidence to suggest that all stakeholders were consulted regarding which sports were to be included in the first UKSG:

‘the sports were determined with no consultation to the home countries, it was just literally up to the sports that Glasgow were willing to host’

(Sue Maughan, Senior National Governing Body Services Officer for the Sports Council for Wales, interviewed 20th April 2009).

Sport Director at the YST, Alison Oliver supported this statement in explaining that:

‘The original decisions around which sports [were included in the 2006 UKSG] were led by Richard Caborn working with the YST…athletics, swimming and gymnastics were invited because they tend to be the cornerstone of the Olympic programme and they are also very significant in the national curriculum at the time’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).

In addition to these three, table tennis was invited to offer a Game sport to the programme. This decision was supported by the fact that the sport is:
‘relatively easy to take part in and tends to be big in schools and not gender biased’. (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5\textsuperscript{th} January 2009).

Fencing was introduced as the fifth sport by chance. Evidence highlights that the Chair of Sportscotland (as home country hosts of the first UKSG) successfully lobbied for the sport’s inclusion.

It was not until the second UKSG when consultation with other UKSG stakeholders took place. YST had originally intended to expand the programme to 12 – 15 sports, however given the economic climate and the loss of the event’s main sponsor, this number became purely aspirational. In 2007 badminton, judo and volleyball were added to the Games. These sports were selected by the four home country sports councils, despite volleyball not having a Welsh governing body at the time:

‘Again, these were thought to be sports that had significance in home countries but were also sports that we could do things within school sports so we steered away from things like cycling and equestrian because the games have got a dual focus; a big four day spectacle, but also a pipeline development in school sports. We’ve selected them around their potential to develop meaningful competition pathways.’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5\textsuperscript{th} January 2009).

The objective behind the UKSG from the viewpoint of the YST was to encourage the UKSG sports to develop their sport from both a top-down and bottom-up approach. As part of the NCF, sports must develop a competition framework that the network of CMs can work within at grass-root level, whilst also linking in a pathway for young people leading to the UKSG. The YSTs ability to interlink the UKSG to their NCF initiative echoes the somewhat opportunistic actions that underpin Kingdon’s multiple streams approach to policy process. As will be emphasised later in Chapter’s 3 and 9, the YST were able to combine problems experienced through the NCF with the UKSG as a suitable solution. The event therefore proved fruitful in gradually
decreasing the power of SAs and catalysing the cultural and structural change within NGBs encouraged through the NCF.

As will be highlighted in later chapters, the motives behind the individual sport’s involvement in the UKSG do not always directly correspond with the YST’s objectives (listed in Table 1:1). Sports have agreed to add the UKSG to their competition profile for a variety of reasons that do not always interlink with the Trust’s NCF focus. This is made particularly evident from comments of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish NGB representatives who were not explicitly involved in the YST’s English driven initiative. One fundamental reason (but not the only reason) why sports have agreed to be involved in the UKSG is the substantial financial support that accompanies the event. Each UKSG sport receives support to develop sport based projects linked to the six UKSG objectives, and is required to make only minimal contributions to the £3 million annual cost of the event. However, evidence would suggest that this generosity has contributed to an ‘expectancy culture’ within the sports, who are now largely to self-fund any future involvement in the event, or have not factored in for any UKSG contingency in their Sport England whole sport plans.

‘I don’t think it’s a secret that they [the sports] were heavily lobbied and it was indicated it would be very good for them to be part of the Games. We [YST] also obviously have the development funding grants and so if you are able to say to a sport, “You’re going be part of a great event that is paid for your athletes to be there. We pay for all their accommodation, all the food… and the £60,000 of development funding”, that’s a very attractive package’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

This attractive package offered by the YST is evidence of Luke’s first dimension of power (discussed in Chapter 3) whereby incentives such as the UKSG development funding and access to a network of 225 CMs have been used to encourage compliance by the sports. According to interview data, the YST is perceived to be a powerful organisation by the UKSG sports (across
the home countries), despite it being an English based body which does not have control over significant funding.

‘YST do not give out funding generally. What they do with the UKSG is the exception, as opposed to the rule…they use their funding to support and employ people within this school and youth sport network. From our viewpoint, this is crucial’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the English Table Tennis Association, interviewed 13th January 2009).

‘If it wasn’t for them pushing government, we’d be nowhere in performance in terms of youth sport…the YST get very close to NGBs’ (Lisa Wainwright, CEO of Volleyball England, interviewed 16th February 2009).

5.8 Conclusion

The context of sport has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. The plethora of sports development initiatives that have surfaced in recent years can be partly attributed to the efforts of PMs John Major and Tony Blair. Major’s contribution to the sporting world was to raise the political profile of sport across the development continuum. His input helped to overcome ‘the long-established reticence on the part of government to accept that international sporting success required a level of professionalism and a resource base that was well beyond the capacity of the vast majority of sports governing bodies’ (Houlihan & White 2002:218). Despite the change of political party in 1997, Tony Blair’s willingness to retain Conservative programmes ensured that the sports development agenda retained its momentum.

New Labour’s commitment to ‘joined up’ and modernised government, intended to eliminate departmentalism, somewhat contradicted the supposed ‘arm’s length’ rhetoric in relation to sport that has been expressed in previous policy documents. NGBs have experienced a slow incursion by government since the creation of the Advisory Sports Council in 1965. With the
consequence that, as anticipated by Houlihan, it appears that the sports councils have become ‘the policeman of sport rather than the developer of sport’ (1991:113).

The introduction of the Lottery in 1994 has arguably had the greatest impact upon recent sport development (Houlihan & Green 2007; Green & Houlihan 2005). The inclusion of sport within the Lottery’s ‘five good causes’ generated substantiated opportunities to increase provision and presented sport NGBs with the opportunity to develop. Although the Lottery greatly improved the prospects for sport development, it also contributed to its loss of autonomy. It appears that the sports council (through the advice of the Government) chose to exploit this resource dependency through linking public funding to social objectives and a performance management style of monitoring (Houlihan & Green 2005).

The school years are an obviously important aspect of this aforementioned systematic approach to sport development. The education system often provides the first point of contact for children entering into the world of sport. Despite this, it has only been in the last decade that school sport has been obviously linked to the systematic identification and development of elite athletes. Since the turn of the millennium, as a consequence of an increase in exchequer and lottery funding, organisations such as YST and Sport England have been able to support initiatives and policies such as PESSCL, PESSYP, NCF, UKSG and the future School Games. These previously discussed initiatives, amongst other things, identify and support talented young people. However, they represent just a small part the abundance of youth and elite sport opportunities that now exist across the UK. The increase in funding availability (due to the National Lottery) and the succession of sport enthusiast PMs (since 1991), each desiring to leave their own sporting legacy has contributed to what is now a complex and perhaps messy network of UK sport policy. In response to the emerging lack of clarity regarding youth competition, several sports have conducted internal competition reviews to explore ways in which they can rationalise their youth competition structure (partly inspired by the NCF) and prevent the possibility of over-competition.
A final summary of the last fifty years of sports development policy can conclude that rarely has government valued sport for its intrinsic worth. Sport has instead generally been viewed as a ‘means to an end’, serving social and political agendas. In acknowledgement of this, it is no wonder that the sporting network has become increasingly confused and fragmented, with so many non-sporting bodies and governmental departments having some level of interest in sport. Within this disjointed policy network, sport has been divided into separate and competing interests; participation sport; performance/elite sport; and school sport. However, the past decade has witnessed a reduction in the mutual exclusivity of the two latter interests, whereby cooperation if not integration between school and elite sport policy has slowly developed.

From this integration of elite and school sport policy came the whirlwind introduction of the UKSG, a policy that provided a multi-sport event for young people, in order to develop and identify future sporting elites. The speed at which the policy was implemented left many NGBs unsure as to how best to approach the event’s six accompanying objectives. This in turn, coupled with the traditional openness and weakness of UK sport policy (discussed further in the next Chapter), resulted in the array of NGB interpretations of the UKSG objectives that are described in Chapters 5 to 9.
3. Policy theory

3.1 Introduction

As Houlihan & White state, ‘To understand the evolution of sports development and its current positions it is important to appreciate the environment in which it emerged and continues to operate’ (2002:5), thus highlighting the importance of policy analysis. Such analysis can be approached from a number of directions. Some academics focus their attentions at the macro-level, attempting to explain policy developments with regards to the society from which it has emerged, whilst others concentrate their focus upon policy sub-sectors, using meso-level analysis to describe how actors interact. This variety in analysis indicates that it can often be quite a challenge to find the most appropriate framework to apply to specific strategies observed within the policy making process (Houlihan 1991). To add to this challenge, the term ‘public policy’ has been viewed as problematic, as made clear in Heclo’s definition: ‘A policy may usefully be considered as a course of action or inaction rather than specific decisions’ (1972:8). Such use of the word ‘inaction’ suggests that policy analysis must take into consideration the non-decisions and power relations that can affect policy development, in addition to those actions which are made more obvious (Houlihan & Green 2005). Also worthy of consideration are the broader ideological, social, political and economic contexts within which the policy process and policy change can occur so that the constraints and enablers of action might be understood. In this respect, it is necessary to make sense of the relationships that exist between policy players and the wider context. As a response to these challenges, the present chapter will briefly evaluate the current approaches to policy analysis at meso-level. These approaches and perspectives will then be applied to current UK sport policy to assess their appropriateness. Of particular importance will be the way in which the various approaches deal with the concept of power.

Three meso-level frameworks are assessed in detail with regards to their potential usefulness in analysing the sport policy process. The purpose of this
section is to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the various frameworks with regards to their ability to analyse not just how policy decisions are made, but also how they are implemented. It is this latter element of the policy process that is of particular interest to the study.

It is not the intention of this chapter to identify one theoretical perspective / framework to use throughout the study of the UKSG, it is instead anticipated that elements within each may provide useful insights. The extent to which the varying approaches mentioned adequately contribute to the analysis of the UKSG will be considered in the conclusion of the thesis.

3.2 Power - an introduction

For many years, social scientists viewed sport as an avenue of social harmony and innocent enjoyment. Hargreaves, however, maintains that in modern day society this is no longer the case and that the interplay of power and structure across sport must be explored in order to understand the nature of its development. He suggested:

"Almost everyone nowadays is aware that governments and pressure groups meddle in sport, and that on occasion sports are thus pulled into politics...the inequalities of power in societies, which if we care to look more closely, register themselves in sports" (1986:2-3).

Although the notion of power is one of the most contested and disputed concepts amongst social scientists, when stripped to its core, a common notion associated to power is that ‘A [the ‘principal’] in some way affects B [the ‘subaltern’]’ (Lukes 2005:30; Scott 2001:2), however this definition proves too vague in the explanation of power relationships across the world of sport. In an attempt provide clarity numerous social theorists such as Weber, Dahl, Arendt, Gramsci, Parsons, Lukes and Foucault have generated useful insights into the concept of power. However, ‘all these writers are in radical disagreement with each other, about what power is, where it is, how we can tell what and where it is [and] what follows from its being’ (Bellamy 1993:198). Their opposing theories merely underline how slippery the concept is and why
there is a need to explore this concept further prior to investigation of the social relationships evident within British sport policy.

Hay has provided examples of questions related to the use of ‘power’ within society. Although these questions are by no means exhaustive, they are referred to here in order to emphasise how broadly the concept of power can be extended:

How is power distributed? Is it repressive or constitutive? Is it best conceptualised in purely structural terms or as a capacity of agents? Or, indeed, is it better conceived as a resource conferred upon actors by the context in which they find themselves? Is the identification of a power relation an analytical or a normative exercise? Is the identification of an inequality of power itself sufficient to imply a normative critique of those identified as possessing ‘power over’? Can power be exercised responsibly?...These and other fundamental questions continue to divide political analysts (2002:168).

Each of these questions centres on the issues of the distribution of power and how its utilisation or manifestation can be determined. Whilst some social scientists believe power is exercised at an individual level and is effectively moulded by the relationships it affects, others such as Steven Lukes locate power at a collective level, whereby groups or institutions can control relationships (Bellamy 1993). In addition to these perspectives, there are some social scientists, namely Michel Foucault, who reject the question of ‘who possesses power?’ altogether. Instead, Foucault is concerned with how power within society generates human behaviour and discourse, as opposed to vice versa. Table 3.5 makes reference to these varying perspectives of how political power is exercised in society.

3.3 Lukes’ three dimensions of power

Steven Lukes has argued that there are three dimensions of power. These equate to three ways in which power can be used to influence the decision making process (Bellamy 1993). Whilst only the first dimension of power,
associated with Dahl, provides us with a visible and clearly empirically measurable set of interests that prevail over others, the remaining two, less visible forms of power are equally important. The second dimension is associated with theorists Bachrach & Baratz who specifically draw our attention to ‘the ideological or psychological processes at work in society as a whole which are not necessarily revealed in the surface of power’ (Parson 1995:145). The dimension focuses more upon the implicit power exercised as part of agenda-setting, as opposed to the explicit decisions that are the product of such agenda. As Bellamy appropriately points out, this managerialist focus of power ‘may involve not just visible actions but also failures to act, which failures may prove to be just as significant in their consequences’ (1993:199). Lukes’ final dimension of power draws specifically on the work of Gramsci and directs the researcher’s attention towards the ability to mould interests through the concept of hegemony, a form of unseen power. This third power dimension describes how a ruling class does not simply dominate the political agenda, but it also manipulates public interest to their favour through reducing the possibility of contestation (Parsons 1995).

The three dimensions of power associated with Lukes, Dahl and Bachrach & Baratz are summarised in Table 3.5. This table provides a brief critique of each dimension and suggests how, despite the perspectives’ flaws, they can each be usefully applied to sport policy formation and implementation to improve our understanding of the processes involved.
Table 2.5: The varying perspectives of how political power can be exercised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proponents</th>
<th>One-dimensional view</th>
<th>Two-dimensional view</th>
<th>Three-dimensional view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dahl (1961); Polsby et al. (1961); Classic pluralists</td>
<td>Bachrach &amp; Baratz (1962); Neo-elitists</td>
<td>Lukes (1974); Marxists, Neo-Marxists, Radical elitists/pluralists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conception of power</td>
<td>Power as decision-making.</td>
<td>Power as decision-making and agenda setting.</td>
<td>Power as ideological control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of analysis</td>
<td>The formal political arena.</td>
<td>The formal political arena and the informal processes surrounding it (corridors of power).</td>
<td>Civil society, especially the public sphere (in which preferences are shaped).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of power</td>
<td>Visible, transparent and easily measured. Power is understood in terms of its effects, such as domination.</td>
<td>Both visible and invisible (visible only to agenda setters), but can be rendered visible through gaining inside information.</td>
<td>Largely invisible – power distorts perceptions and shapes preference; it must be demystified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How power is exercised</td>
<td>‘A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do’ (Dahl 1957, cf. Bell, Edwards &amp; Harrison Wagner 1969:80). The resource rich ‘use their resources to shape the behaviour of the resource dependent’ (Hoye, Nicholson &amp; Houlihan 2010:99). This is through the use of incentives or sanctions. Power is therefore perceived as a zero-sum game, whereby the gains or losses of one party is exactly balanced with the gains or losses of the other party (Hyland 1995). Dahl accepts that some individuals or groups are more successful in dominating decision making arenas (Dahl 1961; Scott 2001).</td>
<td>‘A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A’ (Bachrach &amp; Baratz 1962:149). This dimension focuses upon how the agenda is set (or even systematically distorted) within the policy process through the use of both decision-making and nondecision-making power and in effect redefine ‘the boundaries of what is to count as a political issue’ (Lukes 2005:23; Habermas 1970). Here, power is displayed through the erection of barriers (by an elite or hegemonic group) that strategically limit an agent’s ability to bring difficult issues to the table. This form of unobservable power will ensure that decision-making considers only minority interests (that will not prevail or threaten pre-existing power dominance) enter the decision-making arena</td>
<td>Focuses upon the shaping of preferences, or distorting of the perceived interests of others and hence provides an attractive alternative to the behaviouralist dimension of the alternative power perspectives (Hay 2002). The perspective is associated with Marxism, given its intimate associations with ‘false consciousness’ and the work of Gramsci (1971). It aims to establish how interests of certain dominating groups can be incorporated into the decision-making agenda through the implementation of hegemony. Power, here, is used to subtly modify the interests of potentially opposing members of society, to the extent that their ‘new and programmed’ desires may be contrary, or even harmful to their real interests (Lukes 1986). Power is assumed to be an expression of ideological indoctrination, or psychological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This form of regulatory power is about controlling the parameters of debate about future policy direction, but can also be evident in debates about delivery processes for current policy (Houlihan et al. 2011).

| Example of the perspective in action (Sport policy application) | The use of centralised funding has increased the Government’s control over British NGBs. This is an example of the overt display of power whereby financial incentives are used to encourage conformity. More specifically to school and youth sport, the Youth Sport Trust’s offer of human resource to NGBs through school sport partnerships has provided an incentive for the sports to progress the PESSYP policy mentioned in Chapter 2. The display of power through the use of sanctions is also observed within the sport policy sector. The withdrawal of public sector funding from NGBs who fail to meet targets set by UK Sport presents an example of how the organisation’s ‘no compromise approach’ can demonstrate a zero-sum power relationship. |
| In providing an example of third dimensional power in the school sport setting, Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan make reference to the way in which school staff and pupils are subtly socialized through the PESSYP strategy towards accepting ‘school sport opportunities as not only normal, but desirable’ (2010:111). This has allowed the increasingly competitive nature of school sport to go unchallenged over the last decade. In this regard, the ‘real’ interests of the school sport staff and NGBs within the UK should be questioned with regards to the extent that they are satisfying governmental organisations’ non-sporting agendas in order to achieve financial or human resource support. Is this adherence actually contrary to their original aims and objectives? |
| Critique of the perspective | Dahl’s pluralistic picture of power is limited only to the study of successful power relations and as a result has been criticised for | The two-dimensional view of power coincides with that of the one-dimensional view whereby power only becomes evident through the |
|                           | | In response to such significance given to political inaction, many social theorists have questioned how can ‘things that do |
inappropriately labelling the political process as both open and diverse.

The approach is deemed to be too simplistic to reflect the true nature of power. Both Lukes (1986) and Hay (2002) highlight that the approach overlooks the fact that a person’s interests may not always be equivalent to their preferences. This one-dimensional view does not account for unobservable and less obvious information (or event actors) when analysing the exercise of power.

Lukes explains that in reality, displays of power are rarely as clear-cut as this perspective would assume. In fact, there are frequently actors involved within decision making who only want what they can get, or what others wants, or what they believe others might want them to want (Lukes 1986). The actual revealed nature of actors’ interests is therefore deceiving and rarely in conjunction with their real underlying desires.

presence of conflict. Bachrach & Baratz assume that a consensus regarding a decision is assumed to reflect the true preferences of the actors involved and therefore a display of power is not required. This assumption was later a criticised by Lukes through explanation of his third dimension of power.

Haugaard criticises Bachrach & Baratz perspective of power because it ‘has to be analysed at a behavioural level’ (2002:26) and therefore relies upon the empirical collection of only observable data. ‘No consideration is given to the less visible processes by which preferences are shaped’ (Hay 2002:178). It was exactly this criticism that prompted Luke to intervene and devise a third dimension of power.

Whilst Lukes treats power as a capacity, generated from a specific source, there are other social theorists, (namely the French post-structuralist Michel Foucault) who believed that the concept of power is far vaguer. As opposed to distinguishing clear boundaries between ‘the powerful’ and ‘the powerless’, Foucault asserts that power is omnipresent and diffused amongst the whole of society. He believes that it is far more than a capacity and much more than a form of hegemony or ideology.

| Source: Adapted from Hay 2002:18 |
3. 4  **Foucault - The fourth dimension of power?**

Following on from the third dimension critique in Table 3.5, instead of power being a form of hegemony or ideology, Foucault refers to the mechanisms of power and its ability to ‘produce’ people and shape individual discourse. Foucault asserts that power is self-regulating and it is this perception which led academics such as Digesser (1992) to refer to the Frenchman’s work as the ‘fourth dimension of power’. Whilst Foucault would most likely support Lukes’ assumption that *Power is at its most effective when least observable* (2005:64), he would be far less accepting of Lukes’ third dimension of power, which assumes that power can be possessed, obtained and given. An underpinning characteristic of Foucault’s analysis of power is that power cannot be owned.

Another distinguishing feature of the Foucauldian view of power is the belief that power is localised. According to Foucault, ideologies of power retained by a dominant group are unable to affect individuals, however if widespread oppression is present in society, then that is the result of the more localised power relationships that demonstrate the dynamics of gender and class. Whereas top-down theorists such as Lukes, Dahl and Bachrach & Baratz have made some attempt to explore and deduce the concept of power using a centralised standing point, Foucault argues that the analysis of power requires a less structured, bottom-up approach which should be quasi-inductive in nature. Foucault therefore structured his research to examine the localised relationships and ‘extremes’ of power (the ‘microphysics of power’ [Hay 2002:187]), which would then be induced to describe the exertion of power at societal level.

Foucault’s perception of power also stands apart from other theorists in his rejection of the ‘long-standing assumption in Western philosophy that there is a fundamental opposition between knowledge and power, that the purity of knowledge can only exist in stark opposition to the machinations of power’ (O’Farrell 2005:96). Foucault instead asserts that power and knowledge are
mutually constitutive, rather than mutually exclusive (Haugaard 2002). Each interaction (between governments and individuals, for example) leads to the generation of new forms of knowledge, which consequently leads to the exercise of power. This interaction and exchange of knowledge leads to the shaping of human identity, which from a Foucauldian viewpoint is not a fixed entity. This shaping of identity through knowledge and power is in no way a conscious activity. In line with Foucauldian assumptions, power can only be understood through exploring the unconscious context and the behaviour by which it is accompanied.

As with the previously discussed three dimensions of power, Foucault’s theoretical perspective on power is not without criticism. Michel Foucault was renowned for his frequent changes of opinion and, as a result, his work has been criticised for being riddled with contradictory statements. One of Foucault’s most famous quotes regarding power, ‘where there is power, there is resistance,’ is also one of the most criticised. O’Farrell mentioned how a number of his readers highlighted how this quote actually contradicts itself. ‘In the face of the omnipresence of power... readers still found it difficult to understand how such resistance could not be compromised, since in effect it could only ever be the mirror of the power being exercised’ (2005:99). In addition to this major criticism, Goverde et al. also comment upon the ‘theoretical problems associated with Foucault’s tendency to downplay the significance of agency’ (2000:20).

An additional and fundamental critique of Foucault’s perspective of power relates to his assumption that the state is a decentralised entity. Foucault prefers to assume power is omnipresent, rather than owned by a specific class or group. This assumption does not sit well with some of the meso-level approaches soon to be explored below.

Steven Lukes has also been critical of the work of Foucault, however not in terms of its faults or methods. He instead argues that Foucault does not present any extension to Lukes’ own third dimensional approach to power. Although Foucault maintains that the use of ideology and false consciousness is inappropriate within his localised analysis of power, Lukes contends that the
Foucauldian use of discourse analysis as an exploration as to how individuals define their world, is in fact a form of interest shaping through the use of unconscious and possibly inactive power. Given this assumption, Lukes states that Foucault’s use of discourse analysis is not dissimilar to the third dimension of power.

3. 5 The application of theories of power to sport policy

Focusing first on Lukes’ trio of power dimensions, each ‘face’ of power has the capacity to describe a form of power existing within the policy sector (see Table 3.5). In combining the assumptions of the dimensions, it is ensured that power relations evident in sport are analysed fully at both the conscious and unconscious and the active and inactive levels. Such thorough descriptions of power will surely complement any further application to sport policy of meso-level theory due to a heightened awareness of the sensitivities of power relations. However, as Lukes himself points out, the nature of comparing the extent and faces of power across a variety of organisations (sporting, or non-sporting) remains problematic. It ‘unavoidably involves judgments about the extent to which and ways in which their power furthers their own interests and/or affects the interests of others. This…is inherently controversial and involves taking sides in moral and political controversies’ (2005:111). Lukes suggests that through thorough definitional attention, this controversy can be reduced, if not eliminated and therefore it becomes essential that power relations be explored when attempting to compare the importance of organisations within a sector network of interconnecting institutions.

Foucault’s extensive works provides social theorists with a clear reminder that power can be extremely diffused within society and is therefore not always as obvious as Lukes would assume. Foucault states that power manifests itself within the day-to-day exchanges of society and consequently simple conversations can exercise significant power relations and represent power struggles. A useful example of this can be seen through Foucault’s view of the role of women within society. He highlights that although equality has improved for women at state level through legislation, this does not necessarily have an automatic correspondence at an individual level. It is
quite clear that in some societies, the inherent perception of women at a micro
level has remained unchanged and therefore actual power relations at this
agency level truly reflects society as opposed to the power of the state.
Foucault reminds us not to overestimate the power of the state and remember
that it is the coordination of micro-level power relations that become
increasingly relevant. To examine these micro-level interchanges of power,
Foucault suggests that the concept should be explored through a much wider
lens that alternative power theorists would dare to apply.

3.6 Concluding comments on power theories

There are a wide variety of approaches to the analysis of power, each offering
useful mechanisms and valued perspectives. Lukes (1986) highlights that no
approach appears to provide a completely satisfying definition, however in
combination, the theories build upon one another to develop a robust analysis
of power. The level of consensus between the pluralistic analysis of Dahl and
the neo-elitist approach of Bachrach & Baratz emphasises that the
behavioural aspect of power is of central importance. While Lukes’ and
Foucault’s focus on social structures is different to that of Dahl and Bachrach
& Baratz, the latter theorists’ emphasis on unconscious and unobservable
characteristics of power can be seen as complementary rather than in conflict
with the theorisations of Lukes and Foucault. One would assume that an
optimum definition of power would call upon a combination of these varied
perspectives, however, as Lukes points out, ‘what unites the various views of
power is too thin and formal to provide a generally satisfying definition,
applicable to all cases’ (Lukes 1986:4).

It is not the aim of this research to deduce a single comprehensive definition
of social power; in fact, in view of the former quote it is questionable as to
whether such an aim would be realistic. Instead, the introduction of power
here is intended to aid the application of various meso-level policy analysis
theories to the research topic in question. As Scott fittingly states, the aim of
the analysis of power is to ‘identify the key actors, those whose views and
actions ‘count’ – without ignoring those who are involved in non-decision-
making’ (2001:64).
3. 7  Meso-level theory – an introduction

Whereas the perspectives of Lukes and Foucault debate how power is exercised or displayed meso-level frameworks operationalize these ideas through the analysis of national level policy process. Meso-level theory therefore ‘deals with the pattern of interest group intermediation…it concentrates upon questions concerning the structures and patterns of interaction within them’ (Daugbjerg & Marsh 1998:54). It is the capacity of meso-level theories to explain both policy change and stability at a policy subsector level (as opposed to a broader societal) that determined the use of meso-level analysis in this thesis, rather than macro-level.

The use of meso-level approaches as a form of policy analysis grew in popularity throughout the 1970s within Britain. This period was characterised by increasing state interventionism and, as a consequence, analysts focused on how problems were identified and then pushed towards the political agenda. It was not until subsequent years, when political analysts became aware that government programmes were failing to improve the quality of society, that their attention turned to other areas of the policy cycle, such as policy implementation and the monitoring of its impacts (Houlihan 2005).

Policy analysis therefore extends much further than the mere setting of agenda. Although decision analysis is a vitally important aspect of the overall policy process, there are several other elements that are encompassed within meso-level policy analysis which help to develop an overall picture of why some policies are more effective than others (John 1998).

The complexity of the policy process is summarised by Sabatier who notes that an:

*understanding the policy process requires a knowledge of the goals and perceptions of hundreds of actors throughout the country involving possibly very technical scientific and legal issues over periods of a decade or more when most of those actors are actively seeking to propagate their specific ‘spin’ on events* (1999:4).
In addition to these complicating factors, Sabatier also raises the point that the policy process is too often met with disputes amongst the deeply rooted values and interests of those involved (2007). The conflict of interests frequently leads to the misrepresentation of evidence and distortion of the position of opponents in order for each competing group of political advocates to gain an advantage (Riker 1986; Moe 1990a, 1990b; Schlager 1995). This confusing nature of policy, combined with the sheer volume of actors involved have resulted in numerous difficulties when analysts attempt to develop ‘a theoretical framework and a conceptual language that illuminates the process by which policy is made’ (Sabatier 1999:4).

Determining which of the possible eleven or so (according to Sabatier 1999) meso-level approaches to utilise in research complicates the process of policy analysis is not straightforward. The perspectives ‘look at the same situation through quite different lenses and are likely to see quite different things’ (Sabatier 2007:5) and therefore finding one which best explains the policy process is far from easy. Each model varies in the weight it gives to structure and agency, the degree to which it explains both policy stability and change, and the amount of clarity it provides when being applied to a specific situation (Houlihan & Green 2005). In addition, the models vary in the extent to which they can account for the whole policy process. Several frameworks prioritise their focus to the setting of policy agenda, however the main emphasis of this study is the exploration of policy implementation.

The study of implementation, according to Jenkins, ‘is the study of change. It’s about exploring the micro-structure of political life, and learning to appreciate how organisations interact with one another, and how this impacts on their actions’ (1978:203). In exploring implementation, any disparity between policy design and intention, with policy delivery and outcomes can be better understood. Bardach argues that implementation is a game of ‘bargaining, persuasion, and manoeuvring under conditions of uncertainty’ (1977:56). With this in mind, power battles appear extremely relevant to the study of implementation, as policy actors play to win as much control over policy as possible. Meso-level frameworks are therefore required to gain a greater
appreciation of what ‘power games’ are taking place in relation to a specific policy and learn who is involved in these games and whether their involvement reflects a trade off between policy knowledge and authority (Solesbury 2001). Benson (1982) argues that policy implementation is often a reflection of a cluster, or grouping or network of interests. Parsons suggests that these clusters not only reflect a grouping of interests, but also power and resource dependent relationships whereby resource rich ‘organisations can induce other less-powerful and more-dependent organisations to interact with them’ (2002:483, see also Aldrich 1972; 1976; Kochan 1975; Yuchtman & Seashore 1967). Some (but not all) meso-level analytical frameworks are able to explore the nature of these group relationships.

It is frequently argued by political scientists that the policy process cannot be broken down into definitive and exclusive stages. The designing of policy is therefore overlapping with the implementation of policy and vice versa. Anderson neatly emphasises this point through explaining that ‘policy is being made as it is being administered and administered as it is being made’ (1975:98). In consideration of this, to fully analyse the delivery of the UKSG policy, it is necessary to utilise a meso-level framework or frameworks that can account for much of the policy process. But, as implied previously, not all meso-level frameworks have the capacity to cope with the complexity of policy processes and explore adequately the nature of policy making and policy implementation. Therefore, in order to reduce uncertainty and limit the plethora of theories and frameworks available to a manageable quantity, this study will refer to specific criteria aimed at evaluating the applicability of each approach. These criteria will identify frameworks that allow the researcher to gain an understanding of the dynamic interplay between agents and stages such as agenda setting, the role of the state and ideas and the location of power, across a range of public policy contexts (Sabatier 1999).

3.8 Criteria for inclusion

It is not the intention of this study to test the validity of a particular meso-level theory. This research instead will make, if appropriate, use of a variety of analytical frameworks and treat them as heuristic devises that can enhance
understanding of the policy area. The use of more than one model of the policy process will allow the researcher to robustly analyse the UKSG in that the weaknesses of one framework may be addressed through the strengths of another. However, with approximately eleven meso-level frameworks in existence according to Sabatier, it is important to make use of the following criteria to ensure that only relevant frameworks with the capacity to deal with the empirical demands of this study are referred to.

- The framework should seek to explain much of the policy process

In order to present a full analysis of the policy process, the approach should have the capacity to illuminate several elements of the policy process, including policy implementation. As Houlihan highlights, "too many frameworks concentrate attention and analysis on discrete aspects of the policy process, such as agenda-setting, interest articulation, policy impact or the role of the state. They lack a…holistic manner which examines the inter-relationship between actors, aspects or stages" (2005:167-8). Because of this focused approach, many scholars (Anderson 1975, Hill & Hupe 2002) have highlighted policy implementation as the frequently ‘neglected’ phase of the policy cycle. In essence, the framework used should be able to explain ‘what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results’ (DeLeon 1999:314-5).

One framework which has the capacity to account for both policy design and implementation is the stages heuristic. Developed by Lasswell (1956) and later adapted by Jones (1970), Anderson (1975), and Brewer & DeLeon (1983), the stages heuristic aimed to improve the understanding of policy-making by dividing it up into stages. These stages included ‘agenda setting, policy formulation and legitimation, implementation, and evaluation’ (Sabatier 2007:6). Despite the approach’s organising value, it was subject to sustained criticism starting in the late 1980s (Nakamura 1987; Sabatier 1991; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993). Sabatier in particular has criticised the stages approach for being overly descriptive (2007). He stated that the model fails to identify
any causal drivers in its explanation of the policy-making process. In addition, the model neglects to sufficiently explain how the process of policy-making moves between each stage and as a result, the process it describes appears disjointed and not continuous. As Houlihan summarises, the approach implies ‘a false degree of rationality in the policy process’ (2005:169). Additionally, the top-down bias associated with the stages heuristic means that it is unable to clearly encompass theories of power, which, according to this study’s third criterion for inclusion, leads to the elimination of the stages heuristic from the study. However, following Sabatier (1999), it is important to understand the principles supporting the stages heuristic, since the model provides an influential starting point for developing alternative and more robust policy analysis models.

- **The framework should seek to explain policy change with reference to both endogenous and exogenous factors**

Sport policy in the UK has been characterised by periods of stability and change. The analytical frameworks must be able to account for this complexity. This required ability to account for policy stability and change has been used within the criteria set by other theorists such as John (1998) and Sabatier (1999) in their assessment of meso-level frameworks.

It is important that the frameworks should not seek explanation of change solely in relation to internal processes; they must also take account of external disruptions that impact upon the political agenda (Sabatier 2007). In this regard, the frameworks should be able to account for and discuss the impact of policy change in relation to the role of agency (policy actors and entrepreneurs) and structure (government, economic forces, policy subsystems).
- **The framework should facilitate analysis at the meso level and maintain a sophisticated view of power**

A strong account for the complexities of power relations is required in order to understand the processes that take place at policy level. As Marsh & Stoker maintain, reference to the concept of power becomes useful in answering two important questions: ‘Why are certain actors in a privileged position in the policy-making process?’ and ‘In whose interest do they rule?’ (1995:293).

- **The framework should be internally consistent**

As will become clear, all meso-level theories, concepts and framework have ‘gaps’ in their application. Each approach fails at some level to completely describe a particular policy sector and hence it is important to make allowances for these limitations. Some frameworks however, possess significant gaps in their methods to the extent that they become unusable in analysis.

- **The framework has been subject to recent empirical application**

The subject of sport is a relatively new sector area within policy analysis and hence it can prove difficult to locate meso-level approaches that have been consistently used in the policy area. Despite the recency of sport as a relevant policy issue, there are some frameworks that can be referred to as ‘intellectually robust having been subject to sustained critical evaluation’ (Houlihan 2005:167). In light of these criteria, it is suggested that three frameworks have particular explanatory potential, namely: the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) (Sabatier 1999), the multiple streams approach (Kingdon 1984) and the policy networks approach (Marsh & Rhodes 1992a). These frameworks adhere to a ‘sub-systems’ holistic approach, rather than disjointed stages (as observed through the stages heuristic model), and are able to account for both policy stability and change. In comparison to other meso-level frameworks such as the stages heuristic, or the institutional
rational choice approach, these three approaches are more comprehensive in that they are able to move beyond providing purely descriptive information and develop some casual explanations that captures the messiness of policy process.

3. 9 Policy Networks Approach

The Policy Networks approach, although formulated in 1930s, did not become popular with political scientists until the 1970s. It was at this time that analysts became increasingly aware of the approach’s fluidity in comparison to other meso-level theories, which were often too rigid and portrayed an unrealistic representation of the policy process. Analysts favoured the approach for its ability to account for ‘how people interact at different levels’ (Parsons 1995:185) and how organisations external to the political system have a growing impact upon the likelihood of policy change (Hill & Ham 1997).

The approach assumes that across all policy areas the strength of relationships existing between various groups, institutions and bureaucrats concerned with a specific policy can be positioned along a continuum (see Figure 3-1). This continuum extends between tightly bound policy communities and loose policy networks (also referred to as issue networks). Through time, ‘networks may cohere into communities and communities may disintegrate into networks’ (Hill & Ham 1997:72) and therefore the typology of each policy area is never fixed.

Figure 3-1: The Policy Network Continuum

Policy Community  Issue Network

A policy community, according to Wilks & Wright (1987), includes ‘a number of potential policy actors with a direct or indirect interest in a particular policy area’ and therefore can encompass actors from private, voluntary and governmental organisations such as ‘local authorities, political parties, pressure groups and international organisations’ (Houlihan 1991:161). These actors may occasionally become united when referring to a particular policy
issue, at which time a form of ‘sectorisation’ takes place, forming a policy community. Each community, or sector, will ‘vary according to the instruments and resources’ they have available to them (John 1998:6), whether it be legal, financial, organisational or personal resources.

At the other end of the policy network continuum (Figure 3.1) are ‘issue networks’. It is typical for an issue network to display opposing characteristics to a policy community. How Marsh & Rhodes (1992a) specify these characteristics can be found in Table 3.6

Table 3.6: Characteristics of policy communities and issue networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Policy Community</th>
<th>Issue Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEMBERSHIP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Very limited number, some groups consciously excluded</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of interest</td>
<td>Economic and / or professional interests dominate</td>
<td>Encompasses range of affected interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERGRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of interaction</td>
<td>Frequent, high quality, interaction of all groups on all matters related to the policy issue</td>
<td>Contact fluctuates in frequency and intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Membership, values, and outcomes persistent over time</td>
<td>Access fluctuates significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>All participants share basic values agreements exists, and accept the legitimacy of outcomes</td>
<td>A measure of agreement exists, conflict is ever present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESOURCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of resources</td>
<td>All participants have resources; basic relationship is an exchange relationship</td>
<td>Some participants may have resources, but they are limited and basic relationship is consultative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within network)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of resources</td>
<td>Hierarchical; leaders deliver</td>
<td>Varied and variable distribution and capacity to regulate members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POWER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>There is a balance of power among members. Although one group may dominate it must be a positive sum game if community is to persist</td>
<td>Unequal powers, reflecting unequal resources and unequal access. It is a zero-sum game</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marsh & Rhodes 1992:251

Whilst these descriptive characteristics of Marsh & Rhodes may appear sufficient when analysing policy areas, the fundamental flaw lies in issues of boundary. ‘The nature of the membership, the capacity of the community to exclude actors, the extent of organisation and structure and the sources of
cohesion’ are yet to be explained causing considerable definitional confusion (Houlihan 1991:161).

Aside from the problems of boundary definition, there are important advantages to distinguishing between an issue network and policy community. Firstly, Wright (1988) believes that it highlights to the researcher where a community or network’s membership is drawn from two policy areas. An appropriate example of such a situation is that of school sport, whereby various actors are consulted from both sport policy and education policy (Houlihan 1991). In addition, the ‘strength’ of interactions within a policy area implies the level of dependence the state has upon groups for policy implementation. According to Smith (1993), ‘issue networks will develop in areas of lesser importance to government, of high political controversy, or in new issue areas where interests have not been institutionalised’ (cf. Parsons 1995:190). With these advantages in mind, the policy networks approach provides a useful lens for examining the pattern of relations and negotiations between the actors involved in a particular policy.

3.10 The Multiple Streams Approach

The multiple streams approach was developed by Kingdon (1984) and possesses the same underlying principles as Cohen, March & Olsen’s ‘garbage can model’ of organisation behaviour (1972 cf. Sabatier 1997). Kingdon’s framework deliberately has no starting point to the policy-making process, in order to emphasise that policy developments are in a constant state of flux (John 1998). This element of instability suggests that policy making is often disorganised and hence presents a substantial challenge to the rational decision making of the afore mentioned stagist approach. Kingdon notes that his framework ‘is as far away from the sequential model of policy-making as can be imagined’ (1984:175).

The key aspect to the multiple streams approach is the presence of three independent ‘streams’ within the policy process. These streams (problem, policy and politics) operate through their own dynamics and rules, however, occasionally, they combine when a ‘window of opportunity’ occurs, a time
which ‘increases significantly the chances that an issue will receive attention by policy-makers’ (Zahariadis 1999:76). It is at this point of opportunity that ‘policy entrepreneurs’ aim to push their pet policy proposals onto the political agenda through labelling the idea as a solution to a current problem. The role of policy entrepreneurs is explained in Table 3.7. Figure 3.2 provides a diagrammatic view of how the three ‘streams’ and policy entrepreneurs come together to form policy.

Table 3.7: The three streams of the multiple streams approach and the role of policy entrepreneurs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ‘problem’ stream</td>
<td>Refers to ‘issues’ that are ‘conceived of as public matters requiring attention that may or may not get defined as important’ (John 1998 cf. Green 2003:29). These ‘problems’ are brought to policy-makers attention via three main avenues: 1) focusing events such as national disasters; 2) public indicators, such as statistics that present the scale of the problem; and 3) feedback from the current policies in place (Houlihan 2005). When this stream becomes overloaded with problems, suggested policies that appear to be clear and less difficult to implement have a higher chance of surviving the policy making process. Other, more awkward problems that are not compatible with policy-maker values would eventually disappear all together from the stream through a lack of interest (Zahariadis 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘policy’ stream</td>
<td>Consists of the different proposals put forward for change. These ‘ideas’ are based upon specialist knowledge and the interests of a particular policy sector. It is through this stream that policy entrepreneurs become useful in ensuring ideas ‘remain salient to the agenda’ (Green 2003:19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘political’ stream</td>
<td>Establishes the importance of an agenda item (Parsons 1995). In doing so, the stream evaluates the information generated from a number of sources such as: 1) the national mood; 2) political party forces; 3) election results; and 4) the influence of the media (Houlihan 2005; Green 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy entrepreneurs</td>
<td>‘People who are willing to invest resources of various kinds in hopes of a future return in the form of policies they favour’ (Kingdon 1984:151). Their role involves ‘capturing the [restricted] attention of policy makers and manipulating it to their advantage’ (Zahariadis 2007:75). Due to the limits of cognitive ability, policy-makers are unable to attend to every single policy proposal put to them and frequently struggle to distinguish between information that is relevant and unexaggerated. Policy entrepreneurs therefore aim to ‘frame’ their proposed policy solution in a manner that ensures policy-makers view it in a positive light. For example, the entrepreneur would present a simple and understandable policy idea that not only ensures emotional attachment (which as Zahariadis (2005) implies can aid the adoption of more confrontational policies), but also promotes the gains of the idea and how it has the capacity to recoup previous problems’ losses. This latter ‘trick of the trade’ plays upon the tendency that people are ‘loss averse’ and would always favour a suggestion that aims to prevent and recoup losses (Kahneman &amp; Tversky 1979; Levy 1997; Quattrone &amp; Tversky 1988).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the infrequent combining of the three streams can sometimes be quite predictable (for example, there is an annual budget cycle), there are times when the ‘policy window’ opens randomly as a consequence of ‘policy spillover’ from the happenings within an adjacent policy sector (John 1998).

The lens illustrated here has the capacity to portray a process that is essentially chaotic in nature with ‘a changing array of problems and solutions’ (John 1998:175). Consequently, the multiple streams approach provides a form of explanation for ‘how policies are made by national governments under conditions of ambiguity’ (Sabatier 2007:65). The value to the analysis of implementation in that the process of linking solutions to problems is an iterative one where policy windows open not just at the national level but also at sub-national levels, i.e. nearer to the street level of implementation.
3.11 The Advocacy Coalition Framework

Sabatier believes that policy change is fundamentally driven by the presence of policy groups or ‘subsystems’, as opposed to the combination of ‘streams’. He also asserts that it is crucially important to evaluate the actions of the whole policy process, as opposed to just one phase such as the setting of political agenda. It was from these criticisms that the ACF was generated, which essentially portrays how the interactions between competing ‘coalitions’ can impact upon the policy-making process. Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith define such advocacy coalitions as ‘people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers) who (1) share a particular belief system – i.e. a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions – and who (2) show a non-trivial degree of co-ordination over time’ (1999:138). They include ‘all those who play a part in the generation, dissemination and evaluation of policy ideas’ and not just the formal process of decision making (Parsons 1995:196) and therefore can be extended to the membership of even journalists, interest groups, political analysts and all levels of government.

As a result of the framework’s ability to combine successful elements of other meso-level approaches, the ACF provides a ‘comprehensive and testable theory of the policy process’ (Parsons 1995:195). For example, the ACF successfully combines the top-down approach of the stages heuristic approach, with other theories that acquire more ‘bottom-up’ thinking (Green 2003). This balance in perspective enables the framework to provide a logical analysis of policy implementation, which is explored further in section 3.17 through the discussion of Matland’s ambiguity-conflict policy implementation matrix (1995).

In linking with other analytical frameworks, the ACF adopts Marsh & Rhodes’ concept of competing ‘networks’ or ‘communities’ (Policy network approach, Heclo 1974; Kingdon 1984; Cook & Skogan 1991). Similar to the policy network theory, the ACF ‘regards policymaking as a continual process with no strict beginning and end’ (John 1998:169), however, it differs to Marsh & Rhodes’ policy perspective in the sense that the act of policy development
through bargaining mainly takes place between competing coalitions, as opposed to within the coalitions, or ‘networks’ themselves.

According to the proponents of the ACF, Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith propose that policy subsystems usually comprise of two to four competing coalitions (1999; see Figure 3.3 below). Within the policy subsector, one coalition is likely to dominate decision-making due to its increased size, strength and influence. However, a time perspective of at least ten years is required to observe the changes in coalition strength and correctly analyse policy change. Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith assume that shorter time periods do not have the capacity to fully portray the true impact of policy alterations (1999).

In addition to this assumption, Heclo (1974) and Hofferbert (1974) agree with Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1999) that exogenous shocks are significant factors that drive policy change. Such external perturbations can take the form of either relatively stable system parameters, such as constitutional rules and social structure (Green 2003) or less stable external events which are far more susceptible to change over a decade, and hence are the greater drivers of policy change (see Figure 3-3). The latter of these exogenous impacts relate to alterations in technology, socio-economic conditions and decisions that ‘spillover’ from neighbouring policy sectors. Linked to policy spillover is ‘policy transfer’, which sees policy development intentionally mimicking elements of successful policies implemented outside the normal political arena. Richardson describes policy transfer as being ‘a powerful and disturbing [form of] exogenous shock’ (2000:1020). Table 3.8 provides real world examples of sport specific exogenous shocks.
Table 3.8: Sport specific examples of exogenous perturbations that shape sport policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous factor: External system events</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in public opinion</td>
<td>Elite sport funding allocated by UK Sport is based upon several criteria, one of which is public opinion. A change in public sporting preferences will be reflected through resource allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in systemic governing coalition</td>
<td>The change in political administration experienced in 1997 (Conservative to Labour) and 2010 (Labour, to coalition government). Changes in political priorities and salience placed on sport policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy ‘spillover’</td>
<td>School sport coalition receiving influence from the elite sport coalition. Chapter 2 explores the effects of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy transfer</td>
<td>During the late 20th century, British sport experienced a plethora of policy changes, which mimicked that of the Australians. The English Institute of Sport presents just one example (Chapter 2 discusses in greater depth).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exogenous shocks have the capacity to not only ‘shift agendas, focus public attention and attract the attention of key decision-making sovereigns’ (Sabatier & Weible 2007:199), but they can also impact upon subsystem coalition internal structures such as their ‘hierarchy of beliefs’ (March & Simon 1958; Putman 1976). A hierarchy of beliefs (Figure 3.4) provides three structural categories of belief systems that exist within coalitions and as explained in Table 3.9 the beliefs have varying degrees of resistance to change.

**Figure 3-4: The hierarchy of beliefs**

- **Deep core** – fundamental norms and beliefs which apply to all policy subsystems
- **Secondary aspects** – instrumental decisions and information searches
- **Policy core** – fundamental policy positions and strategies for attaining core values

**Source:** adapted from Sabatier 1988, 1991 cf. Parsons 1995:197)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples of beliefs related to sport</th>
<th>Examples of policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep core beliefs / profound policy</td>
<td>Most difficult to change of the three tiers of belief. Specific to an individual since birth. Defined by Sabatier &amp; Weible as ‘very general normative and ontological assumptions about human nature, the relative priority of fundamental values such as liberty and equality, the relative priority of welfare of different groups. The proper role of government vs. markets in general, and about who should participate in governmental decision making’ (2007:194). Individuals with similar or shared core beliefs often group together to form a coalition within a subsystem. Competing coalitions therefore encompass individuals with alternative core beliefs and hence, opposing coalitions can interpret the same information in very different ways.</td>
<td>Sport participation is appropriate/ inappropriate for women. Sport is a frivolous/serious pastime/career.</td>
<td>Introduction of regulations/processes to require funded sport organisations to increase sports opportunities for women. Regulations which determine the status (compulsory or optional) of sport/physical education in the school curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy core beliefs / substantial policy</td>
<td>Difficult to alter, however are more policy-specific than deep core beliefs. Policy core beliefs reflect a ‘coalition’s basic normative commitments and causal perceptions across a policy subsystem’ (Green 2003:39) and therefore indicate ‘the priority of different policy-related values, whose welfare counts, the relative authority of government and markets, the proper roles of the general public, elected officials, civil servants, experts, and the relative seriousness and causes of policy problems in the subsystem’ (Sabatier &amp; Weible 2007:195).</td>
<td>The maximisation of Olympic medals is a priority. Young people’s participation in sport builds positive personal characteristics. Individuals within competing coalitions would place opposing weight upon mass participation, or elite sport policies.</td>
<td>Allocation of resources in pursuit of Olympic medals Investment by government in school sport provision and in competitive sport.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Easiest level of belief to manipulate of the hierarchy.

Secondary beliefs ‘comprise a large set of narrower (less than subsystem-wide) beliefs concerning, for example, the seriousness of the problem’ (Green 2003:39).

It is here that the concept of ‘Policy Orientated Learning’ has the greatest impact upon the policy subsystem. This concept relates to processes that involve ‘relatively enduring alterations of thought or behavioural intentions that result from experience and which are concerned with the attainment or revision of the precepts of the belief system of individuals or collectivities such as [advocacy coalitions]’ (Sabatier 1993:42). Policy orientated learning is believed to take over ten years to fully materialise as it relies on policy feedback. Not all policy learning results in policy change or transfer.

Hosting major sports events reflects positively on a country.

All Olympic gold medals are of equal value irrespective of the sport in which they were won.

Allocating responsibility and resources to a government department/agency.

The identification of sports where a country has some relative advantage.

Policy orientated learning through the focus of a ‘National Competition Pathway’ of school and youth sport. Linked with principles of the Long Term Athlete Development model.

Source: Adapted from Houlihan et al. 2011.
Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1999), (see Figure 3.3) make reference to ‘policy brokers’. This role within the ACF has much in common with the role of the policy entrepreneurs within the Multiple Streams approach. These individuals mediate between competing coalitions to ensure that a reasonable level of compromise can be settled on, effectively reducing policy conflict within the subsystem.

Criticisms of the ACF are few given the numerous modifications that the ACF has experienced since its conception over twenty years ago. Whilst the modifications reflect Sabatier’s desire to generate a robust analytical framework, the adaptations have been criticised by some academics, highlighting the possibility that modifications are often accompanied by a reduction in usefulness and internal coherence. In defence, Sabatier & Weible assert that any alterations to the ACF have not hampered the underlying principles of it. They emphasise that their focus for policy making ‘has always been the policy subsystem, but [they] now have a clearer method for identifying subsystems. The key political actor has always been the advocacy coalition’ (2007:208).

Alternative criticisms of the ACF relate to its focus on rational behaviour. Skille explains that whilst the ACF ‘implies collective action, based on coordinated individuals with a shared belief system, it does not take into account the influences of institutions’ (2008:189). This critique is echoed by Schlager’s assertion that not all behaviour is instrumentally rational and that ‘institutional coalitions may move among different levels of action in pursuit of policy change’ (1999:250).

An additional criticism of the ACF that is of significance to this study is the perspective that the framework inadequately accounts for policy implementation. Some policy theorists are critical of the ACF’s ‘desire to synthesize the best features of the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches’ (Sabatier 1998:98) stating that the final product that aims to balance these perspectives still inadequately considers policy implementation. However, it is perhaps worth emphasising here that whilst the ACF’s capacity to analyse the implementation process is not fully robust, it is more comprehensive than
other meso-level frameworks, which often focus only on the agenda-setting phase of policy process.

3.12 Application of the criteria for inclusion

In order to further evaluate the usefulness of the meso-level approaches described in this chapter, attention will now turn to the application of the criteria for inclusion listed in section 3.11. To support this process, the Policy Networks theory, the Multiple Streams approach and the ACF will each be briefly applied to the current situation found in British sport policy. This application will not only highlight how appropriate and extensive each of the approaches are, but it will also further distinguish each of the frameworks. The final part of this section will suggest ways in which the frameworks can be used to support the analysis of the UKSG.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>POLICY COMMUNITIES</th>
<th>MULTIPLE STREAMS APPROACH</th>
<th>ADVOCACY COALITION FRAMEWORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The framework will seek to explain much of the policy process</td>
<td>Focuses more on agenda setting than any other ‘phase’ of policy-making (Hill &amp; Ham 1997) although not entirely isolated to this phase.</td>
<td>Framework remains restricted to the analysis of the agenda setting phase of policy-making (Houlihan 2005; Zahariadis 2007). There have been some loose connections made between the ‘Garbage Can’ model of policy process (which the Multiple Streams approach originated from), the role of policy entrepreneurs and Matland’s (1995) model of policy implementation (see section 3.17).</td>
<td>The ACF looks beyond the ‘surface phenomena of day-to-day politics’ and analyses the whole of the policy-making process, rather than focus on just one or two of the phases (Houlihan 2005:182). The framework considers the role of actors internal and external to the policy process, and is therefore able to balance the importance of both structure and agency, avoid unicausal explanations of policy change and account for the ‘messiness’ of contemporary sport policy making. The ACF also balances top-down and bottom-up perspectives of implementation and as discussed above, is able to acknowledge the role that implementation has to play in the policy process. Similar to the Multiple Streams approach the ACF has links to Matland’s 1995 model of implementation process. These links are made between coalition formation and ‘symbolic implementation’ (discussed in section 3.17).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The framework will seek to explain policy change with reference to both endogenous and</td>
<td>The approach lacks consideration of both exogenous and endogenous influencing factors and is therefore considered to be unable to explicitly account for policy change, although it is comfortable at describing policy stability.</td>
<td>The approach provides only a partial analysis of policy stability and change. Caporasco (1997) has implied that the meso-level lens struggles to combine both exogenous and endogenous factors that impact upon the policy process and therefore becomes unable to account for all the possible influencers on policy-making.</td>
<td>It is debatable as to whether the ACF truly accounts for policy change. There are numerous political analysts that would argue that the framework does this with ease, referring to both exogenous and endogenous sources over an extended period of at least ten years; however there are also opposing views that the ACF, similar to the policy networks approach, is only capable of explaining policy stability (John 1998). John (1999) states that the ACF relies...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endogenous and</td>
<td>Atkinson &amp; Coleman (1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
exogenous factors propose that if the boundaries of issue networks and policy communities were to be identified more clearly, the instances of policy change would be easier to observe.

In response to this critique, Sabatier & Weible (2007) made amendments to the ACF that directed consideration to ‘coalition opportunity structures’. This point of focus explores, as part of an exogenous shock, allows analysts to consider what impact resources and behaviour can have over an advocacy coalition. This recent amendment to the framework has increased the ACF’s relevance to the analysis of sport policy, which is characterised arguably by an open, chaotic system concerning a wide variety of actors with differing interests.

### The framework will facilitate analysis at the meso level and maintain a sophisticated view of power

| Framework | Marsh & Rhodes (1992) imply that the formation of networks provides ‘a linking concept between the micro-level of analysis…and the macro-level of analysis, which is concerned with wider questions concerning the distribution of power within modern society’ (cf. Green 2003:31). With regards to power however, both Smith (1993) and Dowding (1995) are right to stress that relationship analysis through the Network approach are based upon dependencies and mutual relationships. The Multiple Streams approach usefully integrates the concept of policy communities, however, the approach has an ‘under-theorised’ view of power (Houlihan 2005:172). Through Multiple Streams approach, Kingdon argues that power distribution within the policy process is equal and pluralistic in nature, allowing all groups the opportunity to access the political agenda. Agenda-setting is therefore, according to Kingdon, more often the result of luck, rather than a reflection of power and intention (John 1998). In this respect, whilst the Multiple Streams approach was originally applauded for the challenge it presented to meso-level theories, too heavily upon the influence of ‘external shocks’ on policy change, and instead more attention should be directed to the importance of strategies and interests in the formation of a coalition. At the micro level, Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith refer to the ACF’s use of the agency-linked ‘model of the individual’ (1999:130). Richardson (1982) brings to our attention that it is unlikely that the ACF would be as fitting within policy areas that are not as pluralistic and open as sport policy, such as defence policy. The ACF’s theorisation of power is arguably less straightforward and appropriate to the nature of sport policy. The ACF places great emphasis on factors such as limited time and cognitive dissonance in the shaping of policy, as opposed to power-related tools such as manipulation, resource control and the pursuit of interests (Houlihan 2005). Parsons summarises this less sophisticated view of power below: |

With regards to power however, both Smith (1993) and Dowding (1995) are right to stress that relationship analysis through the Network approach are based upon dependencies and mutual relationships.
agreement are not zero-sum in nature, it is important to highlight that this is not always the case for modern politics. That assumed institutional and class bias, it perhaps now over-elevates the importance of the sharing of ideas and fails to accept that in reality, power relationships are far more complex. ‘Sabatier is dismissive of ‘raw political power’ (Sabatier 1993:44) because he believes that, in the long run, policy learning has a greater capacity to change the agendas and decisions of government than the exercise of power’ (1995:202).

| The framework will be internally coherent | The application of the policy network approach over time has highlighted numerous technological and definitional ambiguities. In particular, theorists have struggled to define and place boundaries around policy communities and issue networks. Zahariadis (1999) identifies numerous unanswered questions associated within the Multiple Streams approach. For example, how long are ‘policy windows’ open for? And are the three ‘streams’ as independent as the framework assumes? For this latter question Mucciaroni suggests that they are not independent and that ‘changes in one stream can trigger or reinforce changes in another’ (1992:463).
These unanswered questions and the highlighted incoherence associated with the approach causes Zahariadis to question whether the lens provides a viable solution to describing what is essentially a random and unpredictable process. Although the ACF has undergone numerous modifications to improve its applicability to the policy process, the framework still remains incoherent in some areas. An obvious example of such confusion, which is also associated with the Policy Networks approach, is that there is no clear way of defining the boundaries of policy subsystems or coalitions. It is difficult to ensure how individuals gain membership into one specific coalition and if there are hazy and overlapping boundaries between coalitions. In addition, the ACF fails to clarify when policy orientated learning takes place and why some coalitions tend to be more effective at the learning process than others.

| The framework has been subject to recent empirical application in sport | Houlihan (1991) drew on network theory in his study of British sport. Additional examples of application are limited. Houlihan & Green (2006) have utilised the framework in relation to the development of school sport in England. Another example of application includes Chalip (1996). The majority of sport policy applications are limited to America. There have been a few isolated cases whereby researchers have applied the ACF to the British sport sector: Green & Houlihan (2004; 2005) in the analysis of elite sport policy change and Parrish (2003) in exploring European sports law.

| Examples of how the framework | Through analysing British sport policy through the lens of the Policy Networks approach, it is The issue of school sport presents itself as a prime example of the Multiple Streams approach in action. Policy entrepreneur Sue Campbell The ACF’s use of the concept of coalitions appears to fit neatly with the present situation found in British sport policy. The overall
might be applied to sport

likely that the policy area would display characteristics of an ‘issues network’ (Houlihan 2000b; Green 2003). Unlike other policy communities, sport policy does not conform to a common profession type. Instead, the sector encompasses a variety of individuals from a fragmented range of professions (Houlihan 1988).

(YST) aligned the three ‘streams’ at a time which would present a window of opportunity for school sport to be backed by the government at the time. She was able to push forward a school sport related policy that acted as a solution to problems such as international sporting failure and poor school attainment, attendance and behaviour.

The Multiple Streams approach would assume that there are no coherent interests that are shared across the sport subsystem, instead policy is the result of a random collision of three independent policy-linked streams. The question that remains to be answered here is whether sport policy is really this haphazard? Although it remains evident that windows of opportunity do arise for certain ideas (as opposed to the sole pursuit of political interests), it could be argued that some sport related policies, such as the ‘no compromise’ approach taken by UK Sport, are the direct result of an extended period of negotiation between numerous actors.

subsystem of sport, according to policy analysts such as Houlihan & Green (2005), can be divided into at least three competing coalitions. These coalitions separate actors and structures whose chief concerns lie within elite sport, school sport, or community and mass participatory sport. Between the coalitions exists ‘policy brokers’ such as Sir Keith Mills who is currently brokering the merge of Sport England and UK Sport.

The past two decades of sport policy, represented by the ACF, identifies a period of ‘major policy change’ given the extent to which high impact exogenous events has caused a shift in policy core values within coalitions. The ‘shock’ events include the introduction of the National Lottery and other alterations in funding systems and socio-economic conditions for the sporting NGBs, in combination with the endogenous changes such as British sport’s gradual move away from amateurism towards professionalism, has generated enough momentum for policy core belief system and values to be altered (Houlihan & Green 2005).

Eg’s of how frameworks can support the analysis of the UKSG

The extent to which UKSG is at heart of policy area can impact on the way in which the policy community develops – because, as described in the introductory chapter, the lifespan of the UKSG has always been unconfirmed (relying on policy extension and policy rebranding), UKSG sports are reluctant to commit own

According to policy-makers, the UKSG has the potential to facilitate other youth sport related policies such as the NCF. It could be suggested that such facilitation represents a unique coming together of three seemingly independent circumstances (streams). Policy entrepreneurs such as Richard Caborn and Sue Campbell have pursued this ‘window of opportunity’ to ensure YST and DCMS pet proposals materialise as a consequence of the combined

In consideration of the UKSG association with the NCF initiative, an application of the ACF could highlight a strengthening link between the elements of elite sport and school-aged sport. In essence, the ACF analysis may suggest a growing association between elite and school sport policies, which have traditionally acted as two separate and competing coalitions of interest.
resource to policy community/issue network. This reluctance has consequences for the implementation and future design of policy.

As highlighted in chapters 1 and 2, YST as an organisation, are striving towards the development of a National Competition Framework (NCF); a single pathway for youth sport that guides a novice athlete towards the development of elite standards. To achieve this pathway, a significant level of cooperation, goal alignment and integration between varieties of sporting organisations would be required. These characteristics are common to a tightly bound policy community, rather than an ‘issue network’ which is more typical of sport policy. It is feasible to suggest that the UKSG has the potential to act as a catalyst for a move from the current climate in British youth sport - a loose ‘issue network’, towards a policy community.

The UKSG and NCF initiatives are in their fourth year of establishment, however the ACF requires a period of over ten years to accurately describe policy stability or change. However, in just the last four years, sport policy has witnessed significant endogenous and exogenous events, such as the build up to the London 2012 Olympics; the economic crisis; the success experienced by the GB team at the Beijing Olympics; and the withdrawal of school sport partnership funding as a result of the election of a coalition government. In combination, these events have led to policy-orientated learning and transfer, which consequently has had the potential to shape the future of the UKSG initiative. Within just four years, there is clear evidence of policy change, rather than policy stability.
3. 13 Meso-level theory summary

- Policy Networks

In summary, the Policy Network approach provides this study with useful metaphors for policy analysis and enables the researcher to draw approximate boundary lines around the policy sectors that exist within an overall policy universe. In reality, however, the approach struggles to determine when policy change has occurred and is relatively limited in its conceptualisation of power relationships.

In an attempt to defend the network approach, John states that ‘too much is expected from it’ (1998:89). He argues that the networks should not be used for explaining policy formation and change, but instead it proves most useful when capturing the multidimensional nature of policy. In reflection of this study’s focus on how the UKSG initiative has been progressed from its design to implementation, the assumptions of the Policy Network approach may in fact prove useful to consider.

- Multiple Streams Approach

The Multiple Streams framework aims to provide some form of policy explanation for what is essentially a constantly evolving, complex and messy process. The approach possesses no formal starting point, but instead suggests that policy developments are constantly in a state of imbalance. Although there are numerous occasions when the lens appears appropriate in the analysis of sport policy, its analytical capacity is limited to the design of policy, rather than the implementation of it. The approach’s focus on the aligning of policy, political and problem streams is without doubt a fruitful analytical tool for enhancing understanding of policy design, however the interest of this study is implementation. Something that can be taken forward to aid analysis (and will be discussed below in reference to policy implementation) is the Multiple Stream’s concept of the policy entrepreneurs.
- **Advocacy Coalition Framework**

While acknowledging the imperfections of the ACF, the framework still provides this study with a notably coherent and robust theory. One of its most significant qualities, when compared to the other policy approaches, is its ability to link ‘the early phases of the policy cycles – problem definition and agenda-setting with decision-making and implementation’ (Parsons 1995:203). It is this quality that adds an element of fluidity to the policy process that contrasts with the weaknesses of the stages heuristic. When evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the ACF detailed in Table 3.10, it seems that the framework provides one of the most potentially useful tools for the analysis of policy process.

- **Conclusion**

It is not the intention at this point in the study to privilege one of these theories given that they each possess very different and individual qualities that might support later empirical analysis. Houlihan (2000) has argued that many of the frameworks fail to fit the uniqueness and peculiarity of sports policy in the UK and hence a more robust framework is called for, one which has the capacity to analyse and account for a range of characteristics such as the vulnerability of sport policy agenda to intervention from non-sports interests and the extent to which the policy area is fragmented and under-developed. In order to remain sensitive to the characteristics of sport policy and prevent a narrowing of the researcher’s field of vision, a combination of theoretical approaches will be required as a meso-level approach that is able to accurately describe all sport policy processes is yet to be identified.

John (1998) summarises this point extremely well in his declaration that the meso-level theories developed to date act only as partial accounts of the ‘true’ policy process. He states that these frameworks:

> concentrate on examples best placed to illustrate their perspectives. As a result they often leave out much of the practice of decision-making. Sometimes a theory is good at explaining stability, such as policy
It is therefore likely to be more beneficial to use the three identified approaches as part of a synthetic approach, whereby the frameworks act more as heuristic devices as opposed to exact, concrete accounts of political actions.

3.14 Policy Implementation

Whilst there has been only some application of analytical frameworks to explore sport policy as a whole, the extent to which sport policy implementation has been examined is even more limited. Generic perspectives of implementation have been reviewed by several authors such as O’Toole (1986); Sabatier (1986); McLaughlin (1987); Van Horn (1987) and Goggin et al. (1990), however application of the various perspectives to the implementation of British sport policy is lacking.

Policy implementation has often been described as the ‘missing link’ of the policy process (Salamon 2001). Too often policy implementation is something that is separated from the rest of the policy process, which has allowed researchers to overlook the ‘link’ in the policy process. Indeed, policy-makers themselves often neglect to direct attention to policy implementation, which can, particularly in the case of sport, cause policy outcomes to veer away from original policy intentions. Resulting from this, is a lack of understanding of the constraints, consequences and requirements associated with a specific policy by both policy-makers and policy implementers roles. These are roles that are rarely occupied by the same person. This study will use two approaches to policy implementation (top-down and bottom up, described below) to gain an understanding of how this disparity in the roles of policy design and policy implementation has impacted the UKSG. In order to make sense of findings collected through application of these two opposing approaches, Matland’s Ambiguity-Conflict Model will also be used as a
heuristic device to consolidate information collected across three case studies and support conclusions.

The challenges of policy implementation can be explored through two main schools of thought: the top-down and bottom-up approaches. These approaches can support the analysis of the UKSG and enhance understanding of why the outcomes of the event have not always aligned with the original policy expectations of YST and DCMS. It is increasingly accepted by policy theorists that there is some convergence between these traditionally opposing perspectives. As will be explored, frameworks of implementation that tie the ‘macro level variables of the top-down models to the micro-level variables bottom-uppers consider’ are proving popular, although a robust and fault free model is yet to emerge (Matland 1995:145).

The top down perspective of policy implementation has been reviewed by authors such as Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) and Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981; 1983; 1989) although it is Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky who are often referred to as the ‘founding fathers of implementation studies’ (Hill & Hupe 2002:44) and more specifically, of top-down implementation analysis. The pair define policy as a ‘hypothesis containing initial conditions and predicted consequences. If X is done at time t1, then Y will result at time t2’ (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973, xiii). This causal definition has been criticised by advocates of the alternative bottom-up perspective as being too rational and linear. Despite this critique, the top-down perspective is able to account for the disparity that often exists between expected policy outcomes and actual policy outcomes. Pressman & Wildavsky refer to this as the ‘implementation deficit’ (1973), which occurs through the lessening effectiveness of policy as it is passed through an increasing number of stakeholder agencies. The top-down perspective acknowledges that with an increasing number of policy actors (who will each have a vested interest in the consequential outcomes of a particular policy) comes the likelihood that policy implementation is delayed or intended outcomes are reinterpreted. This is of particular relevance to the UKSG policy, which as already highlighted, concerns numerous stakeholders.
Lewis A. Gunn (1978) has suggested that for perfect policy implementation to occur several implementation conditions need to be in place. These conditions are listed in Table 3.11. Whilst top-down theorists appreciate that these conditions rarely accumulate at any given time, they do assume that policy success is dependent on the control of these factors by policy makers, hence creating a top-down perspective as to how policy implementation occurs. Bottom-up theorists on the other hand, such as Elmore (1985) and Lipsky (1980) perceive policy implementation to be a process that is less related to the consequences of control, but is instead negotiation and interaction.

Table 3.11: Proposed conditions for perfect implementation of policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Circumstances external to the implementation agency do not impose crippling constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Not only are there no constraints in terms of overall resources, but also at each stage in the implementation process the required combination of resources is actually available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The policy to be implemented is based on a valid theory of cause and effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The relationship between cause and effect is direct and there are few, if any, intervening links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>There is a single implementation agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success. If other agencies must be involved, the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>There is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>In moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>There is perfect communication among, and coordination of, the various elements of agencies involved in the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The top-down perspective is also criticised for focusing too heavily on policy administration and adhering to Weberian assumptions that claim that decisions are based on merit and technology and therefore can be insulated from political influence. Advocates of the opposing bottom-up approach would argue that in reality, it is highly unlikely that apolitical decisions are made with regards to policy implementation (Matland 1995; Berman 1978; Hoppe 1990). Criticism is also directed towards the top-down perspective’s assumptions of centralised goal definition. By assuming that all policy goals are controlled top-down, the viewpoint is accused of underestimating how challenging policy control is and overlooking how people actually behave.
In opposition to the assumptions of top-down implementation, there is the work of bottom-up theorists such as Lipsky (1978; 1980); Elmore (1985); Berman (1978; 1980); Hjern & Porter (1981); Hjern (1982); Hjern & Hull (1982). The bottom-up approach claims that the process of policy implementation is not as apolitical or rational as top-down theorists would presume, but instead more the outcome of human interaction and negotiation.

*Individuals are not simply cogs in the [policy] process, but rather have substantial ability to mould policy outcomes* (Sutton 1999:8).

‘Bottom-uppers’ assume that policy implementation occurs at two levels: macro-implementation (through central policy actors) and micro-implementation (through local organisations or individuals who must react to policy). Localised policy actors who are engaged in micro-implementation are referred to as ‘street level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky 1978) by bottom up theorists. Berman (1978) argues that it is here, in the micro setting of implementation, where the majority of policies experience problems:

*Central planners only indirectly influence microlevel factors. Therefore there is a wide variation in how the same national policy is implemented at the local level* (Matland 1995:148)

Palumbo, Maynard-Moody & Wright (1984) highlight that whilst microimplementation can lead to varied policy outcomes, without the flexibility for street level bureaucrats to adapt centralised policy decisions to local circumstances, the policy is likely to fail. Research completed by Benny Hjern, and his colleagues (Hjern & Hull 1982) suggests that microimplementation can lead to successful outcomes, but only through experience. Successful policy implementation therefore, from a bottom up perspective, relies on the skill, localised knowledge and discretionary power of street level bureaucrats and their ability to deliver policy through suitable ‘coping strategies’ (Lipsky 1978).

In Lipsky’s description of street-level bureaucracy, it is suggested that these bureaucrats are not neutral servants of policy delivery, but they instead have their own values, beliefs and policy agenda to follow, whilst coping with the
pressures exerted on them by decision-makers through the inadequacy of implementation resources (for example, insufficient time or financial support):

street level bureaucrats respond to work-related pressures in ways that, however understandable or well-intentioned, may have invidious effects on citizen impressions of governmental responsiveness and equity in performance (Lipsky 1980:209).

Here, Lipsky summarises that street level bureaucracy can lead to the adjustment or reinterpretation of original, central policy objectives in order to make them more practical and feasible at a local level. A consequence of this behaviour is policy implementation that leads to policy outcomes that differ to those that were originally intended by the policy’s decision makers.

Although the bottom-up perspective is quite different to and critical of the top-down perspective, it is important to acknowledge that both approaches can contribute to the analysis of policy implementation. In their unrefined form, each school of thought exaggerates its respective position. The top-down perspective can over-estimate the level of influence and control policy decision-makers have over the implementation process. In contrast, the advocates of the bottom-up perspective can be accused of arguing that street-level bureaucrats have a greater amount of discretion over policy progress than they do in reality. The bottom-up approach has also at times over-estimated the extent at which excessive localised adaptation of policy occurs. Such large adaptations can cause policy to deviate substantially from original policy intentions to the point of being irrelevant and ineffective. Although scenarios where this has happened can be found in the work of March & Simon (1958); Merton (1957); Michels (1949); Selznick (1949), the reality is that such extreme cases of policy failure are infrequent in the modern day. In particular for the case of sport policies, which are often cyclical in nature, the success of one specific policy is often linked to the funding arrangements for future sport policies. It is therefore not in the direct interests of sport specific street level bureaucrats to deviate significantly from original policy intentions, as there are likely consequences for future funding allocations. This links with
the ‘no compromise’ approach used by UK Sport and the use of monitored Whole Sport Plans by Sport England, as mentioned in Chapter 2.

In consideration of the criticisms of both top-down and bottom-up perspectives of policy implementation, it is perhaps sensible to consider both schools of thought when analysing the implementation of the UKSG policy. Whilst top-down control over policy conditions can impact upon the clarity of policy direction and its implementation, the way in which human behaviour responds to these conditions can also shape the implementation process of policy.

There has been some, though limited, attempt to combine the top-down and bottom-up perspectives in a way that is workable for the study of policy processes. Elmore presents one example of this through his concept of forward and backward mapping (1982; 1985) which involves the step-by-step planning of top-down and bottom-up implementation processes to ensure that micro- and macro-implementation progress along the same pathway (Parsons 1995). Whilst this tool is able to highlight how effective policy can be assured, the mapping concept does not have any explanatory power and is therefore not an analytical ‘model’ in the traditional sense (Matland 1995).

Sabatier’s ACF model, although not designed specifically for the exploration of implementation process, can be used to gain some understanding of the processes that link policy design and outcome. Through the ACF, Sabatier believes that ‘policies operate within parameters most easily identified by using a top-down approach. These parameters include socio-economic conditions, legal instruments, and the basic government structure’ (Matland 1995:151). But in analysing these parameters, a bottom-up perspective can be used to determine the formation and actions of coalitions of interests. While these coalitions range significantly in terms of organisation, the belief system of the individuals included is the same. Ultimately, a coalition shares goals and interests and views a policy problem in a similar way. This is likely to influence how the organisations included in the coalition are going to implement a policy set by centralised decision makers. The ACF’s capacity to examine policy implementation has been debated by some academics. Matland (1995) as an example highlights that the ACF is only able to explore
the development of policy in general over a ten-year period, rather than the implementation of one specific policy. For findings to be meaningful, Matland suggests that analysis ‘should be tied to a specific policy rather than to all actions in a policy field’ (1995:152).

Whilst other combinations of top-down and bottom-up perspectives exist, they have not been as successfully applied as the ACF and forward and backward mapping concept (Matland 1995). Often, the limiting factor that prevents the development of applicable models is that the top-down and bottom-up perspectives define successful policy differently. ‘Top-downers’ perceive the alignment between policy intentions and policy outcomes as policy success, whereas ‘bottom-uppers’ are quite comfortable settling for ‘positive effects’ and adapted policy outcomes to signify successful implementation (Palumbo, Maynard-Moody & Wright 1984). Other authors such as Dunsire (1978) and Saetren (1983) suggest that it’s more appropriate to apply the different perspectives at different times in the life of a policy. Top-down perspectives may prove more fitting at the earlier stages of policy, such as planning and formation, whereas the use of bottom-up approaches may prove more appropriate towards the evaluation stage of policy process. Matland (1995), in his development of an ambiguity/conflict contingency model that combines top-down and bottom-up perspectives, takes into account Dunsire and Saetren’s perspectives and has developed four implementation perspectives that can be applied to various circumstances (see Figure 3.5).
The four types of implementation (detailed in Table 3.12) are based upon the extent to which policy conflict and policy ambiguity are experienced. Policy conflict (or congruence depending on the circumstance) is a reflection of goal agreement, not just in terms of the goal itself, but also on how that goal should be best achieved (Luce & Raiffa 1957; Raiffa 1970; Lave & March 1975). ‘Many top-down authors have treated conflict as an endogenous variable that policy designers can influence and should minimise’ (Matland 1995:157), however, from a bottom-up perspective, policy conflict is not manipulable and therefore should be taken as a given. Policy ambiguity, according to Matland (1995), relates to how ambiguous policy goals are and how clear the pathway is to achieve them.

Quite often policy conflict and ambiguity are perceived as negatively correlated terms in relation to policy design (i.e. if policy ambiguity is high, then policy conflict tends to be lower). When goals are clearly defined, then there is an increased likelihood that there will be some form of policy conflict (Regan 1984). Matland therefore makes the suggestion that ‘ambiguity is
often a prerequisite for getting new policies passed at the legitimation stage’ (1995:158).

The tension between a top-down and bottom-up perspective with regards to policy ambiguity and policy conflict is captured in Matland’s (1995) matrix (Figure 3.5). The matrix enables policy makers and implementers to understand what circumstances lead to specific types of implementation. Table 3.12 describes the four forms of implementation presented through the matrix, with a brief explanation regarding how each type can be progressed more effectively. This focus of progressing policy becomes relevant to the matrix in that it is possible for developments, or policy-orientated learning to move a specific policy area between types of implementation.

Table 3.12: Types of implementation included in the Ambiguity-Conflict implementation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How to progress policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Implementation</td>
<td>Low levels of conflict &amp; ambiguity. Goals and means of achieving goals are clear. Actors are stable over time. Implementation conditions are relatively closed off from external inhibiting factors. The resources made available largely determine policy success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Implementation</td>
<td>High levels of conflict and low levels of ambiguity. Typical of political models of decision making (Halperin et al. 1974; Elmore 1978). Goals are clearly defined, but are conflicting. The lack of ambiguity and increasing use of power in this type of implementation overrides the usefulness of microlevel analysis and the discussion of street-level bureaucracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Implementation</td>
<td>Low levels of conflict and high levels of ambiguity. Commonly associated with the multiple streams model of policy design whereby streams of (changeable) actors, problems, solutions and choice opportunities combine to form an unpredictable policy, that lacks detailed plans due to the rushed nature of its implementation. Contextual conditions determine policy implementation and therefore bottom-up assumptions of street-level bureaucracy are relevant. Bottom-up perspectives of policy implementation are more tolerant of high ambiguity than top-down models.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High levels of conflict & ambiguity. A proliferation of policy interpretations is common due to ambiguity, which leads to increased conflict. As described in the above explanation of the ACF, policy actors begin to compete for their preferences / ideas to determine the direction of policy. When both conflict and ambiguity are high, macro-level implementers often see their powers / influences diminish and transferred to the micro-level.

The development of a dominant coalition of interest (through a micro-implementation focus) is likely to determine how a policy will progress. However, local level contextual conditions will influence which coalitions of interest become dominant.

**Source: Matland 1995**

To briefly summarise the discussion of policy implementation, each approach, model or theory linked to the segment of policy process provides this study with some useful insights into the challenging reality of implementation. As made evident through the discussion of the top-down perspective, the bottom-up approach and the various efforts to find a balance or compromise between the two extremes through hybrid models, there is no 'one size fits all' for the modelling of implementation. The Ambiguity-Conflict matrix produced by Matland (1995) is probably the most convincing hybrid model to be developed to date however, like the other mentioned analytical tools, it does not escape criticism. Even Matland himself admits that unfortunately the model does not merge or entwine the assumptions of the top-down and bottom-up implementation perspectives. Instead, each of the four implementation types described by the model is dominated by just one of the approaches.

**3.15 Conclusion**

The three meso-level approach that have proven to possess at least some relevance to the study of British sport policy include the Policy Networks approach, the Multiple Streams approach and the ACF. These frameworks, upon application to robust criteria for inclusion, have been identified as possessing the greatest analytical potential for this study. In particular, the frameworks proved to have the greatest capacity of the eleven or so existing meso-level frameworks/models (Sabatier 1999) to account for both top-down and bottom-up processes linked to policy implementation. This has been deemed an important quality for this study, given its focus of how the UKSG policy has been progressed from its intended design by policy-makers, to its actual delivery of policy outcomes. To aid the analysis of this focus, the
tensions between top-down and bottom-up perspectives of policy implementation have been explored in this chapter, along with the various attempts to combine the two extreme’s assumptions through workable hybrid models.

Following on from a point that has been reiterated throughout this chapter, it is not the intention of this study to test any of the meso-level frameworks, power-theories or implementation models mentioned in this study. This study will instead utilise them as heuristic tools, with strengthened explanatory power that can support the analysis of the UKSG policy.
4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Prior to discussing the organisation of this chapter, it is worth repeating the aim and objectives of the research mentioned in Chapter 1:

Aim: to analyse the implementation of the UKSG policy

Objectives:

a) To locate implementation of the UKSG within a broader analysis of the policy process for youth / school sport;

b) To gain an understanding of the relationship between the UKSG sports and the YST; and

c) To explore the outcomes of the UKSG and its six objectives.

To satisfy these objectives, this chapter will discuss a range of methodological and philosophical approaches to research and determine which approach is the most appropriate. The chapter is organised as follows:

1. Ontological and epistemological assumptions will be considered, alongside the resulting paradigmatic options for this study.

2. Methodological issues will then be highlighted in relation to the ontological and epistemological positions adopted.

3. Focus will then turn to the discussion of this study’s research methods.

4. The adopted research methods will then be evaluated in terms of their ability to provide valid and reliable data.

5. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the study’s overall research protocol.
4.2 Research Philosophy

Logical and precise research, according to Grix, must outline ‘the core assumptions that underlie…and inform [its] research questions, methodology, methods and even sources’ (2004:57). This will ensure that the research methodology described is both internally coherent and clearly articulated, as different research philosophies vary in their compatibility (Green 2003). Ontological and epistemological positions ‘embody different ways of viewing the social and political world’ (Sparkes 1992:14 cf. Grix 2002) and must remain consistent throughout the research in order to avoid contradictory and confusing conclusions.

In order to generate robust data, researchers must make strategic decisions in order to select the most appropriate, logical and sound research design (Denscombe 1998). This therefore requires the researcher to position themselves in relation to the philosophical approaches early on, as these decisions will influence subsequent decisions in relation to methods and research design. This process is described more clearly in Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1 : The building blocks of research**

```
Ontology ➔ epistemology ➔ methodology ➔ methods ➔ sources

What’s out there to know?

What and how can we know about it?

How can we go about acquiring that knowledge?

Which precise procedures can we use to acquire it?

Which data can we collect?
```

Source: Grix 2002:180
Whilst the directional approach implied by Grix is open to debate, Grix asserts that, ‘ontology is the starting point of all research, after which one’s epistemological and methodological positions will logically follow’ (2004:59; see also Blaikie 2000; Bryman 2001 and Hay 2002). Such an assumption encourages question-led, rather than method-led research, an approach which will be followed in this study.

4. 3 Ontology

Ontological assumptions are frequently and ‘wrongly collapsed together with epistemology’ (Grix 2002:179). Although the two dimensions of research philosophy are similar, it is important to keep them separate. Epistemological assumptions refer to ‘claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known’ (Blaikie 2000:8). However, such claims cannot be made without prior consideration of (if only implicitly) ontological assumptions; what the researcher believes can actually exist and what constitutes social reality. As Lewis rightly states, ‘any attempt to conceptualise political phenomena inevitably involves the adoption of some picture of the nature of social being’ (2002:17) and therefore ontological assumptions are automatically made prior to data collection.

Grix (2004) divides ontological considerations into two categories which focus upon the nature of social entities and whether social phenomena exist in a reality external to the researcher, or in a reality that is socially constructed by the investigator; ‘whether ‘reality’ is a given ‘out there’ in the world, or the product of one’s mind’ (Burrel & Morgan 1979:1). These opposing approaches are referred to as foundationalism and anti-foundationalism.

For foundationalists, it is assumed that there is only one form of reality that is external to individual cognition. This therefore implies that knowledge is both objective and an ‘indisputable truth’ (Hughes & Sharrock 1997:4-5). In direct opposition to this view, anti-foundationalists believe that the term ‘reality’ is personal to the individual and that it is ‘socially and discursively ‘constructed’ by human actors’ and their perceptions (Grix 2004:61). Due to this
assumption of individuality, anti-foundationalists also believe that ‘there are no central values that can be rationally and universally grounded’ (Grix 2004:61).

4. 4 Structure and Agency

Questions of ontology also arise in debates concerning ‘structure and agency’, which centre upon the fundamental issue of determinism versus free-will. The debate explores the extent to which we are products of our environment and underlying social structures, or whether we are capable of determining our future based on intentional agency behaviour (McAnulla 2005). Depending upon their ontological views, authors tend to adopt a particular preference towards the support of agency, or structurally-influenced behaviour. Even if these positions are implicit, the structure and agency debate becomes almost unavoidable for researchers (McAnulla 2002; Marsh & Stoker 2002).

The purpose of this section is to highlight the influence that the debate has had upon the selection of research strategies. The first of the three approaches, intentionalism, focuses purely on the impacts of agency. Those who subscribe to intentionalism assert that all activity can be ‘explained through reference to the intentions and actions of individuals’ (McAnulla 2002, cf. chapter 13 in Marsh & Stoker 2002:276). However, when mention is made of structure it is interpreted as a straightforward reflection of the actions of individuals. Structuralism is an alternative approach that, if placed upon a continuum, would feature at the opposite end to intentionalism. Influenced by the Marxist Louis Althusser, the position assumes that agents have ‘no autonomous power’ and in fact assume that the role of the individual is as a ‘bearer’ of structure influenced by political, economic and ideological factors (McAnulla 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:275). It is solely structure that has the potential to govern reality, rather than individual behaviour.

In addition to these polarised perspectives, Giddens presents a third, more dialectical approach to the ontological questions of structure and agency and presents an alternative to the radical dualisms portrayed in the intentionalist and structuralist approaches. The theory argues that structure and agency
are, in fact, mutually dependent positions as opposed to separate entities as previously implied. Giddens contends that ‘structure only exists through agency and agents have ‘rules and resources’ between them which will facilitate or constrain their actions’ (McAnulla 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:278-9).

As with all philosophical questions surrounding research, there remains no defined ‘correct’ way through which to tackle research. It therefore seems logical to acknowledge the debate as an unavoidable and situational problem that the researcher needs to be aware of.

4. 5 Epistemology

The concept of epistemology is frequently taken for granted in research and only reflected upon implicitly and unconsciously by the researcher. An understanding of the epistemological options is deemed necessary within research in order to recognise what kinds of knowledge exist and how the generation of this knowledge might differ between research strategies and paradigms. Mason (1998) also stresses that in addition to this level of comprehension the researcher must also remain consistent with their previously adopted ontological position.

The variants of epistemological approaches position themselves differently in relation to the following two questions:

1) Can we be objective in our search for knowledge?
2) Is the knowledge we search for directly observable?

In response to the initial epistemological query, we must relate back to the questions of ontology. Foundationalist assumptions assert that reality and therefore social phenomena exists independently of our thought processes. Consequently, this position assumes that it is possible to be objective in research. Anti-foundationalists are in opposition to this epistemological assumption and believe that ‘no observer can be objective because they live in the social world and are affected by the social constructions of ‘reality’” (Marsh & Furlong 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:19).
The second question raises the issue of how the researcher might establish knowledge and relationships between social phenomena. There are a variety of epistemological responses to this question. For example, there are those who follow the ‘scientific’ approach that asserts that direct observation is possible and is the only way through which knowledge can be generated. The possibility that unobservable, deeper structures to the social phenomena in question might exist is completely rejected. Hollis & Smith summarise that the scientific epistemological approach to investigation aims ‘to detect the regularities in nature, propose a generalisation, deduce what it implies for the next case and observe whether the prediction succeeds. If it does, no consequent action is needed; if it does not, then either discard the generalisation or amend it’ (1990:50).

The competing epistemological position forms the ‘hermeneutic approach’, which assumes the anti-foundationalist ontology that the world is socially constructed (Marsh & Furlong 2002, cf. chapter 1 Marsh & Stoker 2002). According to this approach, phenomena are not directly observable and it is impossible ‘to establish causal relationships between phenomena that hold across time and space’ due to the individuality associated with the construction of reality (Marsh & Furlong 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:20).

### 4.6 Paradigmatic parameters

As a consequence of choosing to make certain ontological and epistemological assumptions, it is likely that compatible and complementary methodological approaches will follow. This directional relationship influences the overall strategy of the research and begins to shape how its data are to be collected and interpreted with regard to the research question. This logical pathway to research philosophy is encompassed within an overall ‘research paradigm’ which effectively determines how social phenomena are to be viewed and ultimately, will impact upon how the research question is to be answered.

Marsh & Furlong (2002) detail three of the main research paradigms, positivism; critical realism and interpretivism (see Table 4.1) and state that
there is little agreement between them. Again, there is no right or wrong way to conduct research and therefore each paradigm remains valid if their underlying assumptions remain consistent with the research’s philosophical approach.

Table 4.1: Assumptions of three approaches to social enquiry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Critical Realism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>Foundationalist - contends that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it</td>
<td>Foundationalist - contends that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it</td>
<td>Anti-Foundationalist – Contends that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>Scientific / Objectivist / Phenomena is directly observable</td>
<td>Scientific / Subjectivist / Phenomena is not directly observable</td>
<td>Hermeutic / Subjectivist / Phenomena is not directly observable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge is derived from sensory experienced by experimental or comparative analysis</td>
<td>Science is an empirically based, rational and objective enterprise to provide true explanatory and predictive knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge is derived from everyday socially constructed concepts and meanings. The researcher enters this social world to understand these meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The role of research</strong></td>
<td>Science is an attempt to gain both predictive and explanatory knowledge of the external world</td>
<td>Explanation is the primary objective of science by discovering the connections between phenomena and knowledge of the underlying structures and mechanisms at work</td>
<td>Due the belief that objective analysis is impossible in research as all knowledge is discursively laden, causal relationships are also seen as impossible. Thick forms of description is therefore the primary objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical dependency</strong></td>
<td>Concepts and generalisations can be established between social phenomena, using theory to generate hypotheses which can be tested, and falsified, by direct observation</td>
<td>Models are hypothetical descriptions which may reveal the underlying mechanisms of reality</td>
<td>At one level these accounts are re-descriptions of everyday accounts, at another level they are developed into theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure vs Agency debate</strong></td>
<td>Structure-centred approach - there are no deep structures which cannot be observed</td>
<td>Structures do not determine outcomes, rather they constrain and facilitate agency determined behaviour, therefore contends not all phenomena is directly observable</td>
<td>Agency-centred approach – Contends the world is socially constructed and therefore phenomena are not directly observable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Blaikie (2003); Sparkes (1992: 21); Marsh et al. (1999: 11-14)
In review of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of this study, of the three philosophical paradigms summarised in Table 4.1, the critical realist approach is deemed not only internally consistent but also the most appropriate to the research questions. Critical realism assumes that not all social phenomena are directly observable, yet it is still possible to produce statements of a causal nature. The approach, associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar, makes reference to both the unobservable structural influences and the human behaviour that impact upon society (Blaikie 1993). Critical realism does not believe it necessary or indeed sufficient to solely refer to directly observable empirical data in order to establish causal relationships. Unobservable events, therefore, do exist in the minds of critical realists and these intangible occurrences can be linked to cause and effect through the use of theoretical models and the establishment of ‘tendencies’ of structural and group behaviour, as opposed to more formal regularities. It is this point that distinguishes critical realism from the positivist tradition.

Positivism and the critical realist paradigm possess similarities in that they both assert that a reality does exist independently of our descriptions of it (Bryman 2004) and therefore concede that science can be empirically-based (Blaikie 1993). However, the two differ in the level of significance they place upon explanatory knowledge and how it can be obtained. Positivists contend that predictive and explanatory knowledge is achievable only through direct observation. Critical realists, on the other hand, state that such knowledge is only attainable once unobservable entities such as underlying mechanisms are understood. Without consideration of these unobservable structures, critical realists argue that it is impossible to evaluate a ‘true’ picture of reality, since actors and agents may advocate interests that have been manipulated by powerful intangible forces. In essence, an actor’s perceived interest may not reflect their real interest and views. When these traditional neo-Marxian arguments are taken into consideration, critical realism becomes similar to the interpretivist paradigm in its rejection of positivist direct observational methods, however the interpretivist stance soon becomes estranged through
the critical realists’ claims that unobservable structures are ‘real’ and possess causal properties.

Through its reference to the impact of structure and agency, critical realism reflects many of the assumptions of Giddens’ Structuration Theory. The paradigm would maintain that ‘while structures exist to facilitate or constrain the outcomes of policy for example, the nature of structure is determined by individual and organisational actors’ (Thomas 2004:124). In essence, critical realists argue for a dialectical approach to the structure-agency problem and state that structures are changeable through individual interpretation of the forces they exert upon society (Marsh et al. 1999).

It comes as no surprise that advocates of the positivist approach critique this paradigm for its acknowledgement of unobservable structures and state that critical realist claims to knowledge are both ‘untestable and unfalsifiable’ (Marsh & Furlong 2002). Unfortunately, for the critical realist tradition, the critiques do not stop here. Interpretivists also declare that critical realists are incorrect to assume that the observations of ‘deep structures’ can be objective (Marsh & Furlong 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:31). Furthermore, the interpretivist critics challenge the critical realist assumption that there is a world that is ‘real’ out there to research. The critiques generated here from the competing research paradigms highlight how the differences in epistemological assumptions can generate alternative outlooks on one social phenomena. The critiques suggested against the critical realist outlook are perfectly reasonable based upon their opposing ontological and epistemological assumptions. However, it is exactly the nature of these opposing philosophies that causes critical realism to be associated with one fundamental contradiction. Marsh & Furlong (2002) draw attention to the paradigm’s attempt to combine elements of both positivism and the interpretivist tradition, which many social researchers assume to be impossible due to their ‘fundamentally different ontological and epistemological underpinnings’ (Marsh & Stoker 2002:31). With this in mind, although the internal coherence of the critical realist position is questionable and the level of guidance and specificity the paradigm provides for research
design is debatable, it is the preferred set of assumptions adopted for this study and is discussed more fully below.

4. 7  Methodology

According to D’Cruz, methodology ‘is a perspective or very broad theoretically informed framework…which may or may not specify its own particular appropriate research methods or techniques’ (2001:18). This definition is logically linked to that of research methods, although it is important to note here that they are two separate concepts. Whilst methodological considerations relate to the ‘potentialities and limitations of research methods’ it does not delve into the details of how each method is able to collate data (Grix 2002:179). There has been a tendency in the past to associate methodological questions simply within a debate between qualitative and quantitative approaches, however, as Higgs & McAllister (2001) appropriately point out, methodological decisions should relate to the research question and therefore to the specific paradigm adopted and ontological and epistemological philosophies that underpin it. This is not to say that qualitative and quantitative discussions are inappropriate; it merely implies that the dichotomy that the two approaches represent should be considered with reference to the underpinning research philosophy.

-  The false dichotomy

In spite of the fact that a large amount of research adopts a ‘mixed-method’ approach, there are still those who remain strong advocates for either qualitative or quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. It is this separation of preferences that encourages some researchers to assume that there is a dichotomy between the two methodologies that should not be crossed. Bryman (1988), along with numerous other well establish social scientists, declare this dichotomy to be, in fact, artificial and that the more successful studies utilise elements of both approaches to complement one another through triangulation (King et al. 1994).
Table 4.2 represents the typical assumptions made about quantitative and qualitative methodologies that reenforces the false polarisation between them. Although one ‘camp’ may appear more attractive and suited to a research project, it is important to also consider that the alternative approach may also offer the potential for complementary methods that produce different data, which is just as precise given the context. The decision, as already emphasised, should be related back to the task in hand and the philosophies adopted.

Table 4.2: The ‘quantitative – qualitative dichotomy’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested in finding out numerical qualities of an event or case: how many, how much?</td>
<td>Interested in the nature and essence of an event, person or case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal of investigation is prediction, control, description, hypothesis-testing</td>
<td>Goal of investigation is understanding, description, discovery, hypothesis-generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses hard data (numbers)</td>
<td>Soft data (words or images from documents or observations, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective (researcher detaches themselves from the phenomena)</td>
<td>Subjective (researcher becomes apart of, or accepts the bias they may have on the phenomena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually tackles macro-issues, using large, random and representative samples</td>
<td>Tends to analyse micro-issues, using small, non-random and non-representative samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employs a deductive research strategy</td>
<td>Employs an inductive research strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its epistemological orientation is argued to be rooted in the positivist tradition</td>
<td>Its epistemological orientation is argued to be rooted in the interpretative tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims at identifying general patterns and relationships</td>
<td>Aims at interpreting events of historical and cultural significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures are created prior to data collection and are standardised</td>
<td>Measures are created during interaction with data and are often specific to the individual setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey methodology</td>
<td>Interview (in-depth case study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures are standard, replication is presumed</td>
<td>Research procedures are particular, replication rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-free</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Grounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts are in the form of variables</td>
<td>Concepts are in the form of themes and motifs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings attempt to be comprehensive holistic and generalisable</td>
<td>Findings are seen to be precise, narrow and not generalisable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High reliability</td>
<td>Impressionistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td>Specific to the context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust</td>
<td>Use of rich description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparable</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative sampling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Dey (1993) highlights that there is growing recognition that there is much to be gained from integration rather than competition between the different
methodologies (Fielding & Fielding 1986). These ‘gains’ arise from the amalgamation of each methodology’s strengths and the eradication of their weaknesses. Depending on the research topic, qualitative and quantitative approaches have the potential to be equally insightful (Richardson 1996). The fundamental question is therefore not which approach to adopt, but instead how research paradigms can conceptualise knowledge and research purpose.

4. 8 Philosophical discussion for this study

Upon considering each of Jonathan Grix’s ‘building blocks of research’ (2002), and their accompanying philosophical traditions, it seems appropriate to now identify the paradigmatic preferences of this study. Through the adoption of the research paradigm, later discussions and decisions upon research designs and methods will become clearer and justified, given the directional relationship of research philosophy, implied by Grix (2002).

Beginning with the paradigms that are deemed unsuitable for the study, positivism and interpretivism, the assumptions that they are based on do not allow sufficiently for the consideration of how both structure and agency can influence society and hence are unable to satisfy the required philosophical and theoretical preferences of the study. The structure-agency debate plays a particularly important role within the study’s discussions of power in relation to the outcomes and developments of the UKSG. These power discussions will in turn impact upon the later use of the meso-level theories mentioned in Chapter 3 (such as the ACF, policy networks and multiple streams approach). For example, Marsh & Smith note that ‘By examining networks we are looking at the institutionalisation of power relations both within the network and within the broader socio-economic and political context’ (2000:6). Whereas according to Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1999), agency power becomes evident within an advocacy coalition’s set of shared fundamental values and beliefs across a group. It is how this agency-related power is strategically used and influences structural power that is of particular interest to this study. In order to analyse how this cycle of influence takes place, specific reference will be made to all three of Lukes’ theoretical dimensions of power.
In isolation, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms struggle to account for all three dimensions of power associated with Steven Lukes (1974). In particular, positivism avoids the issue of latent power and ‘false consciousness’ in Lukes’ third dimension; and interpretivism avoids the issue of structure altogether and hence would tend to ignore Lukes’ second dimension. If interpretivism is correct to assume that reality does not exist independently of our interpretations of it, then power would depend on the individual’s perception of it, and power as an underlying structure would be ignored. Critical realism maintains a ‘relational’ approach to structure and agency, through its assumption that both elements of the debate have the capacity to influence action (Green 2003).

The critical realist tradition accepts that the presence of the researcher is likely to introduce bias into data collection and therefore is more consistent with a qualitative methodology. In keeping with the assumptions of the critical realist paradigm, this study maintains a preference towards the qualitative methodology for a number of reasons. Firstly, qualitative methodology acknowledges the possibility and consequences of researcher bias. Secondly, qualitative research is better prepared to ‘explore people’s subjective experiences and the meaning they attach to those experiences’ in comparison to quantitative methodology (Devine 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002:199).

Where the qualitative approach is less attractive, is the often high cost (time, finance and skill) of data collection. In this regard, smaller, more purposive samples are often used to make conclusions more manageable. This limitation restricts the generalisability of the final results, ultimately confining conclusions to within the boundaries of the study’s context. Given that this study’s intention is to let the research question dictate the methodology (rather than vice versa), this lack of generalisability does not prove problematic. The research aims do not require results to be made relevant to other situations outside the context of this specific study (i.e. to other sports not involved in the UKSG) and hence does not require a large representative sample to increase its validity. Instead, the conclusions of this study will aim to
be only generalisable to theoretical propositions, as opposed to populations. This is referred to by Yin as ‘analytical generalisation’ (2003:10).

Through confirming the overall philosophical assumptions that this study is based upon, it is now appropriate to discuss the research methods that will be employed in order to collate and analyse data.

4.9 Research strategy

In simple terms, a research strategy outlines how a study’s methods will be organised. It provides clarity on the questions to be addressed and ensures that the methods adopted are used in a coherent and complementary manner. The case study approach to research is one of a range of strategies available to the social scientist (see Table 4.3 for alternatives). Dependent upon the nature of the research question (in this circumstance ‘how and why’), each strategy has the capacity to generate knowledge that satisfies descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes.

Table 4.3: Characteristics of research strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control of behavioural events</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>Yes (highly controlled)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No (no control)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Yin 2003:5

The effects of bias are present in each of the strategies, however in comparison to alternative strategies, the case study approach appears to experience the greatest difficulty of overcoming this weakness (Yin 2003). Alternative approaches tend not to encounter considerable levels of bias, as they do not conduct research that directly relates to the context from which the phenomena was formed.
Through consideration of the separation of contemporary context experienced in alternative strategies, it would appear that the case study approach offers this project the greatest opportunity to study phenomena that are not always distinguishable from their context; a quality that is desired by this research’s design and critical realism. It is this ability to explore a phenomenon in the context in which it takes place that outweighs the criticisms of bias.

- **The use of a case study research strategy**

Yin defines the case study strategy as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’ (1989:23). In using the approach, there are six main evidence sources that can be utilised: interviews; participant observation; direct observation; document analysis; archival records; and physical artefacts (Yin 1994:80). Depending on the requirements and aims of the research some, or even all of these sources of evidence will be utilised through a specific case study design, which can employ either single or multiple case approaches, via holistic or generic analysis. This study will utilise a multiple, embedded case study design due to its capacity for cross-case comparisons (where appropriate), using well-defined, consistent measures. Although it is not the intention of the research to engage specifically in direct comparative analysis, as it is assumed that this will detract from the ability to fully learn from the data collected (Denzin & Lincoln 1998), the use of a multiple case design allowed for small scale comparisons to be made across the sports involved in the UKSG study.

- **Case study selection**

The decision to explore all eight UKSG sports (as of August 2007) in the study, with three of the sports being explored in more depth through case studies was determined by the research question and phase one of data collection. Fundamentally, the intrinsic characteristics of the UKSG resulted in a set of pre-determined sports to investigate. As the UKSG have expanded
each year by adding more sports and disciplines, a decision was required to determine: (a) when to ‘cap’ the sports to choose from; (b) which sports would prove particularly appropriate in relation to the theoretical considerations and the research topic; and (c) which sports were most accessible. The latter two decisions were based upon the conclusions drawn from preliminary data collection, whereas the former was based upon personal judgment, time constraints and convenience.

Table 4.5 summarises, from preliminary data collection, the similarities and differences between the eight UKSG sports with respect to four key research themes: power, relationships, motives and structure.

Table 4.5: The notable similarities and differences between the eight UKSG sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each sport has been involved in the UKSG for at least two years</td>
<td>Each sport varies in their underlying motive for agreeing to be apart of the UKSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each sport strives toward developing their youth competition structures, incorporating the UKSG into this structure.</td>
<td>Not all of the sports were included in government-backed initiatives such as the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies and therefore vary in terms of their access to school sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sports receive funding from the YST to support their development work related to their youth competition structures and involvement in the UKSG</td>
<td>The sports vary in the way they are devolved across the home countries. For example some sports compete as home countries, whereas others do not. Please note here that in situations where there was not one overall UK or GB level governing body, data was collected from the England representative body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sports must liaise with the YST and the ‘Fast Track’ events organising company in terms of operating the UKSG</td>
<td>Each sport varies in the way their NGB is organised in terms of their modernisation, professionalism and capacity to work with other public, private or voluntary organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each sport varies in terms of additional initiatives that they have set up in association to the UKSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each sport is included in the Olympic programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not all of the sports incorporate Paralympic events as part of their UKSG programme (predominantly due to YST event funding limitations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each sport varies in terms of the relationships they have forged with influential and powerful organisations or departments within sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each sport varies in their national reputation and success at major events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the differences in Table 4.5 highlight, each of the eight UKSG sports have distinctive characteristics. Although the sports share a common interest in the UKSG, their distinctive profiles will result in very different event impacts on their NGB internal structures and power mechanisms. Due to this
distinctiveness it is clear that any attempt at generalisation across all eight sports must be both limited and cautious. The differences listed in Table 4.5 supported the formation of the case study criteria for inclusion. The three case study sports chosen for analysis (swimming, table tennis and volleyball) therefore differed in terms of: NGB organisational complexity; approach to school sport; NGB size and; strength of tradition. Appendix G provides greater detail on the criteria in relation to the eight UKSG sports, but in summary, swimming was chosen as a case study sport due to it’s large organisational size, its relative wealth, its lengthy history within the UK, its close links to the school curriculum and it’s complex structure that spans four home countries and four school sport associations. Volleyball is almost a complete contrast to swimming and therefore makes for interesting comparison with its small and new organisational structure, its extremely close links across the home country governing bodies, its lack of wealth and its willingness to modernise and be innovative when it comes to school sport; an area which the sport had little involvement in prior to the UKSG. Finally, table tennis is ‘average’ in terms of its size, history and complexity, but proves particularly interesting due to its strong traditions and the large executive board it must liaise with in order to introduce new policies to the sport.

4.10 The research design

The research design is a ‘roadmap’ of the data collection and analysis process. It states how the data will be collected, what questions will be explored and how the evidence will be analysed (Philliber, Schwad & Samsloss 1980). The research design accompanying this study has been divided into two phases:

- Phase one

This preliminary phase of data collection took place between October 2007 to October 2008 and included elements of participant and direct observation. Data were collected at the UKSG-related meetings and events listed in Appendix A. The researcher’s invite to these meetings came about as a result
of her links to YST personnel (who were hosting the meetings). Whilst the YST's (research sponsor) invite allowed the researcher to opportunistically begin data collection, it proved to be the only involvement that YST had in the design of the research process. Not only was data collected at these meetings through observation, information was also generated through informal discussions with key personnel. The advantages and disadvantages of these varying forms of observation will be explored later in the chapter.

The information collected in phase one of the research was designed to inform three decisions:

(a) Which case studies should be selected if a multiple case approach appears most fruitful?
(b) Which organisational roles, or key personnel involved in the UKSG, should be selected for interview and why?
(c) How accessible are these interview subjects and what is their knowledge level regarding the specific research themes?

Phase one played a crucial part in the research process and enabled increased confidence in the reliability and validity of the research. The preliminary data collected at the meetings identified eighteen initial interviewees (listed in Appendix B) who were met with as part of phase two.

- Phase two

The main phase of data collection took place between October 2008 and November 2009. The use of participant observation continued through attendance at further meetings and other UKSG-related events (listed in Appendix A). In addition to observation, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key personnel and stakeholders of the UKSG, as identified in phase one. These interviews sought to obtain an insider perspective on the issues pertinent to the study. The information acquired through these interviews was then triangulated with the data gathered through observational methods. This allowed for anomalies in the data to be identified. These anomalies were then explored in a second interview with each of the eight
UKSG sport coordinators. Upon confirming or eliminating the anomalies, a point of theoretical saturation was reached, with no additional findings being generated through the interview process.

- **Limitations of the research design**

  Whilst the research design provides the study with a systematic and logical approach to data collection, it should be recognised that there are few occasions when the design can be criticised.

- **Phase 1 limitations**

  Direct and participant observation methods could only be applied at specific meetings where the researcher was granted access, which could imply that the researcher could not ensure that a well-rounded set of data had been obtained. Although informal discussions were occasionally possible directly before and after the meetings or during ‘group activities’, the majority of observation took place within a formal environment, where content, quantity and freedom of contributions made by participants were shaped by a meeting agenda that was pre-determined by two larger organisations (Fast Track and YST). This therefore implies, given the structured nature of the meetings, that true underlying issues may not have explicitly emerged. However, despite the presence of an agenda, the researcher was able to identify where informal power relations influenced some decision-making. For example, personal friendships between SPCs for badminton and volleyball meant that the pair’s decisions were often made together to represent what would benefit both of their sports. The SPCs for fencing and judo, however, were often left voting against the majority of the group, possibly due to the danger associated with these fighting sports. Other sports such as athletics and gymnastics were less vocal in comparison to other sports, and therefore often voted to reflect the majority decision. Through observation, this was linked to a lack of decision-making power within their own organisations.
Although the mere presence of the researcher in the UKSG meetings would have undoubtedly caused some bias to enter the discussions that took place, any further bias was avoided due to the researcher’s restricted access to the meeting agenda and inability to shape directly the formal discussions.

Informal discussions with key stakeholders were focused around the four main themes of the research: power, motivations, relationships and structure. Given the relaxed nature of the conversations, it was deemed inappropriate and inhibiting to record the discussions. Whilst this lack of an accurate record would certainly provide an opportunity for the personal perspective of the researcher to contaminate results, the outcomes of these informal discussions were essential in order to ensure, as far as possible, honest opinion, and to improve basic knowledge in the area and thus inform phase two of the research.

- **Phase 2 limitations**

The subjects selected for semi-structured interviewing were identified through phase one of the research design, which, as already highlighted, had the potential to be swayed by the interviewees. This was due to the researcher’s initial limited knowledge of the UKSG. As detailed in Chapter 1, the UKSG was a new policy with little background literature available to the researcher to prepare her for meeting the UKSG policy actors. The initial population from which the purposive sample of interviewees was selected therefore may not have included all key stakeholders involved in the UKSG. This limitation was later addressed through snowball sampling, which highlighted other relevant policy actors who had been overlooked in phase one.

Other, less avoidable limitations of the research design can be encompassed under a heading of ‘interpretation’. Although the study adheres to critical realist assumptions and foundationalist ontology, this study does acknowledge that the interpretation of observations and interview comments can vary significantly between individual researchers. It is recognised that due to differences in researcher ontological assumptions, if this research were to
be repeated by another researcher, who followed anti-foundationalist ontological assumptions, it is possible that different conclusions would be generated as a result.

A final point to make regarding the research’s validity across time is that the data collected were highly context and time specific. Phase two of the research design commenced immediately after the completion of phase one and therefore should not highlight any major problems, as both phases made reference to the same policies, organisations and events over the research time span. Where this issue would become problematic is if the conclusions made in this research were to be applied to a situation in the future. Policies and organisations change through time and therefore conclusions from this particular study should be applied with caution, if at all, to future circumstances related to the UKSG.

4.11 Research methods

In selecting particular methods for research, Sapsford (1999) advises the researcher to consider two basic questions before commencing data collection. The first is to contemplate whether the method is feasible for the task in hand, and the second is, to consider whether the selected methods will generate the information required. In essence, these questions focus upon the validity of the research and whether the chosen methodology will answer the research questions. These questions will be explored in this section, with specific reference to the following selected methods, which according to Yin (2003), are compatible with the case study research strategy:

- Participant observation and direct observation and;
- Semi structured interviews

4.12 Participant observation and direct observation

Simple, passive forms of direct observation are used frequently within research, such as the recording of straightforward observations or ‘snapshots
of empirical phenomena’ (Grix 2004:130). Participant observation makes use of this technique more explicitly and can require the researcher to become actively involved in the phenomenon they are exploring. This study utilised both direct and participatory observation techniques in a variety of ways in order to enhance its understanding of the UKSG in relation to specific topics.

- **The process of observation**

Denzin (1989) recommends that all observations should be documented and that all ‘notational records should contain explicit reference to participants, interactions, routines, rituals, temporal elements, interpretations, and social organisation’ (Alder & Alder 1998, Denzin & Lincoln 1998:86). Unfortunately the observations made in the specified settings were unable to be audio recorded, as it was assumed that this would either; (a) inhibit the natural flow of the meeting’s discussions; or (b) not be consented to by every member at the meeting. Handwritten notes were therefore made at each setting that abided by the recommendations of Denzin. Table 4.6 summarises the specific information that was recorded during the observations.

**Table 4.6: Summary of information collected through observations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting / event / training day information</th>
<th>Date, time, duration, location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment information</td>
<td>Space available, location description, noise levels, interruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information of attendees</td>
<td>Names, roles, responsibilities, numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue summaries</td>
<td>Topics discussed, relevant quotes, relevant reactions, which topics dominated the meeting (rough percentage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language</td>
<td>Reactions to statements, Reaction to researcher, level of interest, tone of voice etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting minutes</td>
<td>Minutes of meetings obtained that were written by the YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher commentary</td>
<td>Personal thoughts and opinions made regarding the observations that should remain separate to the main data collection in order to limit the impacts of bias and acknowledge that the researcher may have been influenced by the setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the study progressed and the researcher became increasingly aware of the issues impacting upon the UKSG, the focus of the observations gradually narrowed. Spradley (1980) and Jorgensen (1989) imply that this tapering of focus is common within research and depicts the initial phases of data collection as being unstructured and descriptive in character. It is here that
patterns emerge from the data that are then used to direct the research further. Data continued to be collected through observational methods throughout the study until ‘theoretical saturation’ was achieved (Glaser & Strauss 1968). Alder & Alder (1998) identify this point by replicating new findings with those collected previously (Denzin & Lincoln 1998).

- **Participant observation advantages**

Whilst many authors critique participant observation for being too subjective, Yin praises the approach for its invaluable ‘ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone inside the case study rather than external to it’ (2003:94). In addition, Webb et al. (1966) state that observation does not necessarily require direct dealings with study subjects and is therefore less obtrusive or off-putting to participants than other approaches. The use of observation proved particularly useful to the study of the UKSG given its lack of existing documented literature. Findings generated through observation and triangulated with information collected through interviews, allowed the researcher to a) explore anomalies in the data and b) confirm that a point of theoretical saturation had been met at the end of phase two.

- **Participant observation disadvantages**

Whilst the observation technique presents ‘unusual opportunities for collecting case study data’, it also is linked to significant problems (Yin 2003:94) one of which is fundamental from the positivist stance. Marshall & Rossman (1995) state that observational methods are not replicable and highly subjective and therefore are not considered as scientific due to the substantial probability of bias. Alder & Alder (1998) suggest that while the use of direct quotes and inter-observer cross-checking can heighten the credibility of the researcher’s claims, there currently remains a shortage of published articles relying solely on observational methods. More often than not, observational research is triangulated with other approaches in order to reduce this critique.
Realists take the criticisms of the observation method further through their assertion that it is impossible to view events free of pre-existing beliefs or assumptions. However given its critical realist base, this project already acknowledges that there is a constant interaction between theory and data and therefore conclusions will inevitably link implicitly to the researcher’s personal and subjective experiences of the setting.

Further weaknesses include the technique’s lack of generalisability and use of small-scale samples. Denzin (1989) and Kidder (1986) state that the results generated through observation can only be verifiable to the local setting and therefore forms of statistical analysis cannot be used to infer trends of behaviour to the wider population. However, it is argued that the observation method can be productive in generalising to theoretical assumptions, as long as the researcher remains ‘aware of the pitfalls of extrapolating from unique incidents’ (Grix 2004:130). For this study, any direct observational findings that were used to generate analytical inferences were triangulated and therefore were consistent across all data collection and not with occasional anomalies.

4. 13 The Interview

The method of interviewing can take a variety of forms, such as structured, semi-structured or unstructured and is considered by Mason (1998) to be a qualitatively orientated, purposeful conversation.

Lilleker states that one of the opportunities that the interview method presents is its provision of rich ‘information that could not be gleaned from official published documents or contemporary media accounts’ from just a small sample (2003:208).

The semi-structured interview method proved to be particularly useful for this study due to the frequent reference that must be made to the UKSG policy. This assertion is supported by Veal’s (1997) contention that interviews are most appropriate when the information collected is of a complex and contextual nature. The semi-structured approach to interviewing permits the
interviewee to answer questions relating to pre-determined topics, using their own language and terms of reference. This ensures that the relationship of power within the interview setting between the interviewer and interviewee is two-way to limit interviewer bias and the generation of irrelevant information. The flexibility of the semi-structured interviewing ensures that all topics that are required for the research are discussed with an interviewee, yet there is room for the interviewer to ask probing questions to clarify points and delve deeper into unexpected for ambiguous responses (Bryman 2001; May 1997; Patton 2002).

- Factors that can influence the success of the semi-structured interview

In choosing to adopt a semi-structured approach to interviewing, there are numerous factors that have the potential to impact upon the success of the data collection. These factors must be considered prior to commencing the interviews through either an acknowledgment of their effects, or the development of a strategy that will minimise any adverse impacts upon the validity or reliability of its findings. The impacts that will be referred to can be caused by the interviewer or the interviewee.

- Interviewer impacts

The semi-structured interview, as already mentioned, observes a balance in power between the interviewer and the interviewee via two-way interaction (Gubrium & Holstein 1997). As a result of such interaction, it is unrealistic to assume that an interviewer can remain uninvolved or neutral within the interview process (Potter & Wetherell 1995). As there is little that can be done to overcome this potential interviewer bias, it should be acknowledged that the interviewer could affect the validity and reliability of the data collected.

The validity and reliability of data can also be affected through the use of dictaphones or note-taking during an interview. This can be off-putting to the participants and introduce feelings of unease. To limit the impact of such
feelings and establish a relaxed interview environment, the inclusion of closed and ‘settling’ interview questions early in the interview schedule can help.

- **Interviewee impacts**

The underlying motives for an interviewee’s involvement within the research need to be considered. For example, the respondent could be particularly keen to please the researcher in the hope that the outcome of the research will benefit his or her own personal position. This situation can lead to the participant elaborating on certain points in an attempt to provide information that they do not actually have access to (Devine 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002). Or, alternatively, the respondent could feel threatened or anxious by the study’s proposal, which could result in the interviewee choosing to withhold essential information from the interviewer. Given the common nature of interviewee bias, this study will not attempt to control the effects, but rather ‘acknowledge it in the process of collecting empirical material and explicitly consider its effects on substantive findings’ (Devine & heath 1999:9-10; Hobbs & May 1993; Lee 1993).

- **The Interview Process**

This process has been divided into four stages that will each be discussed in turn.

- **Stage one: identification of interviewees through sampling**

Due to the pressure that is placed upon time and financial resources made available to research projects, researchers are very rarely able to investigate an entire population. They must instead engage in sampling activities to identify a more manageable number of interviewees. Typical sampling techniques for semi-structured interviews rely on either purposive or snowball sampling or, as observed in this study, a blend of the two.

Purposive sampling relies on the personal judgement of the researcher to select respondents that best suit the requirements of the research project.
This strategically based sampling method was incorporated into the first phase of this research’s design, whereby a list of potential interviewees was developed throughout the periods of observation. From this list, consideration was given to each potential participant’s role, knowledge and experience in relation to the UKSG. Essentially, each participant underwent a form of review that would determine whether they could provide the study with relevant information (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Criteria for selection of interviewees used in purposive sampling stage.

| Criteria: Each potential interview must satisfy the following criteria. (NB – criteria 2 is only relevant for sport representatives) |
|---|---|
| 1. | Must be involved with the UKSG in a senior management and/or strategic capacity |
| 2. | NGB representatives must be from one of the eight sports specified for this study and have either a management responsibility for the organisation of the Games or strategic responsibility for talent identification and development within their sport. |
| 3. | Must occupy one or more of the following roles: Youth Sport Trust employee Fast Track employee Single point of contact of a sport (a.k.a. UKSG Coordinator) UK Sport employee Department of Culture, Media and Sport civil servant CEO and/or board member of their sport Talent Development Officer for their sport Performance Director for their sport Champion Ambassador Competition Manager Attendee of UKSG Development Group Meetings |

As part of the interview schedule, participants were asked to suggest other potential informants (and documents also) that could benefit the study. This process is known as ‘snowball sampling’ and proved to be particularly useful for the researcher whose background knowledge and contacts did not span evenly across all eight sports involved in the UKSG.

The total number of interviews that took place was capped once the researcher felt that the point of theoretical saturation had been reached in review of the data collected (Bryman 2004). Between the period of October 2008 and September 2009, 60 one-to-one interviews were conducted, with 53 interviewees. It should be noted that only one interviewee declined involvement in the study due to time constraints. In addition to these 54 individuals four potential interviewees were also contacted, but did not respond to the invitation.
- Stage two – managing the interviewees

To formalise the interview process, letters that outlined the study and the relevance of the interviews were sent to the chosen participants between the period of October 2008 and April 2009. In accordance with guidelines developed by Corti, Day & Backhouse (2000), the interviewees were supplied with detailed information relating their involvement in the research. Participants were asked to give their consent for the audio recording and later transcription of their response to interview questions. It was explained that it was the researcher’s intention to use some of their responses as part of a published thesis but that their names could be kept anonymous if required. The participants post of responsibility would not be excluded from the thesis due to the nature of the study and its need for context, however, it was explained that all interviewees would be given the opportunity to amend the transcriptions of their responses prior to publishing. Finally, the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time, or request for the recording devise to be paused.

- Stage three – devise an interview schedule

In order to conduct the semi-structured interviews effectively, a list of predetermined questions that linked back to the research’s objectives and questions mentioned in Chapter 1 were developed to direct discussion. The use of similar questions and topics for a number of interviewees allowed for a more consistent approach to data collection and the generation of responses that could be used comparably. Each of the schedule’s main questions were accompanied by several probing questions that could be used to explore the perspectives of interviewees or gain clarity on their responses. Table 4.8 identifies the themes that the interview schedule aimed to explore.

Table 4.8: The research themes used in the development of the interview schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Theme</th>
<th>Brief reasoning behind the theme’s inclusion in the research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>To identify the pattern of relationships that exists as part of the organisation of the UKSG. Description of relationship and communication between YST and UKSG sports. How does the standard of relationships impact on the current policy network existing in the sport policy sector? Collect any evidence regarding these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relationships and whether they are changing in terms of both strength and direction. Has the perceived role of the organisations involved in the UKSG changed over time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political barriers</th>
<th>What political barriers exist as part of the organisation of the UKSG and what impact are they having on the outcomes of the Games?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Collect evidence regarding the current distribution of power in UK sport systems and more specifically the UKSG. What impact is this having on the sports involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts</td>
<td>What general impacts are the UKSG having upon the competition structures of the eight sports involved, from baseline to top of performance pyramid? These impacts may come in the form of political impacts, physical impacts, power impacts, structural impacts and changes to strategic planning etc. How has the interpretation of the six UKSG objectives affected the level of impact and policy implementation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic decision making</td>
<td>What are the reasons for the eight sport's involvement in the UKSG and do these motives have any strategic bearing on the sports? How does the UKSG fit in with the broader picture of youth sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation</td>
<td>To what extent have the sports involved had to modernise their current systems to accommodate the UKSG?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions used in the interview schedule started initially with a broad focus, which was gradually narrowed as the interview progressed and areas of interest emerged. This tunnelling of focal points also accommodated any early nerves that the interviewee may have felt.

- **Stage four – conducting the interview**

As the interviewer was known to some of the interviewees, it must be accepted that this is likely to project some bias and impact upon the interview responses. In order to reduce the effects of bias, ‘interview diary worksheets’ (Appendix C) were used with each interview which recorded interviewer thoughts, interviewee body language and information on the interview environment.

In the majority of cases, the interviews lasted no longer than one hour and were held at the participant’s place of work due to convenience and interviewee comfort. The duration was deemed an appropriate length in order not to take up too much of the participant’s time, whilst ensuring all research themes were covered in the interview. A minority of the participants were interviewed over the telephone, which provided an element of practicality to the research. The telephone interview is considered a second best alternative to the face-to-face interview, as it can be more challenging to build a rapport.
between the interviewee and interviewer and interpret body language or distinguish between pauses for thought or awkward silences (Kellard et al. 2002).

Following the completion of the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to add to their previous answers or ask questions. In addition, they were reminded of their right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

4.14 Thematic Content analysis

Thematic content analysis was used in this study to make sense of the sheer volume of insight collected through semi-structured interview and participant observation. Thematic analysis does not adhere to any ‘formulae for determining significance…no way of replicating the researcher’s analytical thought processes…and no straight forward test for measuring reliability and validity’ (Patton 2002:433) but avoids the rash and not always useful quantification of ‘word counting’ of the alternative approaches to analysis.

The process of thematic analysis for this study followed several steps. Firstly, all collected data was read through thoroughly. During this re-read and using an inductive approach, themes gradually emerged from the collected data (rather than the researcher following a more deductive approach by searching for pre-determined themes). The initial emergent themes were then coded and later added to with secondary or linking themes upon closer inspection of the data. Coding refers to the categorisation of words and phrases into specific themes that prove to be of significance throughout the text. This somewhat fluid process allowed for key pieces of insight to be unearthed from what was often highly contextual information. It effectively decomposes the original text and then reconstructs it after it has been interpreted in relation to the specific research themes (Ericson et al. 1991; May 2001). To make this coding process more manageable, this study made use of the ‘Nvivo 7’ computer software package that specialises in qualitative data analysis. The final phase of this piece of research’s thematic analysis was to re-evaluate all the data collected under the theme headings. This process ensured that the meaning of the data once themed, remained consistent with the message it
portrayed in its original raw format (Bryman 2001; May 2001; Patton 2002). Having reviewed the reconstructed text, the researcher then either accounted for any gaps in the literature and contradictions that existed, or alternatively continued to research the issue and collect further information where resources allowed.

4. 15 Limitations of the research

Yin (1994) asserts that all researchers should consider the potential limitations of their studies, with particular reference to the issues of validity and reliability. It becomes even more important to consider these methodological concerns given the qualitative nature of this study.

- Reliability

The goal of reliability is to ‘minimise the errors and biases in a study’ (Yin 2003:37) so that the same results will be derived when a different researcher conducts the study, potentially at a different point in time, using the same procedures (Cohen et al 2000; Mason 2002). Whilst the methods employed for this study maintain a high standard of reliability, identical study outcomes will not result. The simple reason for this being that the research design used allowed for themes to emerge from the data (phase one), which shaped the future direction of the study (phase two). It is possible, that due to differences in data interpretation and in the experience and other characteristics of the researcher slightly contrasting themes may emerge. This could direct the second researcher along a different line of enquiry. To improve the reliability of this study, other than acknowledge that the opinions, values and interpretations of the researcher have a significant bearing on the outcome of the research, the findings of the study were presented at sport policy specific conferences and reviewed by peers.

It is also worth noting that should the research be repeated at a later time, it is likely that the opinions, values and experiences of the study’s participants would have altered somewhat and therefore the likelihood of generating the same findings would be reduced further. Any test of reliability for this study
should make use of the available raw data and original transcriptions collected at the specific time period of the study and then apply them to the project’s documented methodology. The raw data for this study is made accessible to other researchers through the use of a ‘case study database’ that helps to maintain the chain of evidence (Green 2003; Yin 1994). Yin highlights that ‘in the past, case study research procedures have been poorly documented, making external reviewers suspicious of the reliability of the case study’ (2003:38), however this study aims to avoid such suspicion through its clear methodology and an exhibition of consistency in the research themes it focuses on.

- **Validity**

Bryman conceptualises validity as ‘the correspondence between the measure and the concept in question’ (1989:58). It is concerned with addressing whether research findings are really about what they appear to be about (Robson 1993). Quantitative researchers argue that validity can take the form of an objective numeric value, however for qualitative researchers, the justification of a valid approach is far more complex given their use of subjective interpretation and limited generalisation. Yin (1994) explains that if careful attention is directed towards the issue of validity, the criticisms of qualitative methods can be withdrawn or significantly weakened. There are a number of different tests for validity (see Table 4.9)

**Table 4.9: Types of validity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of validity</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construct validity</td>
<td>Use multiple sources of evidence; establish chain of evidence; have key informants review draft case study report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>Do pattern-matching; Do explanation-building; address rival explanations; use logic models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>Use theory in single-case studies; replication logic in multiple-case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face validity</td>
<td>Seek advice from experts or pilot studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent validity</td>
<td>Compare a measure against a known difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictive validity</td>
<td>Compare predicted measures with actual measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent validity</td>
<td>Compare measures with alternative methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
External validity refers to the capacity to generalise findings to a wider population, which although it may be possible in this study, given the large number of sports explored, it is not its intention. This study instead strives towards analytical generalisation, as opposed to statistical generalisation. However, Yin (1994) emphasises that the emergence of theories and concepts do require a level of support from a diverse range of evidence sources in order to be considered externally valid. This condition was realised in the study's use of two forms of data collection that informed the focus of one another; observations made in phase one of the research design were used to identify specific research concepts that narrowed the focus of the interviews conducted in phase two.

Internal validity, according to Holloway (1997) concerns how evidence can be used to make statements within a study. It provides the explicit link between the explanatory research findings and the theoretical concepts that it supports. In order to ensure this research was not undermined by a lack of internal validity, conclusions were drawn on the basis of pattern building. In addition, rival explanations were addressed as opposed to ignored in the data analysis stage of the study. This ensured that any explanatory or causal links could be justified logically through sound conclusions.

Finally, construct validity focuses on correctly establishing operational measures for the concepts being studied (Yin 2003). This form of validity can be improved, as witnessed in this study, through the use of triangulated data that is generated through a variety of research methods.

Table 4.10 outlines the eight strategies that Creswell (2003) proposes can be used to validate findings. Creswell has rank ordered these strategies in terms of their ease of implementation and popularity, with triangulation representing the most popular and frequently used approach to validation. The first four of Creswell's strategies were employed within this research project and therefore their application will be explored. This is not to suggest that the latter four options were not of any use within this study, but rather their impact upon
establishing validity was not as significant, or due to time and financial restrictions, could not be fully applied.

Table 4.10: Eight primary strategies for validating research findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation</th>
<th>Use of different data sources of information to build a justification for themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member-checking</td>
<td>Determining the accuracy of qualitative findings by checking themes, reports and descriptions with research participants to check for accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich, thick description</td>
<td>To transport the reader to the setting and give the reader a sense of shared experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification of bias</td>
<td>Clarify the potential bias that the researcher brings to the study so that self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative that resonates with the readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepant information</td>
<td>Discussing contrary information that runs counter to the central themes gives the account greater credibility with the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged time in the field</td>
<td>This consequently allows the researcher to generate an in-depth understanding of the context and the phenomenon under investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer de-briefing</td>
<td>The use of a peer de-briefer who asks questions of the study so that the account resonates with individuals other than the researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External auditor</td>
<td>A person who is independent of the study and the researcher who can provide an assessment of the study during or at the conclusion of the research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Creswell 2003:196

Member-checking was used as a validation method within this study through consulting research participants prior to the inclusion of their interview comments within the final phase of data analysis. Each interviewee was sent a copy of their transcribed interview and asked to either confirm the validity of their responses, make additional comments or amendment their statements where they saw fit. Whilst the opportunity for the participants to adjust their transcriptions occasionally proved problematic when subjects significantly altered their comments perhaps to meet their employer’s expectations and avoid potential conflict of interest, the validation process ensured ethical practice and generated additional information that respondents had previously forgotten. In addition, through checking their comments in relation to the project’s context, respondents were able to notify the researcher of any misinterpretations and add clarification of what meaning they had actually attached to their comments.

The use of the case study research strategy encouraged the application of ‘thick description’ as a validation strategy. This rich information developed a detailed account of each case study and its characteristics, with specific
reference to the UKSG and the impact the event had on the case study sports.

The third validating strategy used in this study was Creswell’s ‘clarification of bias’ approach (2003). The effects of researcher bias on each research method employed were fully acknowledged as part of the data collection process and therefore the use of an ‘interview diary worksheet’ was adopted (see Appendix C for example). This worksheet required the researcher to log all notes regarding the observations made, including comments about the setting and the personal thoughts of the researcher that had the potential to influence the responses of the participants. These comments were then taken into consideration during the analysis phase of research, which ensured that the researcher’s personal values were taken into consideration. Rather than attempt to exclude or deny the impact that researcher bias may have on the study subjects, this study opted to fully acknowledge it and accept that ‘research cannot be value free’ (Bryman 2004:22).

Finally, validation was encouraged through the use of triangulation. This approach specifically targets ‘construct validity’ through incorporating additional research elements into the data collection process. Houlihan & Green explain that the aim of this approach it to share strengths, eliminate weaknesses and back up results through the use of alternative methods, data sources or researcher analysis (2005). As already implied, there are three forms of triangulation that can be used to improve the validity of research: researcher triangulation; data source triangulation; and method triangulation. Although not applied in this study due to lack of resources, researcher triangulation incorporates the expertise of multiple researchers into the data collection process.

Triangulation of data sources refers to the cross-checking of information obtained from a variety of informants and/or observations. This validation process was incorporated into this study through the analysis of observations and interviews with a range of participants involved in the UKSG in differing capacities. The data collected from these sources were then cross-checked to identify agreement and conflict areas and gaps in the information.
The final form of triangulation makes use of multiple methods to investigate the same phenomenon (Grix 2004), which according to Yin (1994) enhances the accuracy of final conclusions. Lilleker fittingly summarises the importance of this form of validation, explaining that ‘one should never rely on an interviewee to provide a key fact on which your conclusion hinges. If uncorroborated this would be highly unreliable’ (2003:212). Despite the benefits that this form of triangulation offers to research, it should be accepted that it also has the potential to increase the error of final conclusions if different methods identify highly contradicting comments. It is naïve to assume that this form of corroboration is straightforward and therefore researchers should be responsive if triangulation identifies clear weaknesses in the data collected (Mason 1998). Triangulation becomes further complicated when issues of ontology and epistemology are taken into consideration. Blaikie (2000) highlights that various methods are underpinned by different philosophical assumptions that have the potential to conflict with one another (cf. Grix 2004). Bryman however disagrees and argues that methods should not be routinely ‘rooted in epistemological and ontological commitments’ (2001:445); instead the overall philosophical stance of research should be used to guide methodology, not dictate to it.

To summarise, the issue of validity has a significant bearing on the success of research. It is the researcher’s responsibility to validate his or her research in order to justify particular approaches to data collection and the resulting conclusions made from it. Given the long term criticism that has been associated with the qualitative approach to research, Mason (1996) and Silverman (1997) advise any social scientist conducting research to present a systematic approach to data gathering and to be as explicit as possible in their interpretation of data (Devine 2002, Marsh & Stoker 2002).

4. 16 Ethical considerations

One final point to make relates to that of the ethical procedures. It is true that, in some situations, adherence to an ethically sound research design may eliminate some of the opportunities presented by qualitative methods,
however, it remains good practice to respect the safety of participants and their expectation of confidentiality.

A common feature of qualitative research that leaves it vulnerable to questions of ethical importance is that of an invasion of participant privacy (Alder & Alder 1998, Denzin & Lincoln 1998). Such abuse of research access can have negative consequences on the subject’s career and/or family life. In order to avoid such circumstances, this research adopted various methods (listed in Table 4.11), which ensured that the participants requests of confidentiality were respected at all times.

Table 4.11: Forms of good ethical practice used throughout the research

| Written and verbal consent was collected prior to any data collection and after providing the participants with a detailed ‘Participant Information Sheet’ (See Appendix D) |
| The right to withdraw from the study at any point was clearly explained to each participant |
| Research questions were not of a highly sensitive or personal nature |
| Consent to include the participants names in the research was sought and if not agreed to, the participants were left anonymous throughout the research. |
| Member-checking of written transcriptions and quotes intended for use was used to a). confirm the content is correct in its wording and context with the relevant participant b). confirm again whether the use of the transcription is acceptable for the subject c). provide the participant with the opportunity to amend or add to the transcriptions |
5. Overview of the UKSG

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the impact of the UKSG on all eight sports. The findings will be divided into three sections. Firstly, the chapter will discuss the UKSG six objectives, how they were formulated and how they were subsequently addressed by the sports. This analysis is utilised in the following sport cluster model whereby sports are grouped based on their approach to the six objectives and their NGB’s organisational climate. The third section of the chapter analyses the perspectives of non-sport specific UKSG stakeholders. Throughout the chapter, analysis is supported by reference to the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 3 and the contextual information provided in Chapter 2.

5.2 The creation of the UKSG – sport specific focus

Whilst Chapter 2 analysed the context from which the UKSG was developed from and the reasons given by the YST for the inclusion of the eight sports in the UKSG, this section (with reference to appendix E) examines the rationale for involvement from the perspective of the individual sports.

As evident from the table (see Appendix E) there is some consistency between the sports in terms of their rationale and perspective towards the UKSG, the challenges they have experienced and their headline achievements through the event; however these similarities are counterbalanced by number of inter-sport differences. Each sport varies significantly in terms of their organisational structure, history and climate in terms of their motivation, strategic aims, capabilities and resulting UKSG impacts. As will be mentioned later, the YST in their creation of the UKSG have allowed for such differences through the development of six broad objectives that can and have been interpreted differently to suit each sport.

When exploring the motives for sport involvement in the UKSG, there are three main categories of incentive. Firstly there is the need to be associated
with the UKSG to display ‘willing’ characteristics to key policy makers such as the DCMS and the YST. Sports such as athletics and gymnastics have no obvious rationale underpinning their involvement in the UKSG, other than to be included in a politically significant event. Whilst most sports would agree that this is a sufficient reason to become involved in the UKSG, sports such as swimming and table tennis have additional motives such as using the event as a catalyst for cultural change or image transformation. The UKSG for these sports fits well with their pre-existing priorities to confront long-standing traditions.

The motives for involvement within badminton, judo, fencing and volleyball reflect a desire to change the structure of youth sport in conjunction with a high profile event. The UKSG (and its accompanying development funding) has provided these sports with an opportunity for structural change that previously was not within their reach due to lack of finance, human resource and expertise.

In terms of perspective, these four sports are largely positive about the multi-sport event so much so that both badminton and fencing have replaced long-standing competitions with the UKSG. Judo and volleyball’s positive attitude towards the event is reflected in their NGB’s financial contribution to the roles of ‘UKSG Coordinator’. Significant financial contributions are also evident within swimming, however the upbeat perspective of the English body (ASA) is not reflected in the other home countries that are somewhat sceptical of the perceived Anglo-centric nature of the event. Similar concerns related to devolution within table tennis have meant that the event is perceived as the ‘icing on cake’, rather than the sole reason for change.

For athletics and gymnastics the perspective of the UKSG was reported as being less positive. Athletics has been accused of delivering a tokenistic disability programme and gymnastics has assumed that the UKSG has a ‘fixed shelf life’, which has limited the events impact to only short-term tangible projects.
All sports see the value of the UKSG, but long-term commitment to the event (and therefore major sport specific structural change that accommodates the UKSG) is weakened by the UKSG’s unconfirmed financial and political future. There is some concern that if the event were to continue without accompanying funding, current UKSG development projects would have to discontinue.

As the table in Appendix E highlights, the differences in organisational structure and history between the NGBs accounts to a significant extent for the variation in UKSG impact. Some sports such as badminton, volleyball, judo and fencing are small in size and infrastructure which has allowed for faster decision making. Evidence suggests that this speed, however, is sometimes hindered by a reliance on volunteers holding powerful positions within the organisation (with the exception of judo which ensures that all UKSG staff are professional employees of the sport). A reliance on an aging volunteer/officials workforce is evident across each of the UKSG sports and consequently, each NGB highlights the need to keep skilled volunteers ‘on-side’ with the plans of the UKSG, whilst using the event to train a younger generation of voluntary support.

Devolution was also significant in influencing the developmental impact of the UKSG. Some sports such as badminton and volleyball do not have overarching GB bodies which are actively involved in the UKSG. These sports therefore receive funds through their English body which then distributes funds to the home country NGBs on a needs basis, or in support of UK-wide projects. Interestingly, it is not these sports that have reported distributional difficulties. These sport organisations are in fact very supportive of one another across the home countries. Somewhat paradoxically it is those sports that receive funds through a GB body proved to experience greater inter-organisational tension. Larger sports with longer histories such as table tennis, gymnastics and swimming reported tensions between the home countries when it came to UKSG projects and consequently the majority of these sports’ development projects were created with just one home country’s priorities and preferences in mind.
The eight UKSG sports also differ in terms of their approach to school and youth sport. Some of the sports make use of SAs (badminton, swimming, table tennis, gymnastics and athletics) and some do not. Whilst the presence of an additional organising body does not obviously impact on UKSG progress for badminton, for the remaining four sports it does. Gymnastics and swimming explicitly report some role and responsibility confusion between the SAs and NGB. Table tennis and athletics imply that their SA/NGB relationship is amicable, however organisations external to the sports believe that the presence of two bodies has led to initiative duplication and has allowed the sports to avoid risk. Both table tennis and athletics have reported little evidence of impact back to YST, which the YST’s UKSG coordinator has associated with the sports’ poor record of responsibility delegation and failure to gain momentum behind new initiatives.

Given the afore-mentioned broad variation between the sports, the headline achievements reported by the eight UKSG sports varies significantly. Only one achievement remains consistent, and this is linked to the development and integration of young officials. Each of the UKSG sports report contrasting stages of youth competition development. Some sports are more advanced with longer, deep-rooted histories of traditional competition, which require significant momentum or exogenous impact to overcome (table tennis, athletics) whereas other sports have very little infrastructure in place, allowing for small developments to make a large impact upon the NGB. Fencing and volleyball in particular provide excellent case studies for the latter. Prior to the UKSG these sports had minimal youth support systems in place and therefore structural change was relatively straightforward to implement, with little opposition. The development of youth competition structures has led to closer association between the YST and these smaller sports and the opportunity to be involved in other YST projects such as ‘Premier League 4 Sport’. The UKSG therefore appears to provide a window of opportunity for these smaller sports; a circumstance which resonates well with Kingdon’s multiple streams approach to policy process (1984).
An unexpected and less obvious outcome of the UKSG that was consistently mentioned by the interviewed Single Point of Contacts (SPCs) was the capacity of the UKSG to drive forward other initiatives. The SPCs commented that by simply attending the UKSG operational and developmental meetings, formal and informal conversations were facilitated between the sports themselves, and with the YST, BOF and SCUK. Sports were able to compare and share ideas in a non-resource competitive environment; as well as improve their visibility amongst influential sports organisations such as the YST. In addition, the flexible interpretation of the UKSG allowed for sports to engage in policy learning and explore how different sports tackle each of the objectives. The mutually beneficial nature of the SPC relationships presents characteristics of a developing an issue network and potential policy community around the agenda of the UKSG.

5.3 The UKSG Objectives

- The development of the six objectives

The UKSG six objectives were formulated by the YST and approved by the DCMS. Few other stakeholder interests (NGBs, BOF, sports councils and the Legacy Trust UK) were involved at this stage, but were consulted later regarding their implementation:

‘The Legacy Trust really had very little to do with that [formation of objectives]…Having looked at the UKSG objectives again, they appear very aspirational’ (Phil Chamberlain, Director of Strategy and External Relations for Legacy Trust UK, interviewed 28th May 2009).

Data implies that this process of policy formation and lack of stakeholder consultation consequently led to some confusion over the objectives. The eight UKSG sports (which are issued with annual ‘development funding’ from the Legacy Trust UK via the YST) are expected to ‘address’ the six objectives. However, the lack of specificity in the objectives has allowed each sport to interpret them differently, in a way that would benefit their own sport. Whilst
this suggests flexibility, for some NGBs, it has allowed for creative interpretation leading to either a) unintended impact or b) little or no impact.

As Table 5.1 and Appendix F indicate, the majority of sports have reported significant impact in addressing the UKSG objectives, however in response to an initial lack of stakeholder involvement and clarity during early phases of the UKSG policy formation, the reported impacts are wide-ranging. For some sports (namely the smaller, less developed sports which have much to gain from the UKSG objectives), the benefits of the UKSG policy agenda are clear. For the sports with greater infrastructure, the impact of UKSG objectives have proven more difficult to achieve given the size of their sport and number of staff, athletes and volunteers involved. For these sports (swimming, gymnastics athletics and table tennis) the interpretation of the UKSG objectives has been more creative and less aligned with the YST’s and DCMS’s original policy intentions.

Table 5.1: Generic examples of how the six UKSG objectives have been addressed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1)</th>
<th>On going planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● As a whole there is consistency across the sports response to this objective. Sports have interpreted this objective to mean that the UKSG should influence the presentation, planning and delivery of other youth focused competition across their sport's pathway.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● However, there is limited evidence to suggest that elements of the UKSG have been implemented within UKSG feeder competitions. Whilst there are sport specific exceptions, generally sports representatives cite that issues of funding and volunteer capacity have prevented them from doing so. Sports express a desire to address this vision more seriously if further resource became available, however this intent is not reinforced within their NGB operational plans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● It is worth noting that to date the sports have each received in the region of £200k to support the UKSG development work and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 2)</th>
<th>To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● The eight UKSG coordinators have collectively interpreted this objective as a way of influencing their own sport’s content and structure of competitive opportunities for young people. However, how they have gone about achieving such change varies significantly from sport to sport. In particular, the objective’s reference to the achievement of a ‘step change’ has led to subjective interpretation. Each NGB’s perspective as to what signifies such a change is varied, therefore a comparative analysis of collected data is difficult to achieve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● For the majority of sports, the UKSG is viewed as a ‘bonus’ competition, rather than an embedded element of the sport’s strategy. This perspective is linked to two circumstances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Firstly, the future of the UKSG is not confirmed beyond 2011, therefore sports are reluctant to make substantial change to their competition pathway.

Secondly, this objective is already addressed through the English NGB’s involvement in the YST’s NCF initiative. As a result, UKSG developmental work relating to this objective is difficult to separate from developmental work connected with the NCF agenda. The impact of the two policies is difficult to distinguish, however sport representatives perceive the NCF work as a priority and the UKSG work as a valued extra. ‘You can never be sure whether it’s because of the UKSG or not, or is it because of something else. But there are more youngsters coming into sport and that’s good for the long run’ (Colin Chaytors, CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14th May 2009).

Devolved sports have highlighted the difficulty in developing competition pathways across the UK. Each home country has different priorities, traditions and structural capacity and infrastructure.

**Objective 3). Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve PE and school sport**

For the majority of sports involved in the UKSG, the interpretation of this objective reflected a desire to develop school-aged competition, rather than school competition specifically. As a consequence, few of the sports can report any impact on school sport and PE through the UKSG. Each sport has associated the UKSG with elite and performance level sport, as opposed to the more participation focus observed within the school environment.

The event’s link to school sport instead comes in the form of SAs (for those sports which make use of such bodies) and therefore this objective has frequently been reinterpreted by NGBs as an opportunity to rationalise the competition structures of SAs and the NGBs.

The UKSG have had a significant impact on the relationships between NGBs and SAs in several of the UKSG sports. Communications have improved between the organisations and long-standing issues of pathway separation are now being addressed.

The title of the UKSG however, has not facilitated this progress. Neither has the wording of this school focused objective. There has been some confusion over the role of the event.

**Objective 4). Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village**

Sports perceive this objective to be the concern of the YST, BOF and the Fast Track event’s agency, rather than the NGBs themselves. To date, the majority of event specific decisions have been made by these organisations, therefore sports have little input into how to shape the Paralympic and Olympic themes within the event. Whilst the YST perceive this as a lack of NGB ownership in addressing the UKSG objective, the sports would perceive this as a consequence of a lack of funding available to the NGBs.

There has been some effort by the sports to implement educational based ideas at and beyond the UKSG. ‘100% ME’ Workshops as part of the Culture and Education Programme have proved popular at UKSG feeder events, as have educational athlete handbooks.

However, similar to objective 1, further evidence of the Olympic and Paralympic values cascading down to UKSG feeder events is limited. In part, this is due to a lack of finance and officer time.

Athletes who have attended several UKSG have expressed that there is little evolution of the 100% ME programme year on year.

**Objective 5). Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in**
volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers

- This objective has provided by far the greatest level of impact and has been reported as the clearest and most quantifiable of the six objectives. ‘Some of the objectives are more obvious than others. So things like welfare and volunteering, it’s quite easy to see how we might take that and move it forward’ (Louise Satherley, UKSG coordinator for British Gymnastics Association, interviewed 17th August 2009).
- Young officials and volunteers have been trained and utilised at the UKSG and have since gone on to volunteer at local, regional, national and international events.
- There is growing evidence of a ‘volunteer pathway’ effectively supporting and encouraging young people to stay within a sport beyond their athletic career.
- There has been a culture change within several of the sports regarding overall attitude towards the competency of young volunteers. Through ‘proving’ themselves at the UKSG, long-standing members of sports are now realising the skill potential of young people.

**Objective 6). Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems**

- Many sports already addressed this area of development prior to the UKSG, however the event has facilitated this process. The UKSG provides a reason for change and promotes the importance of child protection and welfare. For the majority of sports, the event has provided a way of addressing resistance to professionalism.
- Many NGBs involved in the UKSG now have a database of volunteers who are safeguard trained and CRB checked. This is a direct result of the UKSG requirements.

In summary the data in Table 5.1 and the table found in Appendix F suggest that significant impact has been achieved across the eight UKSG sports with regard to objective 5. Interviewees have attributed such success to the clarity of the objective and its capacity to fit in with the sport’s previously existing strategic documents. Similar impact has been reported for objective 6, where an attitudinal change towards child protection and welfare procedures has been witnessed across several of the UKSG sports. Again, sport representatives have commented on the straightforwardness of the objective and how it links well with current NGB priorities. In this respect the impact of the objective is not solely the consequence of the UKSG.

Objectives 1 and 4 have been described as desirable to achieve by the UKSG sports, but that they would require significantly more financial support and NGB influence in order to address them fully. At present, only a small selection of the UKSG sport coordinators have sufficient time, funding and influence within their own NGB to instigate significant change in the content and presentation of their sport’s UKSG feeder competitions. In addition, the
majority of UKSG event decisions are finalised by the YST, therefore the UKSG coordinator's ability to shape the way the event reflects Olympic and Paralympic values is restricted. Whilst all UKSG coordinators are invited to UKSG operational meetings to discuss how to enhance the UKSG, the majority of decisions which reflect objective 4 are guided by the BOF and then finalised by the YST.

Objectives 2 and 3 have been reported as being the least clear of the event’s six aims. Vague and sometimes irrelevant wording has allowed the eight UKSG sports to interpret the objectives differently.

‘Objective 3, which talks about raising the profile in each home nation of PE and school sport, I’m not sure when to accept that that objective’s been met’ (Anna Payne, Deputy Head of Sport Unit, DCMS, interview 15th June 2009).

Whilst the ambiguity at times has allowed the sports (and home country NGBs within these sports) to work towards developments which are more applicable to their individual strategic aims, this has led to an array of non-comparable impacts, which sometimes detract from the YST’s underlying intentions of the UKSG and NCF agenda. Circumstances such as this resonate well with Matland’s (1995) discussion of ‘symbolic implementation’ of policy, which will be explored further in Chapter 9. An example how the YST’s policy expectations have not been met can be observed in table tennis’ competition review. Whilst the sport has allocated UKSG funding to address objective 2 and rationalise the sport’s offer of youth competition, the sport has merely moved competitions around in its calendar to make available some country-wide training weekends. The duplication of SA and NGB competition remains in place, which is contrary to what the NCF initiative seeks to achieve:

‘I think there are issues in table tennis in terms of their NGB and their SA. They have a fantastic relationship in England…they work very closely together, but I feel that this has perpetuated a dual competition system which means young people in that sport still face a vision of competition that has mixed messages…Change is, on the surface
embraced, but I am concerned about how deeply this is integrated … The National Competition panel’s becoming quite useful in terms of saying to them that all they’re creating is a stronger school system separate from the clubs. What’s going on with the clubs scene? Is this being considered at the same time? Because if it’s duplication then we’re not necessarily helping the situation for young people in the bigger picture. So that’s part of the problem in table tennis’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

Other examples of where sports have avoided adhering to the fundamental aim of an objective can be found in sports such as badminton and judo. These sports, along with others to a lesser degree, have chosen not to directly link the UKSG with school level sport and PE. These sports justifiably explain the irrelevance of such a link given that the UKSG is positioned as a talent development tool and school sport is pitched at a mass participation level to generate an interest for their sport. The room for reinterpretation of the UKSG objectives has allowed these sports to almost collapse objectives 2 and 3 together as a way of formulating a pathway (rather than a direct link) between school sports participation and elite performance, through their pre-existing work on the YST’s NCF. School sport development is perceived in UKSG terms as a way of developing and identifying elite talent, therefore NGBs are encouraged to incorporate school sport in the grassroots stages of the NCF’s. This merging of school sport and elite sport agendas through an event such as the UKSG highlights how the development of interest coalitions can shape policy formation, an analogy that underpins Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith’s ACF (1999). The two coalitions appear to be aligning their objectives, to the point where the school sport coalition is well represented by elite sport representatives. The YST situates itself at the heart of the school sport coalition, however its initiatives include the UKSG, The National Talent Orientation Camp and the ‘Gifted and Talented’ strand within the PESSYP strategy, all of which have a direct link to elite sport.
Whilst only some of the UKSG sports have made structural changes that reflect the YST’s original policy expectations (namely the smaller organisations with less complex infrastructure such as volleyball and fencing), other sports have made progress that reflects a change in organisational relationships or culture. The example given here manifests itself within swimming, where Welsh and English relations between NGBs and SA are gradually improving and stabilising. The broadness of the objectives has ensured that the UKSG agenda can be interpreted by the sports in a way that proves applicable and appropriate for each home country NGB:

‘If the YST went in there and tried to replicate what is right in England we would be ignoring a whole range of policy agendas in each of the home countries’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).

It is worth noting, however, that this room for reinterpretation has led to some policy implementation confusion across various levels within the UKSG sports. The policy that is intended by top-level decision makers such as the YST does not always coincide with the policy outcomes achieved by street level bureaucrats delivering policy at grassroots level. For example, for NITTA, a gradual top-down chain of reinterpretation of the UKSG objectives has led them to develop school sport projects alone, with little connection to the UKSG event. NITTA chose to direct the UKSG development funding to this type of project because their stage of development was so minimal, a more elite focused project would prove ineffective. Whilst this level of reinterpretation may be perceived by the YST and DCMS as non-compliance, it is in fact a display of a coping strategy, street level bureaucracy and a mismatch of top-down and bottom-up policy agenda (Lipsky 1980).

A final summative point regarding the six objectives is that the sports agree that a seventh objective could prove beneficial. Sports would like to develop the skill base and experience of NGB staff such as coaches and team managers alongside the UKSG. However, when asked if the YST would like to add to the objective list, Steve Grainger (CEO of the YST) responded:
‘if there was anything else we wanted to do we would have included them [as an additional objective] and I think they are all quite encompassing anyway to pick things up... They are deliberately broad and deliberately there to try and get people away from the fact that this is a four-day event’ (Steve Grainger, CEO of the YST, interviewed 3rd April 2009).

There is universal support to continue with the UKSG and its underlying objectives. The multi-sport nature of the event and its accompanying objectives are deemed to be unique. Each sport admits that logistically, the future of the UKSG is bleak without the finance, managerial and coordination skills of the YST and Fast Track. As a consequence of this, most sports have been reluctant to make significant ‘UKSG objective’ specific changes to their sport that would accommodate the UKSG. Anna Payne, a DCMS representative echoes the perspective of the SPC’s interviewed:

‘it’s all going in the right direction isn’t it? But I do know what the NGBs mean, it’s always a question when something relies heavily on public funding, there’s always going to be a danger of a lack of vision and long term security…It can’t just be about relying on government funding because it’s just not reliable enough. However much we all love it’ (Anna Payne, Deputy Head of Sport Unit, DCMS, interviewed 15th June 2009).

- The perspective of non-sport specific stakeholders

The implementation of the UKSG policy concerns a variety of stakeholders within sport. Although not all of these organisations were involved in the creation of the six UKSG objectives, they are each consulted in how the objectives should be addressed. Aside from the YST, DCMS and the eight UKSG sports, a group of stakeholders which includes the Legacy Trust UK, the UK’s four Home Country Sports Councils, UK Sport, the EFDS and an England based network of 225 CMs are involved in the UKSG policy
implementation. Although these organisations are traditionally quite different in their agendas, the majority of them are part of the YST’s ‘National Competition Review Panel’ where the future of youth competition is discussed in detail. Both elite sport interests and school sport interests are considered, in order to produce a youth competition pathway that aligns the two coalition’s interests. It would appear that a similar aligning of youth sport objectives (elite and school) is manifesting itself through the UKSG policy, as represented through the variety of stakeholders consulted in the policy’s implementation process, which in fact has similarities with Marsh & Rhodes’ description of a ‘policy community’ (1992).

The stakeholders mentioned have a vested interest in the policy for two reasons. Firstly, the majority of these stakeholders provide the resource links between the UKSG and the YST, or the UKSG and the eight sports. These stakeholders therefore have the power potentially to withdraw financial support and greatly impact upon the UKSG’s policy success and implementation. Secondly, for some of these stakeholders the event’s outcomes can impact upon their own organisation’s strategic aims and objectives. These organisations contribute to the UKSG’s policy subsystem and therefore they have the capacity to shape the direction of the policy and the way in which the event’s six objectives are addressed. The perceptions of these additional policy stakeholders are therefore valuable and have been summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Summary of the perspectives of additional, non-sport specific UKSG stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Key data summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legacy Trust UK</td>
<td>The Trust is positive towards the UKSG’s multi-sport experience, however the charity is concerned that beyond 2011 (when future funding for the event is far from guaranteed) a sustainable legacy may not be achievable. As it stands, few sports have the capacity to increase their financial ownership of the event, therefore limiting their ability to leave a lasting legacy. ‘We run projects that we hope will be continued beyond the life of the Trust and ensure that people can take the projects to their hearts and carry them on. I’m not sure that that’s going to be the case for the UKSG’ (Phil Chamberlain, Director of Strategy and External Relations for Legacy Trust UK, interviewed 28th May 2009). The LTUK fear that there is a long-term resource problem, which inhibits the UKSG’s sustainability. In response to this Colin Chaytors (CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14th May 2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
explains that ‘to a large extent sustainability comes down to the buy-in and ownership of the sports themselves. If the sport is convinced about the benefit to it, then actually the bit of money that is available will make a difference. They would do it themselves’.

- The Trust perceive the UKSG objectives as a little ambitious and lacking clarity. ‘Having looked at the UKSG objectives again, they appear very aspirational. Reporting against them may well prove difficult…it’s a one off event with quite a small budget for it and there’s a lot of other school sport activities going on and competition and where does it fit within that and how can they claim to meet a lot of those things- I think it will be quite difficult…They (YST) need to be a bit more realistic about what they think they’re going to achieve through a one off event over four days of competitions. Especially since all of the NGBs have all got their own competition structures in place already’ (Phil Chamberlain, Director of Strategy and External Relations for Legacy Trust UK, interviewed 28th May 2009).

- LTUK is particularly impressed with the progress made with young volunteers and officials at the UKSG, however questions whether this progress could have been achieved without using the event as a driving force.

- The LTUK would ideally add two less tangible objectives to the six that the YST have formulated. Firstly the positive impact that the event can have on the dialogue between home countries and secondly the possibility for improved communication between SAs and NGBs. ‘I think there’s more politics that go on in sport than anywhere else. And therefore, I think the UKSG project is really empowering for the home countries. It’s a legacy that will lead to enhanced dialogue’. (Phil Chamberlain, Director of Strategy and External Relations for Legacy Trust UK, interviewed 28th May 2009).

### Home Country Sports Councils

- Representatives of Sport England (SE), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and the Sports Council for Wales (SCfW) are generally positive about the UKSG, its developmental outcomes and the opportunities it presents to share ideas across nations.

- Sportscotland (SS) is quite negative towards the event. The UK-wide visions encouraged are neither applicable to Scotland’s competition pathways, nor are they aligned with the country’s 2014 Commonwealth Games focus. SS would prefer the UKSG funding to go towards the development of NGB squads.

- SS are concerned that the UKSG have added to an already complex competition structure, rather than complemented or supported the rationalisation of them.

- All four sport council representatives state that the UKSG does not currently feature in their organisation’s overall strategy. It remains an ‘add on’ competition because of its uncertain future.

- There is some concern regarding the lack of engagement of SE within the UKSG and the youth sport movement. Whilst other home country sports councils are involved in the UKSG at strategic level, SE have chosen to take a step back and let the YST lead development work based within England. This perceived distance is also noted at local level, with reference to the NCF. This framework has clear developments taking place at its pinnacle (through the UKSG) and at the level of grassroots (through CMs) but sports highlight that there is little support from SE to develop club sport. This hinders the ability of clubs to work with CMs.
From the perspective of SS, there are fundamental differences to the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) models of the four home countries and therefore there are rarely occasions where a UK-wide approach is appropriate. ‘I’ve seen loads of initiatives that have been hatched down south and then implemented UK wide. But a number of organisations are still trying to do that and so what’s happening is that people in Scotland are either turning off from it – and so completely not even giving it the benefit of the doubt, or becoming apart of it when it’s something that’s taking them away from Scotland’s original aims’ (Alan Macmillan, Employee representative of Sportscotland, interviewed 1st May 2009).

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland representatives perceive the UKSG as quite Anglo-centric. More engagement is needed from the England based UKSG coordinators

SS, SCfW and SNI state that given the small sizes of their home countries, the Sport Council representatives are able to quickly identify where sports are failing to gain ‘value for money’ on public resource. Because of this they believe that the UKSG funding would be more effectively controlled and efficiently administered through the sports councils than if it was issued to the sports themselves. SE (and the Legacy Trust UK) maintain that the funding should be distributed per sport. This is to encourage a UK-wide approach and prevent funding from being directed to non-UKSG areas.

All sports councils agree that the smaller UKSG sports with less traditional and complex infrastructure have experienced greater benefits through the event.

**UK Sport**

- There is a concern voiced by a UK Sport representative that the UKSG were established without full consultation with NGB performance departments. UK Sport therefore questions whether the event would feature as an essential part of a sport's talent programme.

- Given that some sports have chosen to offer the UKSG to its ‘second tier’ of athletes in order for the event to fit in with the sport's competition pathway, UK Sport expresses a concern that the multi-sport experience is being offered to competitors that may not have the potential to reach a major multi-sport event.

**English Federation of Disability Sport**

- Whilst there are still some EFDS officers who believe that the inclusion of disability sport within the UKSG is tokenistic, this is no longer the majority perception. ‘There was lots of scepticism about the UKSG and there still is to a certain extent. And like any competition of this nature, people will look at the bottom line budget and say ‘god that’s a lot of money to spend on one weekend’, and they miss the point that if its really been successful, then isn’t about just one weekend – that's the culmination of one year’s work…We are a small part of the programme – we’d love to be a bigger part of the programme, but accept the need for small steps. And certainly the steering group meetings have been a help, but sometimes it’s frustrating - it’s hard to know how to influence a sport. Unless the sport really wants to change and be involved, there’s little that the rest of us can do’ (Colin Chaytors, CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14th May 2009).

- The UKSG features within the organisation’s long term strategy as it provides a high profile competition at the pinnacle of their player pathways and presents an additional opportunity for the EFDS to communicate with National Sport Disability Organisations (NSDOs). ‘As a focus for potentially talented athletes, yes it is a great opportunity. And unlike some of the more vocal critics – we always accepted that there were flaws in the way in which it was established, but it was much better to work with the organisation and to accept that over a period of time it’s
**going to learn, improve and hopefully become more representative**’
(Colin Chaytors, CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14th May 2009).

- The EFDS would prefer to continue issuing UKSG disability funding through NGBs, rather than via the NSDOs. This is to further encourage an integrative approach between the organisations. However it is acknowledged that the funding is ring-fenced, bureaucratic and minor in size, which limits what can be achieved.

**Competition Managers**

- At grassroots level, the UKSG have supported the work associated with the NCF, which has been delivered by CMs. Although the event has not directly impacted upon the work of CMs, it has indirectly supported them through an associated increased profile of the NCF.
- Comments from a selection of CMs suggest that there is misunderstanding of what the YST expects them to learn from the UKSG experience. CMs tend to disassociate the UKSG from their own work at grassroots level, explaining that the UKSG is of such high quality that it would be difficult for the CM network to replicate aspects of the event at a local level.
- CMs have commented that the quickly evolving nature of their role doesn’t accommodate a connection with the UKSG. Their role lacks stability and is yet to confirm its position within the youth sport infrastructure.
- Although the connection between CMs and the UKSG is still not quite understood by CMs, it is almost possible for the YST to sell the UKSG, the CM network and NCF as one youth sport development package.
- Most CMs and schools are unaware of any of their pupils competing at UKSG.

As Table 5.2 details, the majority of the UKSG stakeholders are positive towards the event, perceiving the Games to be a valuable developmental tool for young talented athletes preparing for multi-sport competition. However, some organisations highlight areas of scepticism. For example the LTUKs questions whether the UKSG will deliver a sustainable legacy, SportScotland is concerned with the Anglo-centricity of the Games and the EFDS perceives the UKSG’s disability programme to be tokenistic. In summary, the stakeholders that influence the policy environment in which the UKSG are held are supportive of the event, however they are pessimistic that the competition will feature prominently in any of the sport’s long term strategies given its unconfirmed future.

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**The clustering of the UKSG sports**

Based on the above data outlined in Table 5.1, Table 5.2 and Appendices E and F, it has been possible to group the eight UKSG into three clusters. The clusters represent possible coalitions where sports organisations share similar
interests and core beliefs and normative assumptions. In grouping the sports (in terms of their stakeholder beliefs and characteristics listed in Table 5.2) it is possible to build a picture of a UKSG policy subsystem, a concept detailed through the ACF. However, the extent to which these ‘clusters’ or ‘coalitions’ compete for resources and policy dominance is debatable. This suggests that the application of the ACF may instead be useful in highlighting the weakness of the UKSG policy, rather than detailing the policy process linked to the UKSG. The application of the Marsh & Rhodes’ concept of an ‘issue network’ may instead be more fruitful (1992).

Table 5.3: Characteristics used to cluster the UKSG sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGB Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Competition Structure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance between home countries NGBs within the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction between school and club pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach to partnership working:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of improved communication with sport organisations (external and internal to the sport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The perceived long term benefits of the UKSG:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO buy-in to the UKSG principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General perception of the UKSG coordinator role across the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of future planning for the UKSG, or a similar GB-level event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size and professional infrastructure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The capacity for the sport to make quick decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The capacity for the sport to implement decision outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The funding made available to the sport through corporate sponsorship or home country sports councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The funding provided by the NGB itself to the UKSG event or related projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The perception of what accounts for ‘value for money’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age and tradition of the sport:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to changing long-standing practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The age of competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of cultural change through the UKSG:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of relationship development / advanced communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of change in long-standing sporting traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of structural change through the UKSG:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The approach to addressing UKSG visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced links with the school environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an analysis of these highlighted characteristics (Table 5.5), the UKSG sports were evaluated in terms of how they cope with change and the challenges associated with youth competition. Tables 5.6 – 5.8 identify three clusters: ‘break through sports’, ‘willing but constrained sports’ and ‘selectively cooperative sports’.
Badminton, fencing, judo and volleyball are representative of ‘break through sports’ which have made use of the UKSG’s high profile to catalyse the expansion of their youth development programmes. ‘Willing but constrained sports’ have been identified as swimming and table tennis. These are sports which have demonstrated support for the UKSG and a willingness to comply with its philosophy, however due to long-standing issues within the sport such as home country devolution and school / club sport divide, the sports have been unable to act upon all their intentions. Finally, the third UKSG sport cluster ‘selectively cooperative sports’ includes athletics and gymnastics; sports which have made little changes to accommodate the UKSG, but have maintained their involvement in the policy to add profile to the event and appear supportive in the eyes of key policy makers and funding bodies.

Table 5.4: Cluster one: break through sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports: Badminton / Fencing / Judo / Volleyball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In comparison to clusters 2 and 3, the UKSG development funding provides a larger contribution to these NGBs’ overall budget. The support is therefore significant enough to effect competition pathway change across the home countries. These NGBs have made an effort to make structural changes sustainable, given that the sports will not be able to replace UKSG funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These NGBs have minimal infrastructure, leading to closer communication across their organisation and consequently faster and clearer decisions. However, with a less professional infrastructure comes a reliance on volunteers who sometimes struggle to cope with the tasks asked of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition to structural changes, these sports have experienced an improvement in the working relationships between home country NGBs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of UKSG coordinator in these sports is generally influential. Roles that lack sport specific knowledge make up the deficit with innovative thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These sports generally have clear competition pathways, which position the role schools appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These sports have minimal funds available to contribute to the operational costs associated with the UKSG. Despite this, the sports are very keen to continue with a GB level competition with a multi-sport element. These sports would like to continue with an event which presents the same talent development opportunities as the current UKSG. In addition, the sports would like to continue with a high profile event that catalyses change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These smaller sized NGBs appear to be better placed to take advantage of the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives for involvement generally reflect a desire to improve youth sport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.5: Cluster two: willing, but constrained sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports: Swimming / Table Tennis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although relationships between these sports’ home country NGBs could be far stronger, the UKSG have provided an opportunity for the NGBs to communicate and consider the underlying issue of devolution. The UKSG have instigated discussion, but not tackled the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKSG development funding is not perceived as significant to these sports. The funding does, however become useful in communicating across the home countries. Due to the sensitivities of devolution, these sports have chosen to allocate funds fairly across the home countries. This allows each home country NGB to develop its own useful projects, whilst at the same time link loosely across the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The division of the UKSG development funding has caused some alienation between the UKSG coordinator and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish NGBs. The coordinator role is therefore valued across England, with little support beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These sports have a large infrastructure and long-standing traditions. Competitions have been in place for decades and due to a lack of modernisation, the competitions are not necessarily ‘fit for purpose’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although predominantly within the England, relationships between NGBs and School Sport Associations within these sports have improved. Where improvements have not yet been made, the opportunity to work together on an event at least presents a forum for negotiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making processes are lengthy within these NGBs, however once decisions are made, there is the genuine intent to act on them. Change is slow paced and must overcome several internal challenges. It is anticipated that greater impact through the UKSG will materialise through an extended life span of the event. These sports would therefore view the end of the UKSG as detrimental to their sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives for involvement generally reflect the desire to initiate cultural change throughout the sport. This is either to achieve modernisation or collaboration across the sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High support towards the UKSG from England based CEOs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Cluster three: cooperative profile sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports: Athletics / Gymnastics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar to cluster 2 sports, these sports are traditional in their approach to competition, with a large infrastructure that results in slow-paced decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These sports have experienced minimal change as a consequence of their UKSG involvement. Whilst the UKSG coordinators describe possible changes that could arise, there is little evidence to suggest that these changes will materialise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All four home country NGBs and school sport associations are involved in the staging of the UKSG. However, there have been no significant changes to the relationships existing between these organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In comparison to cluster 1 sports, the role of UKSG coordinator within these sports is not as influential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UKSG development funding is not perceived as significant to these sports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whilst these sports express a desire to be involved in the future development of the UKSG, an end to the event would not prove overly detrimental to the NGBs.

These sports acknowledge that their inclusion in the UKSG adds ‘profile’ to the event.

Motives for involvement generally reflect the avoidance of ‘missing out’. The UKSG is perceived as a highly politicised event, which major sports can not afford to decline.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the UKSG policy from the perspective of its key stakeholders. The six objectives connected to the UKSG were explored in greater detail, with mention of how they were formulated and how individual sports have addressed them in a way that is specific to their own policies, priorities and internal capacity. In light of this information the focus of this conclusion now turns to the selection of three case studies.

Whilst data collection was representative of all eight UKSG sports, the investigation’s methodology adheres to a selective case study approach. The three case studies (swimming, table tennis and volleyball) were selected based upon several criteria, which have been confirmed by the data analysed in this chapter.

The three criteria used for selection of the cases were:

   a) organisational complexity especially in relation to devolution
   b) organisation of school sport
   c) size and strength of traditions

These three criteria are applied to the eight UKSG in Appendix G.

Using these criteria, swimming, table tennis and volleyball were selected as case studies. These case studies provide interesting, cross sectional data with regards to issues of power, policy process and policy implementation. For example, issues of devolution (an important issue within the table tennis case study) provides an opportunity for the application of the theories of Foucault and Lukes’. The power of decision making across the sport’s home countries also impacts upon the UKSG policy and how it is followed and implemented. Similar issues linked to power and policy implementation are observed in the
swimming and volleyball case studies; however the consequences of these issues and how they are dealt with are very different between the two sports given their difference in size, school sport structures and history.
6. Case Study One: Swimming

6.1 Introduction

It is well documented that swimming is the UK’s most popular participation sport. Statistics generated through Sport England’s ‘Active People Survey 4’ (April 2009-April 2010) highlight that annually, 5,571,100 people participate in swimming at least once a month (www.sportengland.org accessed 19th July 2010). This figure ranks highest of the 38 sports analysed by the survey for both disabled and non-disabled participants. Although the sport’s participation rates are high, membership numbers and engagement in competitive opportunities are lower than sports such as golf and football. Just 3.41% of participating swimmers are members of the ASA and 1.33% have taken part in competition between April 2009 – April 2010 (www.sportengland.org accessed 19th July 2010). This is a likely reflection of the sport’s young peak age of swimming ability. Although the sport caters for ‘masters’ competitors aged over 25, club swimming and competition are activities dominated by children and young adults.

The sport’s high participation rates have been supported through government initiatives such as PESSYP and the Free Swimming Programme (FSP). As a continuation of the PESSCL strategy, PESSYP identified swimming as one of its ten work strands focused on enhancing the quality and quantity of youth sport. It is compulsory that swimming and water safety is taught within primary schools as part of the National Curriculum so that all children by the age of 11 are able to swim 25m unaided. This early introduction to the sport facilitates swimming’s lifelong participation rates, as did the short-lived FSP initiative which received £140m funding over two years from the ASA, Sport England and five government departments: the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department of Education (DfE)), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The FSP offered free swimming
for children aged 16 and under and adults over 60, however due to a change in political administration in May 2010, it was announced that the FSP would be discontinued due to lack of value for public money. The FSP did, however, raise the awareness of swimming as a participation sport across the country. Shortly following the announcement of the discontinuation of the FSP, the ASA learnt that the £25m funding promised by the DCMS and the DfE to rejuvenate swimming pools across England had also been withdrawn. This double blow for the ASA reflects the current state of Britain’s economy

‘Given that the participation part of the Free Swimming programme has already been axed, and the amount of cuts being made across Government departments, this was not surprising news’. (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming [www.swimming.org accessed 18th July 2010]).

As explained in Chapter 2 the nature of British sport has always been subject to financial vulnerability. The much needed government support of sport is highly dependent upon government ministers attitudes towards its capacity to impact positively upon other agendas. The susceptibility of sport to government whim has become evident through the case of swimming and therefore sports have justifiably become increasingly skeptical of public sector promises in case they are abruptly withdrawn. As will be detailed in Chapter 9, this has caused sports to be particularly cautious of the UKSG policy given its unconfirmed future and potential change in values through the introduction of the new coalition government. Sports, including swimming, are yet to fully commit to the policy’s six objectives.

The organisational structure of swimming’s NGB is devolved across the UK (see Figure 6.2). The sport has a GB governing body known as British Swimming. This organisation is

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<th>Figure 6.1 Abbreviations of swimming’s organising bodies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Governing Bodies (NGBs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA: Amateur Swimming Association (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASA: Swim Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>SASA: Scottish Swimming</td>
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<tr>
<td>IASA: Swim Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Swimming Associations (SAs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESSA: ESSA</td>
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<td>WSSA: Welsh Schools Swimming Association</td>
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<td>SSSA: Scottish Schools Swimming Association</td>
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<td>ISSA: Irish Schools Swimming Association</td>
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responsible internationally for high performance swimming, diving, synchronised swimming, water polo and open water Swimming. Home country specific programmes in each aquatic discipline (grassroots through to elite) and team selections are the responsibility of four NGBs: Amateur Swimming Association (ASA); Scottish Swimming (SASA); Swim Wales (WASA) and Swim Ireland (IASA) founded during the 19th century. The NGBs are responsible for approximately 1590 affiliated aquatic clubs. Whilst their overall aims are similar, the way in which each home country NGB sets about achieving these aims is very different. The study’s interviewees link the reasons for this to differences in home country funding, traditions and political systems.

Each home country governing body is linked to a separate ‘Schools Swimming Association’ (SA) which is responsible ‘for promoting the teaching of swimming in schools’ and organising competition for school aged swimmers [www.essa-schoolswimming.com](http://www.essa-schoolswimming.com) (accessed 18th July 2010). Interestingly, however, the SAs’ claimed role within swimming is contradicted by fact that the NGBs are the main promoter and organiser of school curriculum-based swimming. An example of the SA’s limited role would be the coordination of the ‘swimming’ strand of the PESSYP strategy, which is managed only by the ASA, rather than the English Schools Swimming Association (ESSA). The area of focus for the four SAs is the coordination of school swimming events, which catered specifically for full-time school pupils attending schools included in the ‘Education Act 1944’ [www.essa-schoolswimming.com](http://www.essa-schoolswimming.com) (accessed 18th July 2010). SA competitive teams are typically selected via a communication network between school teachers and swimming clubs, consequently, SA competitions cater for the same group of competitors taking part in NGB coordinated competitions.

The SAs are legally independent from the NGBs and therefore possess their own history and regional and constitutional structure. The SAs do however, remain highly dependent upon the four home country NGBs for funding, which until recently has been supplied unconditionally. Whilst members of the SAs would argue that their competitions play a fundamental role in the provision of
competitive opportunity for young people, members of the mainstream NGBs disagree and believe that the SA’s merely provide competition which is either inappropriately designed or duplicates with NGB swimming meets.

‘ESSA’s national council have said that they don’t want to dilute the national competition which is an inter-divisional competition between the 12 divisions. At the moment, that gives us a pathway to international representation and it presents a competitive opportunity for some swimmers not affiliated to clubs…What we don’t want to see is the suggestion for our national competition to become like a B grade gala because we don’t think that that would have any value’ (Mavis Fox, ESSA Championship Coordinator, interviewed 25th March 2009).

‘I question whether there’s room for two national championships – I think the ESSA relay competition adds something to the programme that the ASA doesn’t do, I don’t know whether there is room for both ASA and the ESSA championships. I’m not sure whether the ESSA national championships is pitched at the right level. Or WISE [see Figure 6.4 for description] is pitched to the right level. They don’t include Olympic distance events. And myself and Mavis [ESSA Championship Coordinator] will argue until the cows come home!’ (Dennis Yeoman, Chair of the Swimming Trust and expert voluntary advisor for British Swimming, interviewed 25th March 2009).

As a consequence of the perspectives of British Swimming representatives, coupled with the gradual shift in sporting culture away from amateur and voluntary management towards business-like professionalism, SAs are now being asked by NGBs to meet certain targets and make specific changes to their competition formats in order to be in receipt of funding. The changes that are occurring as a result of this conditional funding will be analysed later in the chapter.

Over the sport’s 150 year history swimming has developed a complex and extensive structure of competition, which for many years has remained unchanged (see Figure 6.3). This structure consists of five strands of
competition for the aquatic discipline of swimming alone (additional aquatic disciplines such as disability swimming, water polo, diving, synchronised swimming, masters swimming and open water swimming add significantly to British Swimming’s competition structure). The five strands include SA-led competition, NGB-led competition, further and higher education-led competition, ‘Arena’ branded gala league competition and private provision competition (see Figure 6.4 for further discussion). The UKSG has presented the NGBs of swimming with the opportunity to rationalise this structure as part of the YST’s NCF initiative, however this has been met with some resistance from several organising bodies, namely the SAs and the SASA. These bodies state that there is little need to alter the traditional competition structure.
Figure 6.2: Structure of swimming within the UK
Some competitions both have long course (50m pool length) & short course (25m pool length) versions

This diagram is swimming specific, there are also detailed competition networks for other aquatic disciplines (disability swimming, open water, waterpolo, synchronised swimming and diving)
School Games objectives

Given the organisational complexity of swimming in the UK, the main governing body for the sport, British Swimming, opted to allocate the UKSG development funding it receives from the YST to each home country. Whilst this approach may avoid political unrest and allow more relevant funding.
expenditure for the home countries, there is a possibility that an opportunity cost has occurred. Home country funding allocation has discouraged UK-wide communications and further supported a devolved programme. Large scale, UK-wide developmental ideas have not been pursed due to a lack of finance. Instead smaller, less costly projects are pursued in order to ‘use up’ the small amount of resource available to the home countries:

‘What is there in the games that will make them a better athlete in the future? I think it’s so small for the amount of money that’s been invested. If that money was used to bring them into GB squads, I think you would get much larger impacts…the focus per home country has, however, benefited Scotland’s preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. I’m not sure much impact there has been in the other home countries’ (Sportscotland senior official interviewed 1st May 2009).

Whilst the expenditure of UKSG development funding has proved relatively useful across the four home country NGBs for swimming (as will be discussed later), the same can not be said for other sports such as gymnastics, where British Gymnastics senior staff have allocated funding towards projects which are not perceived as sustainable across the NGBs:

‘The volunteer development project has proved successful in Coventry and Bristol, but we’ve not yet managed to set one up in Cardiff. It seems to be as though the bigger the sport, the more problems you come across. It’s hard to keep things going with the funding that’s available’ (British Gymnastics Association senior official interviewed 17th August 2009).

The extent to which an opportunity cost has occurred through each sport’s decision to allocate UKSG development funding per home country, rather than per UK-wide project, is difficult to determine empirically given that alternatives to devolved funding were never implemented. Bachrach & Baratz (1999) refer to these circumstances as ‘non-decisions’ whereby possible alternatives to the implemented policy are left off the decision-making agenda.
In the case of swimming, British Swimming representatives chose not to present home country NGBs with the option of developing UK-wide projects given the sport’s historical devolved approach to strategy making.

‘Because each home country has a different strategy, whenever I get the funding, I split it by teams. So England get half of it as they have four teams, Scotland have two teams, and Wales and Ireland have one team each. And everyone’s quite happy with that’ (UKSG coordinator for the ASA interviewed 8th January 2009).

The division of development funding has impacted upon the way in which swimming has approach the UKSG’s six objectives, as have the sport’s original motives behind its involvement in the UKSG movement. The sport’s UKSG coordinator has highlighted that for British Swimming the attraction of the Games was its capacity to stimulate cultural change; to catalyse a level of ‘involvement with the Schools Associations where the NGBs had not previously been involved’ (UKSG coordinator for the ASA, interviewed 5th June 2009). Unlike some of the smaller sports which have targeted the UKSG as a source of funding and pathway to increased visibility amongst influential organisations such as the YST and the DCMS, swimming instead positioned the Games as an opportunity to break away from traditional and somewhat dated school competitions and ‘challenge the thinking of SAs and introduce some new ideas and some new people’. (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming interviewed 10th February 2009). It was intended that through the UKSG, the role of SAs would be reduced (but not eliminated). The UKSG would mark the beginnings of a move away from the traditional ‘expectancy culture’ experienced by the SAs, whereby funding would be provided unconditionally by the NGBs. Instead, SAs are now being asked to comply with NGB policy and competition pathways in order to be in receipt of the much needed funding. Non-compliance would see the withdrawal of funding, reflecting the use of sanctions as a form of power (Lukes 2005). The home country NGBs and SAs were expected to work collaboratively on the UKSG, with final funding decisions coming from the NGBs which receive the UKSG development funding from the YST. Each of the four home countries
have reported difficulty in establishing such hierarchical partnerships, with the majority of the SAs proving resistant to the changes proposed through the six UKSG objectives by the NGBs. Further analysis of these relationships will be discussed later in the chapter.

Given the ulterior motives behind swimming’s involvement in the UKSG, the way that the sport has approached the event’s six objectives varies slightly from the other UKSG sports. It is worth emphasising that the objectives were not formulated through a consultative process involving the UKSG sports, therefore in order for sports such as swimming to gain ownership, the NGBs and UKSG coordinators involved have creatively interpreted the wording of each objective. The way in which each objective has been approached by the sport will now be discussed.

- **Objective 1). On going planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people**

Representatives of the performance departments within the YST and UK Sport agree that swimming already delivers competitions to a high standard. Whilst the ASA in particular would like to build on this, the NGB’s representatives highlight resource limitations such as funding and inadequate volunteer numbers to support an expanded competition network.

- **Objective 2). To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people**

The extent of variation in how the home countries approached this second objective has been quite significant. Whilst the content, structure and presentation of swimming competitions in general across the countries are relatively similar, the timing of these competitions in each NGB’s competition calendar is not the same. Scottish Swimming in particular varies in its implementation of the UKSG objectives based upon its different school system, which caused the date of the UKSG to clash with Scottish school
term time. The ‘inconvenient’ date, coupled with the uncertainty of the event’s future has left the UKSG struggling to feature as an essential building block within the home countries’ competition pathways. This is just one example of how structural differences between the home countries have complicated the implementation of the UKSG policy:

‘To be brutally honest, the UKSG doesn’t impinge on our competition pathway at all. If it was positioned slightly differently in the competition year then maybe it would be more of an integral part. Generally speaking, the athletes that we send are those who are certainly sub world class level’ (Dorothy Roberts, Swimming Programme Manager for Scottish Swimming, interviewed 23rd April 2009).

This perspective, supported by several swimming representatives involved with implementing the UKSG, directly contrasts with that of the CEO of British Swimming:

‘The timing was perfect for us…September is a good time, it gets people back into the pool (after summer holidays) as they know that there is an event coming’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming interviewed 10th February 2009).

The conflicting comments here provide evidence of a mismatch between the aspirational expectations of policy developers and the realistic capacity of the policy delivers. As emphasised by Parsons ‘policy implementation is not a process in which x follows y in a chain of causation…what actually counts as success and failure is a matter of controversy and conflict.’ (2002:467). As a consequence, the outcomes expected by the YST and David Sparkes in relation to this second objective have struggled to materialise. The sport’s talent competition programme has remained unchanged, with little link to the UKSG. Similar to several other UKSG sports, this highlights that top level athletes with the greatest Olympic potential are not attending the UKSG and missing out on the multi-sport experience offered at the UKSG.
Objective 3). Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve P.E. and school sport

British Swimming interpreted this objective slightly differently to the other UKSG sports. As opposed to incorporating school sport into the UKSG event and its qualification structure, swimming opted to make use of the UKSG development funding to alter the role of school swimming. Traditionally, SAs have staged ‘school’ competitions for talented club swimmers of school age. The competitions therefore duplicated the NGBs mainstream competitions such as ‘ASA Nationals’. British Swimming perceived this as unhealthy for the sport and wanted to reposition SA school competition so that it would cater for a lower standard of swimmer. The English NGB therefore developed the ‘Aquasplash’ resource\(^1\) with the UKSG development funding. This resource provides guidance on how to host an aquatics festival, which is participation focused. The ASA’s aims for the resource are for it to encourage participation at school level and direct children towards the club environment should they wish to compete at the next level. ‘Aquasplash’ provides a clear distinction between ‘school swimming’ and ‘club swimming’ and therefore separates the roles of the SAs and NGBs. Unsurprisingly the SAs have proved reluctant to support the resource, with ESSA representatives claiming that they were not consulted in the development of the resource or the new NCF. This indicates

\(^1\) The ASA describe the Aquasplash resource as ‘aquatic festival aimed at 5-11 year olds and is designed to cater for both non-swimmers and swimmers. It is based upon recognising and celebrating the skills achieved at swimming lessons and is a fun, inclusive, multi-skill activity designed to encourage young people to:

- demonstrate their skills as individuals and teams.
- experience a fun based festival in a co-ordinated environment.
- be signposted to other aquatic activities in the community.

The Aquasplash Festival resource is designed to assist festival organisers in planning and delivering an aquatic festival. The information contained within this resource, is designed for both experienced and non-experienced aquatic organisers, is practical, provides templates, ideas, plus additional guidance on how to include young people with a disability’ (www.aquasplashfest.org accessed 18\(^{th}\) July 2010).
rising tension between the ASA and the ESSA in the implementation of the UKSG policy.

‘We didn’t design the NCF, we were presented with it’ (Mavis Fox, ESSA Championship Coordinator interviewed 25th March 2009).

Consequently, the ESSA have refuted any suggestion that they will alter their current competition structure, which includes the ‘WISE’ competition, that has similarities to the UKSG in terms of the competitors it caters for, however differs significantly in its event presentation which is deemed to be far less impressive than the UKSG.

Despite three home countries not having access to the England based network of 225 CMs that supports the implementation of the YST’s NCF initiative, all four home countries have bought into the Aquasplash resource. Each NGB now distributes the guidance packs across their youth swimming network and implements the festivals through a supporting system of volunteers.

The recent release of the secondary school Aquasplash resource known as ‘Splashdown’\(^2\) has had less support across the four home country NGBs for swimming. The resource was designed by the ASA through the expenditure of UKSG development funding. Swim Wales have since spent their proportion of UKSG development funding on obtaining the rights of access to the English resource and therefore Splashdown is currently promoted across Welsh and English secondary schools. Scottish Swimming and Swim Ireland declined the use of the resource and have instead chosen to allocate their UKSG development funding towards alternative volunteer development projects.

Both the Aquasplash and Splashdown resources have little, if any mention of ‘PE’. The resources are instead designed to support intra- or inter-school activities. This highlights the extent to which reinterpretation of the UKSG

\(^2\) Splashdown provides secondary school aged pupils (11-14) the opportunity to represent their school within a multi-aquatic competition. Splashdown includes a selection of 13 fun activities (such as lifesaving and water polo) that can be combined to make up a specific competition that suits the needs of specific swimmers. The resource provides teachers with quick rules cards that will facilitate the coordination of intra- or inter-school competition. Points awarded to swimmers can then be accumulated nationally within a web-based league table. [www.swimfit.com](http://www.swimfit.com) accessed 21st July 2010).
objectives have been allowed by the YST. Swimming representatives have explained that the UKSG is positioned as a sub-elite event and therefore the delivery of the competition is not applicable to any swimming observed within the school curriculum. This perspective has been reiterated by the UKSG coordinator in response to the YST’s efforts to include CMs in the delivery of the UKSG.

‘It’s hard to accommodate them (CMs) at an elite level event such as the UKSG. The UKSG is a gala competition essentially for our top swimmers. What we want our CMs to be delivering is a multi-aquatic festival. So in terms of the rules and organisation etc, they’re completely different concepts’ (UKSG coordinator for the ASA interviewed 5th June 2009).

Although this UKSG objective has been creatively interpreted by the swimming steering group, the outcomes achieved through the development of the Aquasplash resource have been impressive. Whilst the UKSG event itself has not been fully utilised to promote PE and school sport (as intended through the objective’s wording), the development funding linked to the Games has created a tangible resource that has been used by CMs and volunteers throughout the UK. In addition, the UK-wide distribution of the resource has provided a platform for enhanced communication between home country NGBs and SAs. In England, Wales and Ireland, relationships between the NGBs and SAs have noticeably improved, impacting positively on the sport’s future of school sport. However, in Scotland the quality and quantity of inter-organisational communication has deteriorated.

- Objective 4). Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic

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3 The UKSG swimming steering group meets quarterly to discuss the progression of the UKSG policy. Agenda is predominately focused on the coordination of the UKSG event itself, rather than on the development of projects linked to the six UKSG objectives. Members of the UKSG steering group include representatives from the ASA, British Swimming, ESSA and the host city region. ESSA and British Swimming representation is through voluntary posts. Meetings are also attended by Fast Track and the YST if the agenda requires their organisational input. Figure 6.2 positions the steering group within the UK-wide swimming organisational structure.
values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village

In similar response to the first objective, swimming representatives associate their limited progress towards this goal with a lack of available finance. The sport’s competition network across the UK is extensive and therefore a desire to replicate volunteer training, ‘100% ME’ workshops and introduce athlete mentors beyond the UKSG is difficult to support financially. Paralympic and Olympic themes are therefore yet to filter through the rest of the sport’s competition pathway.

At the event itself, like most sports, swimmers have little opportunity to watch other UKSG events. This is due to the large number of competitors attending the event and the fact that in most of the UKSG annual venues, the Olympic-sized pool is based quite a distance away from the other sports. Aside from this, the sport has made some effort to embrace opening and closing ceremonies similar to those of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This is with the exception of the Scottish UKSG teams, who have chosen on several occasions to depart from the Games prior to the closing ceremony in order to return swimmers, volunteers and officials to school as soon as possible. The tension which this has created between the home countries and the YST’s operational team will be discussed in the subsequent section.

- **Objective 5). Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers**

For the organisers of the swimming event within the UKSG, this objective has proven to be the most successful in terms of impact. The UKSG has been used as a platform where young officials can demonstrate and develop their skills as fully capable sporting volunteers. The sport has highlighted to event organisers how successful a team of officials under the age of 25 can be. For the 2008 UKSG, 67% of UKSG swimming volunteers were under the age of 25. Given the success of the young officials programme at the UKSG, British
Swimming is now introducing the young official programme at other swimming events, in order to establish a ‘volunteer competition pathway’.

‘The UKSG has been a catalyst...it’s probably the biggest example we can demonstrate where it works. It’s certainly signposting what can happen’ (Dennis yeoman, Chair of the Swimming Trust and expert voluntary advisor for British Swimming, interviewed 25th March 2009).

UKSG organisers have, however, been met with some resistance when deploying young officials. As expected and as observed in several other sports, the longer-standing officials have been reluctant to delegate some of their officiating responsibilities to young people. In order to overcome this resistance and ensure that the maturer officials remained ‘on board’ with the UKSG, they have been used as mentors for the younger officials during the event.

All four home country swimming NGBs and SAs identify this fifth UKSG objective as the most sustainable of the six. It is also one of the few areas that all four home countries have jointly embraced, however Scottish representatives have suggested that beyond the lifespan of the UKSG, it would prove difficult to provide similar volunteering opportunities for youngsters in Scotland.

‘I think the problem is because there’s so many other issues within swimming, so volunteering projects just get lost in it’ (Dorothy Roberts, Swimming Programmes Manager for Scottish Swimming, interviewed 23rd April 2009).

- **Objective 6). Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems**

Even before the UKSG, British Swimming prided itself on its approach to child safety and protection. Given past scandals and incidents reported in the sport, swimming was forced to quickly advance its welfare systems. The resulting policies such as Wavepower and initiatives like Childpower have vastly
improved the sports reputation \[www.swimming.org\] accessed 29th June 2010). With this in mind, swimming representatives have explained that this UKSG objective is not a priority concern for the sport.

‘I think with CPSU, swimming has always been one of the first sports to receive all the Child Protection Standards and implement good practice around Child Protection. British Swimming does fully support the implementation of the UKSG’s Welfare Plan, but I don’t see this as a priority area for UK School Games development money, because the work is already achieved by other posts within the NGBs’ (UKSG coordinator for the ASA, interviewed 8th January 2009).

However, the sport has still made some noticeable progress with regards to other areas of UKSG welfare. Swimming has used the opportunity of the UKSG event to encourage senior welfare coordinators to mentor less experienced Welfare Officers. In addition, the number of CRB checked officials within the sport has risen. This is a significant development for school based swimming, which until recently failed to comply with child protection policies.

‘The SAs used to billet children into houses with other parents – you just can’t do that today. Everyone has to be CRB checked. We have changed the SAs’ thinking…there has been a culture shift’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

In addition to the outcomes experienced through the sport’s efforts to address the six objectives outlined by the YST, there have been additional (and sometimes unintentional) impacts witnessed as a consequence to the implementation of the UKSG policy. Attention will now turn to identification and discussion of such impacts with reference to swimming.
- **Headline achievements and main challenges**

The history, organisation and size of swimming have certainly impacted upon the way in which the sport approached the six UKSG objectives. Reports of restricted finance and human resources as well as tension between influential governing bodies influenced the way in which the objectives were interpreted by the sport, which in turn has caused the YST’s expected outcomes of the UKSG to deviate slightly from actual outcomes. In particular, the overall success of the UKSG has been challenged by swimming’s long-standing parallel between school and club led competition. Although the UKSG has provided an opportunity for collaborative working between the SAs and NGBs, on occasions a forced working relationship has proved near detrimental for the UKSG selected swimmers. Examples here relate to the Ireland and Scottish SAs, which have both separately attempted to protest against the actions of their corresponding home country NGB by refusing to enter a team into the UKSG. For the case of Ireland the protest was brought about through a misunderstanding of funding allocation. The Irish SA questioned the funding process whereby the Irish NGB received money from the YST, rather than the SA. The SA felt this process was not efficient, given that it was their responsibility to select the UKSG team, not Swim Ireland’s. After direct intervention by the YST, the problem was resolved through a process of mediation between the parties. The funding procedure was clarified, an Irish team was entered into the UKSG and amicable communication between the Irish SA and NGB has resumed. The tense situation that arose within Scotland was again associated with the allocation of funding from YST to Scottish Swimming, rather than the Scottish Schools Swimming Association. Despite the efforts of British Swimming’s CEO and YST representatives, the source of tension between the organisations proved to be too deeply embedded and therefore the issue remains unsolved. To present day, the organisations do not communicate with one another. In order to avoid the organisational tension impacting negatively on the experience of the Scottish UKSG athletes, it was agreed that the Scottish Schools Swimming Association would devolve full responsibility of the UKSG to the extremely reluctant Scottish NGB, which itself had reservations over the organisation of
the UKSG. Since Scottish Swimming became the sole organiser of the UKSG Scotland teams, there have been further changes made by the home country, which could be perceived as impacting negatively on the Scottish competitors multi-sport experience. As already mentioned, the dates of the UKSG require Scottish competitors to take time off school. Consequently, Scottish swimming teams have been directed by Scottish Swimming to depart from the UKSG early in order to return to school. This has caused some tension with the Welsh, English and Irish UKSG teams who perceive Scottish Swimming’s decision as detracting from their own competitor’s multi-sport experience.

There are, however, significant achievements reported by the sport which have come about through the use of the UKSG development funding. The Aquaplash resource and the development of a young volunteer pathway are two headline achievements that have been embraced by all four home country NGBs. In addition, the positioning of the UKSG in the sport’s competition pathway has been viewed positively by swimming competitors. The UKSG caters for sub-elite swimmers who have missed the opportunity to compete at European level. The UKSG therefore provides another competitive opportunity for these competitors, or late maturing swimmers who would otherwise drop out of the sport. The Games therefore acts as a retention and talent developmental tool, rather than an elite level event.

“We think it’s important to Hoover up all those youngsters who, for various reasons, haven’t made the summer events…we’ve seen some of these youngsters who competed in the UKSG go on to get into bigger and stronger teams, hence the decision that if the money’s pulled, we’ll try to find a way to keep the event going’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

British Swimming’s decision to use the event as a retention tool, rather than as an elite development event demonstrates the versatility of the UKSG. Across the eight UKSG sports investigated, the positioning of the event varies from sport to sport and from NGB to NGB within these sports. The flexibility of the event’s athlete selection procedure demonstrates the level of freedom that the sports have in their implementation of the UKSG policy. This flexibility
ensures that each sport is able to position comfortably the UKSG within their competition pathways, in a way that can positively impact, or at least fit with the sport’s overall strategic plans. In opposition to this point, however, the flexibility of the UKSG suggests that the YST have limited control over the original expectations for the policy. The original intention was to position the event as a pinnacle in each sport’s NCF, effectively offering a multi-sport experience to young Olympic hopefuls. With sports such as swimming locating the event away from elite level, the policy goals have been reinterpreted as part of a street-level ‘coping strategy’ (Lipsky 1980). This ‘tweaking’ of policy purpose rings true with Lewis & Flynn’s analysis of the policy implementation process:

‘actions result from the resolution of conflicts between two sets of priorities…this may result in what is feasible in the circumstances rather than the fulfilment of the original objectives’ (1978:5).

6.3 Analysis of the UK Schools Games’ impact on organisational relationships

The complete policy process of the UKSG, from its inception to implementation, has impacted upon the relationships between stakeholders of the event. In particular, swimming has experienced changes internally within the sport with varying levels of interaction taking place between the four home country NGBs and their corresponding SAs. The consultation process involved in implementing the UKSG policy has in some cases complemented relationships between the various governing bodies, but in others it has only accentuated historical differences of devolution and power battles. The extent to which organisational relationships have been altered through the UKSG policy process is discussed below. An analysis of the relationship existing between swimming and the YST is also provided, which utilises theories of power and policy implementation to inform the discussion.
- Home country relationships: the impact of devolution on the UKSG

As already explained, British Swimming opted to split the UKSG development funding proportionally across the four home countries. The decision was made on the basis that each home country differed in terms of strategy, priorities and political structure and therefore individualised projects would prove more fruitful than generic UK-wide expenditure. As the CEO for British Swimming emphasised, the division of funding allowed the English based UKSG coordinator to encourage UKSG policy buy-in from Welsh, Scottish and Irish stakeholders.

‘It’s almost like a little bit of ‘can help you’ money. It’s a bit of grease on the wheels money which is really helpful. It makes things happen. I think to me that the money is about that’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

In this respect, the money is being used as a form of power, whereby an incentive manipulates action. Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan associate the use of incentives with Lukes’ one-dimensional form of power.

‘The use of incentives (an example of what Lukes refers to as ‘one-dimensional power’), whereby the powerful (i.e. the resource rich) use their resources to shape the behaviour of the resource dependent’ (2010:99-100).

Although the UKSG development funding has attained policy support from all four home countries, British Swimming’s underlying intention to increase the communication between the countries has not yet fully materialised. Although general operational discussion has increased between the four main contacts for the UKSG, there are no obvious systems that have been put in place that would sustain UK-wide communication that focuses on youth competition beyond the UKSG. Even the UKSG ‘steering group’ meetings set up by the UKSG coordinator do little to encourage interaction. These meetings are attended only by English swimming and host city representatives. The
agendas of these meetings are dominated by competition-specific and operational discussions and therefore the opportunity to examine the progress of the home country UKSG development programmes or confront historical tensions between the countries is missed. Developmental projects such as the Aquasplash resource are not discussed; instead the resource has simply been made accessible across the UK, with minimal feedback provided by the home countries.

The lack of positive interaction between the home countries is surprising given that the sport’s initial approach to the UKSG policy was one of consultation and encouragement.

‘we actually took some time to sit down with the home countries and the school associations…we asked ‘does the event really work for us and why’…and the decision was yes, it has been really good at breaking the mould and more importantly, it had fitted in really well into our competition calendar’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

In response to this process, representatives of Scottish Swimming explained that their NGB was appreciative of being involved in the early formation of the UKSG swimming policy, however they expressed reservation about the usefulness and appropriateness of the event given its Scottish term-time date. The NGB (who inherited the Games through the refusal of the Scottish SA to take ownership) had little motivation to alter their competition calendar in order to accommodate the UKSG and its accompanying development projects. The reason for this has been linked with the NGBs long term visions and strategies, which are substantially different to the ASA and do not feature the UKSG.

‘Scotland were left in the minority, they don’t know what they want from the Games…when we asked ‘why do you think it’s wrong?’ they said ‘we can’t explain it’. It probably means it’s just one person who doesn’t like it…there needs to be some input from the Scottish Parliament to
see if they really want to be engaged’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

The lack of Scottish engagement has been summarised by several interviewees as unsolvable by English based employees.

“When I’m working with my Scottish colleagues, they have different priorities, for example the Scottish team development for the Commonwealth Games. So I’m not an influential person there, I can’t make much impact.” (UKSG coordinator for the ASA, interviewed 5th June 2009).

And without the capacity of the UKSG coordinator to influence Scottish Swimming’s perception of the UKSG, Sportscotland representatives assume that in the near future, if the opportunity arose to withdraw from the UKSG, Scottish swimming would choose do so. In consideration of this point and the resulting impact that Scottish Swimming’s equivocal commitment to the UKSG has upon the policy’s implementation, concerns have been expressed that the NGB is just ‘dancing the dance’. In this respect, the Scottish NGB is making superficial amendments to the home country’s swimming structure, rather than long term committed changes. The lack of ownership that the SASA has over the objectives has caused some concern for the stakeholders involved in the policy formation process, such as the YST. The way in which Scottish Swimming approached the UKSG and its six objectives have led to policy outcomes which are quite different to those expected by the YST.

The approach of Scottish Swimming proves to be quite distinct when compared to the more supportive attitudes of Welsh, Irish and English NGBs. This distinction has some compatibility with Sabatier’s ACF. Whilst divisions of interests are typical within sport, whereby a variety of stakeholders have opposing perspectives on the roles elite, school and mass participation sport have to play within society; in this circumstance it would appear that geographically defined coalitions of interest are possibly emerging. Differing priorities and political structures across the home countries have led to two opposing approaches to the implementation of the UKSG policy.
- **Stakeholder relationships: the level of interaction between the numerous swimming organisations and the Youth Sport Trust**

As already described, swimming is a sport that has not avoided controversy as part of the UKSG policy process. Home country devolution and issues linked with the duplication of NGB and SA competition provision have become apparent as part of the UKSG. On numerous occasions, representatives of the YST have stepped in to maintain relationships internally within the sport and to prevent any irreversible breakdowns in lines of communication. As an organisation with a vested interest in the UKSG, the YST has intervened in disagreements between the Irish Schools Swimming Association and the IASA; the Scottish Schools Swimming Association and SASA; and the Scottish Schools Swimming Association and the UKSG swimming steering group. Through negotiation, the YST has maintained the progress of the UKSG and sustained its working relationship with each of the nine organising bodies within swimming.

It is worth emphasising, however, that the YST has had to be cautious in its approach to intervention. In allowing the UKSG sports to allocate their UKSG development funding across the four home countries, the YST has had to be flexible in relation to the UKSG objectives in order to account for differences in how the home countries have tackled them. The YST’s effort to demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards the sports has been perceived by some UKSG stakeholders as a display of insufficient power over the UKSG sports and a lack of control over the policy’s direction.

> ‘I think some of the sports feel that the event has been thrust upon them, which in a way it was... but the YST are very flexible if tweaks are needed... Now I think there’s a danger of the YST getting this wrong. But I think they’ve got it right up to now. The wrong bit of it is that I think it’s almost going to grow too big if we’re not too careful. We’re almost in danger of fannying to the politicians and losing sight of
what is core’ (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

However, as Alison Oliver of the YST acknowledges, there is a need for diplomacy within the world of sport. Long-standing traditions and historical tensions within a sport should be accommodated, rather than being tested to breaking point.

‘It’s different in different sports, we have always tried to use the UKSG to encourage home country sports bodies to work together, because this is what they do ultimately in support of Team GB at the elite end of sport. We’ve therefore mainly worked through the UK NGB where there is one. Where a UK governing body doesn’t exist, it has been harder to get collective agreement and a joined up approach to the development of competitive pathways. However, of course, while we can challenge and encourage this way of working, we have to respect the decisions in each home country… the most important thing is that money is put to some good use for the benefit of the sport’ (Alison Oliver, Sport director of the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).

At the same time, Guin Batten (YST officer responsible for performance development) criticised the historical tensions magnified by devolution and would prefer to see the UKSG really challenge the inter-country relationships for the benefit of the sport.

‘In sports, where the pinnacle of global success is about competing as Great Britain on the Olympics stage, there is an expectation that the home nations will work together. This isn’t always a reality within all sports and at all levels. At times sports should ask themselves the question – do they want to be the best home nation, or do they want to be the best country in the world? Which is more important for them?’ (Guin Batten, Head of Performance for the YST, interviewed 6th January 2009).

It could be argued that the UKSG is in fact subtly challenging these differences in competitive status and prioritisation, which have been
reinforced through devolution. Particularly within swimming, the process of allocating resource across the home countries is gradually highlighting the inefficiencies that exist within the sport at UK level. Given that home country relationships and issues arising from devolution were not identified as a separate UKSG objective, the event has still proven successful in encouraging the sports to at least acknowledge the embedded issues, as opposed to treading softly around them.

Swimming representatives working closely with the UKSG have been positive about the level of support the YST has provided for the sport, however disappointment has been expressed regarding the Trust’s disapproval of the ‘Secondary School Aquasplash Resource’ developed by the ASA. This resource caters for secondary school aged children who do not compete within swimming. It is designed to encourage participation amongst this unique group prone to the ‘participation drop off’. The YST’s initial response to the resource was negative, claiming that it had little connect to the UKSG as it failed to utilise the event as a motivator for participation. The YST therefore made an effort to rein in the sport’s creative reinterpretation of the third UKSG objective, implying that the resource would not support the organisation’s move towards a NCF. ASA representatives argued that the resource would prove worthwhile in delivering the YST’s ‘5 hour offer’ initiative and that one-off events such as the UKSG are not a sufficient motivating force to encourage participation amongst non-participating teenagers. The final outcome of the debate reflected the preferences of the ASA, rather than the YST, effectively permitting ASA senior officers to by-pass the ring-fenced allocation of the UKSG development funding.

In analysing the tensions that arose between the two organisations, two key theoretical observations may be offered. Firstly, the YST have proven reluctant to make use of threats or sanctions as a form of one-dimensional power (Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan 2010). Instead, the unstated threat that the ASA could withdraw from the event if they were unable to interpret the UKSG objectives in a meaningful way for their sport, indicated their power over the YST. The ASA are a large, high profile organisation and it is
therefore evident that the YST would prefer to maintain the NGB’s involvement, rather than risk its withdrawal through the retraction of its UKSG development funding allocation. Findings do suggest, however, that the power relationship between the YST and swimming is not zero-sum. There is evidence of a mutual interdependence between the bodies, whereby the YST relies on swimming’s high profile involvement in the UKSG and swimming relies on the YST’s mediating skills between the nine NGBs within the sport. Tomlinson (2005) refers to this particular relationship type as an ‘idealistic partnership’.

The second notable point is the method by which the YST promoted the UKSG as a way of developing a logical NCF that maps out a pathway of competition to elite level. This area of focus suggests that there has been a gradual change in what Sabatier refers to as the organisations’ secondary aspect beliefs. With reference to Sabatier’s ACF, the school sport coalition of interest (which up until recently perceived school sport as a way of improving a child’s attainment, behaviour and attitude) has experienced a shift towards the elite sport coalition. School sport is now perceived by the YST (the organisation central to the coalition) as the starting point of a pathway leading to elite competition. This signifies a merging of elite and school sport aims and objectives and is particularly evident within the UKSG and NCF policies:

‘The vision is to develop for each sport a single competitive framework top to bottom that includes competitions in school and club. The framework seeks to increase participation in high quality competition for all young people; and will also be used as the basis of the review process to transform talent identification and development for 2012 and beyond… [The framework] will culminate in the UK School Games; a pinnacle multi sport event which will profile the most talented young athletes aspiring to compete in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games and create a legacy for future sporting generations. This agenda will create a heightened profile for school sport, and specifically competitive opportunities…The framework will start to signpost the most appropriate competitive opportunities for talented young performers in each sport,'
and significantly clarify relationships and responsibilities between providers like NGBs and Schools Associations’

www.youthsporttrust.org accessed 22nd July 2010, emphasis added).

- **School Sport Associations and National Governing Bodies:**
  
  *the impact of role duplication on the UKSG*

As already identified, British Swimming’s decision to become involved in the UKSG was associated with a desire to change the role of the SAs. Through the event and its six objectives, it was intended that the four home country NGBs would work closely with the four home country SAs as part of a conditional partnership. SAs would receive financial support through the NGBs in return for their cooperation in implementing the six UKSG objectives and more specifically to England, supporting the newly designed NCF (see figures 6.5 & 6.6). The CEOs of the ASA and Swim Wales have each explained that their organisations are striving towards the development of a harmonious ‘youth sport culture’, whereby the SAs sit under the umbrella of the home country NGBs. Given the level of similarity that this long term ambition has with the YST’s strategic objectives, it is possible the Trust have become successful in ‘influencing, shaping or determining [an organisation’s]...very wants’ (Lukes 2005:27 adapted from Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan 2001:100). Through the development of the National Competition Panel and policies such as the UKSG, the YST have produced socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour to the point where swimming NGB representatives agree that SA competition is not appropriate for elite talent development. It is likely that if the presently reluctant SAs are influenced by these growing social constructs, this third dimension of unobservable, regulatory power will start to influence other sports as well. The inclusion of SAs under the governance of the sports NGB may eventually occur.

The extent to which British Swimming’s intention of achieving SA and NGB collaborative working has been realised varies between the four home countries. As figures 6.5 and 6.6 show, the extent to which ESSA competitions have been altered in the ASA’s newly proposed NCF is quite
significant. The English SA have been charged with coordinating ‘Aquatic Team Events’ rather than its traditional inter-regional competition which duplicated with ASA inter-county competitions. In addition, the SA's ‘WISE’ competition has been eliminated altogether. The WISE competition saw all four home country SAs compete against one another and therefore duplicate the target audience that the UKSG caters for. In summary, the ASA have proposed that the ESSA alter their competitions and cater for a more participation-focused audience in order to be in receipt of funding. By the end of 2009 the proposed NCF had yet to be implemented due to the mounting tensions between the ASA and the ESSA. The ESSA stress that its competitions not only provide opportunities for children who may not be good at any other sport, but they are also essential to qualify for world-school events and therefore should not be removed from swimming's competition structure. ASA CEO referred to these arguments as ‘emotional attachment to out-dated events' (David Sparkes, CEO of ASA and British Swimming, interviewed 10th February 2009).

Figure 6.5: Competitive structure of English Swimming prior to the introduction of the UK School Games

Source: Adapted from ASA UKSG strategy & visions document (2009)
The ESSA’s resistance to the proposed framework has slowed progress with British Swimming’s ambition for modernisation. However communication between the two organisations has significantly increased. Prior to the UKSG the English NGB and SA had very little contact, leading to the provision of two separate competition pathways. This duplication of competitive opportunity allowed some swimmers to over compete and under train, placing physiological strain on the athlete and hindering their development. As a consequence of the introduction of the UKSG policy, the ASA initiated progressive steps that will move the sport closer to the ASA’s new NCF design (see figure 6.6). However, the sport is currently in a phase of transition between Figures 6.5 and 6.6, resulting in a more congested and complicated structure of competition within England. The longer it takes for the ASA and the ESSA to agree on a suitable NCF, the longer this period of policy ‘flux’ will continue. It has been explained by the UKSG Coordinator that should the
debates continue for an extended period of time, the ASA may be left with no alternative but to withdraw funds from the ESSA, exerting a form of one-dimensional power to ensure compliance.

At present, the ESSA appear to be successfully playing, what Bardach refers to as, the implementation power game (1977). Despite the ongoing threat of funding withdrawal, the English SA is exhibiting skills of ‘bargaining, persuasion and manoeuvring under conditions of uncertainty’ (Bardach 1977:56). The organisation is withstanding pressure to comply with the proposed NCF through prolonging periods of negotiation. In doing so, the SA is protecting its own interests with regards to the implementation of the UKSG policy, reflecting aspects of Lipsky’s theory of ‘street level bureaucracy’ (1980). The ESSA representatives’ effort to maintain the validity of their organisation’s competition pathway also reflects Solesbury’s assumptions of the policy implementation process. Similar to the way in which the ESSA made unverified claims that the new NCF ‘does not reflect the best interest of swimmers’, Solesbury (2001) explains that policy implementation is frequently ruled through authority and control, rather than proven knowledge and empirically supported expertise.

The UKSG coordinator for swimming describes the Welsh Schools Swimming Association as ‘one step behind the ESSA’. Similar to ESSA, the Welsh Schools Swimming Association is a financially weak organisation that is being asked by Swim Wales to alter its competition pathway in order to be in receipt of funding. Lines of communication are improving between the organisations as a result of working jointly on the UKSG policy.

‘Relationships between the bodies have improved because now the SA has to listen to us (NGB). We haven’t involved ourselves too heavy because I didn’t want to do the big brother thing. We wanted the Schools Association to come on board with us for the benefit of the competition and swimmers’ (Robert James, CEO of Swim Wales interviewed 28th May 2009).
British Swimming representatives predict that once the period of flux is resolved within the English swimming structure, Wales will closely follow.

Swimming within Scotland has not matched the rate of progress experienced within England and Wales in terms of advancing the communication systems existing between the home country’s SA and NGB. As already mentioned, the Scottish Schools Swimming Association chose to devolve all UKSG responsibility to Scottish Swimming, who reluctantly took on the event after prolonged persuasion from the YST and the CEO of ASA and British Swimming. Although lines of communication were limited prior to the UKSG, the issue of separation between the SA and NGB has been highlighted as a result of the UKSG.

‘Swim Scotland don’t see it as a priority to pursue the development of school competition pathways. They don’t have a YST or Competition Managers in Scotland, so they are thinking ‘what’s the point at a school level?’” (UKSG coordinator for the ASA, interviewed 5th June 2009).

Comments such as this reveal that Scottish Swimming’s attitude towards the UKSG policy is cautious. Comments from Sportscotland representative Alan Macmillan only reinforced this analysis, suggesting that the initiatives developed by the England based YST are often challenging to adapt appropriately to the Scottish sport system.

‘I’ve seen loads of initiatives that have been hatched down south and then implemented UK wide. But a number of organisations are still trying to do that and so what’s happening is that people in Scotland are...turning off from it’ (Alan McMillan, representative of Sportscotland, interviewed 1st May 2009).

Scottish Swimming’s low level of enthusiasm towards the six UKSG objectives is reflective of Sportscotland’s generic opinion towards English ‘hatched’ initiatives. The geographical and political distance between the NGB and the YST has meant that the ‘socially constructed norms’ generated by the Trust, that proved so influential upon the perspective of British Swimming, have proved to have had less impact on Scottish Swimming. As already mentioned,
Scottish Swimming have been perceived to be just ‘dancing the dance’ when it comes to the UKSG. In essence, the Scottish NGB only maintains its involvement in the UKSG in order to maintain a politically sound position with key sport decision makers such as the DCMS. The need to adhere to the YST’s vision of youth sport is perceived to be of lesser importance by Scottish Swimming. Lukes’ third dimension of regulatory power does not appear to be applicable here; however the presence of ‘non-decision making’ (Lukes’ second dimension of power) does resonate with Scottish Swimming’s seemingly frustrating situation. For the case of Scottish Swimming, both British Swimming and the YST have prevented Scottish Swimming from withdrawing from the Games by suffocating the option before it is even voiced (Lukes 2005).

‘If there were less political constraints involved with the DCMS, Scotland would probably withdraw. Meetings between Scottish Swimming, British Swimming and the Youth Sport Trust have prevented that from happening.’ (Representative of Scottish Swimming, interviewed 23rd April 2009).

The relationship existing between Swim Ireland and the Irish Schools Swimming Association is by far the most positive across the four home countries. This is in stark contrast to the period of unrest experienced between the organisations in 2008. As described earlier, due to confusions over funding provision both organisations (NGB and SA) refused to support the implementation of the UKSG. After mediation by the YST and the UKSG swimming coordinator, the issue was swiftly resolved. The organisations are now comfortable with their current situation and therefore are continuing to move forward with separate school and club competition pathways. All swimming organisations within Ireland (SAs & NGBs) see no reason for a change from the current operating procedures. This is a perspective that is distinctly different to the Welsh, English and Scottish NGBs. Similar to the situation observed within Scotland, the YST have little ‘power over’ the organisation of Irish swimming. The lack of YST organisational structure within the country has allowed significant room for reinterpretation of the six
UKSG objectives, to the point where the NGB and SA focus on volunteer development alone, as opposed to other areas such as the development of a modernised competition pathway. This lack of influence is not helped by the YST’s occasional use of sanctions through the withdrawal of allocated UKSG development funding.

Although the analysis of NGB and SA relationships suggests that little tangible change has resulted from involvement in the UKSG, swimming as a sport has benefited intangibly in the form of enhanced communication between NGB and SA organising bodies. The sport has an extensive history, with traditions that will only be modified through initiatives that are significantly supported, and which can generate sizable momentum. The UKSG have at least started the process of change by gathering SAs and NGBs around the discussion table.

‘At times the past seems to be leading sport…there needs to be a culture change of tradition holding onto the best pits and breaking away from tradition for traditions stake’ (Guin Batten, Head of Performance for the YST, interviewed 8th January 2009).

There have been fears expressed from within the sport that the early stages of cultural change could quickly be brought to a standstill should the UKSG and its accompanying development funding be stopped. The UKSG funding supports the role of the UKSG swimming coordinator, a role which resonates with the position ‘policy broker’ mentioned within Sabatier’s ACF. This position has proven essential for brokering elements of the UKSG policy and encouraging on-going communication between swimming’s nine governing bodies. If this role were to discontinue, representatives of the sport predict that UK-wide communication systems would breakdown.

‘Development work would probably slow down significantly without the role of UKSG coordinator. But I think the UKSG event itself would still continue even if the YST funding was stopped. Our CEO is very supportive of the event’ (UKSG coordinator for the ASA, interviewed 5th June 2009).
‘The additional funding, be it so small, if it were to be withdrawn it’s bound to have an impact because of the fact that you’re losing out on financial support. I believe that if they did any analysis on the Games, they would get more benefit from keeping the funding going that if they were to stop it and not spend it' (Robert James, CEO of Swim Wales, interviewed 28th May 2009).

The stability of the developmental work may also be in put into jeopardy should the UKSG evolve into the Conservative government’s proposed ‘UK School Olympics’ (UKSO). Although the date of the UKSG replacement is yet to be confirmed, the likelihood of the change going ahead is high given the change in UK political administration in May 2010. The UKSO will see children compete through their school across a wider range of sports. These children will represent their school (as opposed to their sport in the UKSG) through an inter-school competition structure that concludes at the UKSO. Sports currently in the UKSG fear that the replacement of the Games with the UKSO will undo a lot of the NCF orientated development work already in place and will reassert the role of the home country SAs. In particular, the UKSG coordinator for swimming expresses concern that the sports long-winded negotiation process which has gradually improved communication between NGBs and SAs will be lost. Any progressive steps made to reduce or redefine the role of the SAs will be invalidated, with the SAs moving back to the forefront through the introduction of the UKSO competition infrastructure which duplicates with NGB provision.

### 6.4 Conclusion

With reference to the UKSG objectives, data collected suggests that the devolved manner in which swimming allocates the UKSG development funding has allowed the sport to 'creatively reinterpret' some of the more complicated objectives. The development of a participation focused ‘Aquasplash Festival resource’ has proven popular across the home countries in addressing the third UKSG objective, with consistency in festival delivery being noted across the UK. The YST have, however, questioned the relevance of this resource to the more elite focused UKSG event. The YST's
original policy intention was to utilise the UKSG as a high profile driving force for inspired school sport participation. Instead, the ASA have reinterpreted the objective to achieve the same outcome of increased youth participation, but through an alternative driving force to the UKSG, through the ‘Aquasplash’ and ‘Splashdown’ festival resources.

Objective two of the UKSG has been approached differently by each of the home country NGBs given their disparity in tradition, priorities and existing competition and political structure. Whereas Wales and England have proposed (but not yet fully implemented) significant changes to their competition structure, Scotland and Ireland are reluctant to do so. A lack of YST presence within these home countries has been associated with the limited progress.

Objective five proved to be the most successfully implemented and sustainable of the six, with all four home countries developing significant ‘volunteer pathways’ in connection with the UKSG. Objectives one, four and six had less impact given that the sport does not perceive them to be relevant areas of priority. This again has caused some mismatch between the YST’s policy expectations and the actual outcome of the implemented UKSG policy.

With regard to inter-organisational relationships, while a closeness of NGB and SA interaction is not strongly evident, the UKSG have at least instigated a communication network which had not existed previously. The event is presenting the sport an opportunity, whereby deeply embedded issues such as the duplication of SA and NGB roles and responsibilities, can be exposed and challenged. The UKSG are therefore providing a catalyst for the sport to evolve, effectively building momentum behind cultural change.

‘What the UKSG are doing is actually raising that [the SA and NGB divide] as a real issue and it has encouraged them to work together to get a better result, so that has been really a good outcome’. (Pauline Harrison, Independent consultant for the UKSG, interviewed 21st January 2009).
The UKSG, through the influence of the YST, has acted as a catalyst for the sport to review the efficiency of its competition structure and faces up to difficult questions, which had previously been avoided. The YST are proving to be an increasingly influential partner in enhancing inter-organisational relationships through the use of all three of Lukes’ dimensions of power. The unconfirmed future of the UKSG and the recently proposed introduction of the Conservative’s School Games have presented the sport with a justified excuse not to make complete use of the UKSG catalyst and therefore full implementation of the UKSG objectives has not yet materialised. There are concerns that should the remit of the UKSG change towards a more ‘school sport’ focused School Games event, swimming’s current plans to alter the role of the four home country SAs will be seriously undermined.

Sabatier’s ACF (1999) has proven particularly useful in turning the above-mentioned research findings into insight. The use of the framework has supported the understanding of swimming’s involvement in the UKSG policy and identified a) geographical interest groups (whereby the secondary aspect beliefs of Scottish swimming differed to the rest of the UK due to variance in political backgrounds and stakeholder interests) and b) an alignment of elite and youth sport participation coalitions of interest (as observed in earlier descriptions of swimming’s approach to addressing the six UKSG objectives).

In addition to the ACF, Lipsky’s (1980) notion of street level bureaucracy and Bardach’s (1977) reference to ‘implementation games’ supported the analysis of this chapter’s findings. The use of these theories allowed the researcher to identify mismatches in policy expectations and policy outcomes, and account for processes that contributed to such policy disparity. For example, the unknown future of the UKSG contributed to conditions of uncertainty for swimming governing bodies, which consequently resulted in a) creative reinterpretation of the UKSG objectives and; b) ‘coping strategies’ (Lipsky 1980) whereby the ASA’s authority and control (over ESSA) was exercised more frequently than its knowledge and expertise in the formation of the sport’s NCF.
7. Case Study Two: Table Tennis

7.1 Introduction

Table tennis officials across the UK pride themselves on their sport’s inclusive nature. These officials assert that table tennis can be played by anyone, regardless of physical and mental ability, in almost any environment. The sport requires minimal equipment and is therefore a ‘school favourite’ according to English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) officials and staff members of the NGB (www.etta.org accessed 23rd July 2010).

Results from Sport England’s ‘Active People Survey’ (April 2009-April 2010) confirm that the sport is played throughout England, by players from a variety of backgrounds, however with just 203,500 participants taking part in the sport once a month, table tennis is the 17th most popular sport of the 38 explored (www.sportengland.org accessed 23rd July 2010). Of these participants, 15.82% are members of a club and 17.17% have taken part in some form of table tennis competition in the last year. These proportions are higher than that of the UK’s most popular sport, swimming; however the actual numbers of competitors and club members for the sport are still significantly lower (www.sportengland.org accessed 23rd July 2010).

Whereas other UKSG sports such as swimming, athletics and gymnastics are known for their UK success on the world stage, table tennis have not won a world championship title since 1954. Consequently, prior to its inclusion within the UKSG, table tennis across the UK received minimal funding, little government interest and almost no media coverage.

‘The UKSG are a government-liked initiative and a great showcase, shop window event for our sport…before we didn’t really appear anywhere. We were invisible’ (Richard Yule, CEO of the ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

Table 7.1 demonstrates the lack of financial support in comparison to the other seven UKSG sports. Whilst the availability of UK Sport funding for the
period of the London Olympiad was welcomed by table tennis, given that the sport received no funding during the previous Sydney and Athens Olympiads, the amount of funding allocated was met with disappointment. Table tennis was one of eight sports (which included UKSG sports of fencing and volleyball) whose elite funding was significantly reduced due to UK Sport’s £50m budget shortfall that occurred as a consequence to the country’s economic crisis.

‘If that is how they think you run an elite sport programme then I really worry. Our [Table tennis] funding has been up and down like an elevator and that is no way to build for Olympic success’ (Steen Hansen, GB table tennis performance manager, cited [www.bbc.co.uk accessed 29th January 2009]).

Table 7.1: UK Sport funding allocation to UKSG sports per Olympiad (Adapted from www.uksport.gov.uk accessed 24th July 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Sydney Olympiad</th>
<th>Athens Olympiad</th>
<th>Beijing Olympiad</th>
<th>London Olympiad</th>
</tr>
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<td>£20,659,000</td>
<td>£25,096,600</td>
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<td>£11,400,000</td>
<td>£26,513,000</td>
<td>£25,073,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
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<td>£4,100,000</td>
<td>£9,036,000</td>
<td>£10,125,400</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>£8,759,000</td>
<td>£7,970,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
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<td>£6,947,000</td>
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<td>Fencing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£3,074,000</td>
<td>£2,519,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£2,533,000</td>
<td>£1,207,848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UK Sport’s funding decision proved to be a serious blow for table tennis staff and several elite level players and their coaches. With reduced financial support, the sport was forced to readdress its strategy and internal priorities in order to ensure elite player support continued. This placed financial pressure on table tennis projects, which were designed for sub-elite players. It was hoped by the ET Toolbox that table tennis’ inclusion within the UKSG would add profile to the sport in the eyes of key funding decision makers, so that future funding decisions would provide the sport with some much needed financial stability.

‘The media coverage that comes out of the UKSG is quite often used in other table tennis events and conferences, which again boosts the sport’s profile. It also gives us great coverage with the government.'
Table tennis is a huge sport in Europe, and in England people just don’t appreciate it. We’re trying to raise the profile of the sport to compete in Europe and we have to compete with big NGBs in UK. The UKSG have provided us with a great opportunity to promote the sport…this all bodes well with regards to the UK Sport funding decisions’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG Coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

The changing salience of table tennis to government has contributed to a degree of scepticism within the sport towards government-supported initiatives.

Although the sport has in the past had a relatively low profile amongst funding providers such as Sport England, UK Sport and the DCMS, the YST have provided some opportunities for table tennis. Since becoming involved in the UKSG and providing evidence that its sporting infrastructure could cope with large scale projects, the YST recommended table tennis (in addition to three other UKSG sports badminton, judo and volleyball) be included in the ‘Premier League 4 Sport’ government-backed initiative. The initiative is designed to link twenty Premier League football clubs with the four chosen sports as part of a £3.8m community orientated partnership with the DCMS.

‘The initiative will help the Government’s ambition to offer young people five hours of sport a week, as part of its 2012 legacy plans. It will also address the drop-off in sport participation when young people leave secondary school.

Working with the sports governing bodies, the Youth Sport Trust and Sport England the Premier League clubs aim to get 25,000 young people, aged between 11 and 16, to join local sport clubs in the four Olympic sports during the three year scheme’


Whilst published feedback on the initiative, which launched in 2007, are yet to become available, it is predicted that the Premier League’s ‘expertise and pulling power will be used to boost participation rates in badminton, judo,
volleyball and table tennis - and create a network of sports clubs linked to schools’ [www.premierleague.com](http://www.premierleague.com) (accessed 26th July 2010).

Although the organisational structure of table tennis within the UK is not as extensive as that of swimming, the sport is still complicated in its working relationships and organization (see Figure 7.1).

Table tennis within the UK is governed by an overarching body known as the British Table Tennis Federation (British TTF). However, as the British TTF and ETTA Chairman explains, the governing body is a relatively young organisation, with narrowly defined responsibility. The four home country NGBs of table tennis develop and implement their own strategies with little or no involvement from the British TTF.

‘The British TTF used to be the British Olympic Table Tennis Federation. It used to, as it’s prime role, just select people to enter the Olympics. When the funding changed and there was a lot more UK level activity, such as the UKSG and the UK Coaching Framework, we decided to set up a new organisation – the British TTF Limited. And so that was made up of a board with representatives from each of the four home countries…that started 2.5 years ago, so it’s relatively new. It was obviously a response to the Olympic Programme funding by UK Sport. But we’re also involved in the UK Coaching Framework and the UK Coaching Certificate. We’re involved in the UKSG, but our involvement is limited. We don’t select the individual players; we try to put in recommendations for how they should operation in terms of selection. And each home country does it separately’ (Alex Murdoch, Chairman of ETTA and British TTF, interviewed 12th April 2009).
ETTA was founded in 1901 and is by far the largest of the four home country NGBs. Not only does ETTA have the most affiliated members, clubs (over 2,875) and leagues (over 250), but the organisation is large with approximately fifty paid staff. ETTA has a very close working relationship with ESTTA, the English SA for the sport (discussed in following paragraph) and the British
Table Association for People with Disabilities (BTTAD) [www.etta.tv](http://www.etta.tv) accessed 26th July 2010).

Decision-making processes are relatively long-winded within ETTA, given that proposals must achieve a 70% approval vote in order to be implemented. Voting takes place at the ‘National Council’ which meets three times a year and is attended by an elected representative from each of the fifty county associations.

Most of ETTA’s income comes from Exchequer grants and lottery funding administered through Sport England, however as detailed in Table 7.2, in comparison to other UKSG sports, table tennis still receives less than half the financial support directed towards the likes of swimming, badminton and athletics. The total funding from Sport England for the period between 2009-2013 is just over £9m, which is more than the funding provided by UK Sport for the London Olympiad. This suggests that table tennis is perceived as a more participation orientated sport, as opposed to one that will generate significant elite success for the UK.

Table 7.7: Sport England funding figures for 2009-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>2009-2013 Funding Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>£20,875,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>£20,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>£20,447,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>£11,388,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
<td>£10,242,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
<td>£9,301,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>£5,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>£1,041,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

Some of the funding provided by Sport England to ETTA is directed towards the English Schools Table Tennis Association (ESTTA) through grants. Unlike the tensions evident within swimming between the SAs and NGBs discussed in Chapter 6, the ET TA (NGB) and ESTTA (SA) have a far closer and amicable working relationship:

‘The English Schools’ Table Tennis Association is in ‘good standing’ with the ET TA and is a member of the National Council for School Sport
As will be discussed more fully below, the convenience of this close relationship has led English table tennis to develop a two strand competition structure. This replication, according to the YST, presents young table tennis players with too many opportunities to over-compete and under-train.

The aims and objectives of ESTTA are focused on encouraging and enhancing the table tennis played within schools. They do this through coordinating two championship tournaments (individual and team based competition) which each have five rounds of competition from local borough level, throughout to national finals. These competitions, which see school-aged participants represent their school, have been running for over 45 years. The majority of competitors that progress to the regional level of competition also compete in ETTA Championship tournaments.

Whereas the swimming SAs’ roles and responsibilities were limited to the coordination of competition, ESTTA played are far more active role in the development of table tennis. According to the ESTTA produced literature, the organization liaises with ‘School Sport Partnerships, their Partnership Development Managers, School Sport Coordinators, Primary Link Teachers and Competition Managers to promote intra and inter school competitions’ (www.estta.org.uk accessed 26th July 2010). In addition, the SA works alongside the English NGB to produce the UKSG. Although the two organizations regularly utilize one another’s volunteer and officials at table tennis events, the UKSG is the only event whereby the two organizations have joint ownership. This has caused some problems for the events management company Fast Track who led operational implementation of the actual UKSG:

‘The NGBs of the sports in general are easy to work with. Where we do have some complications is when we’re working with additional bodies, so for example, we always have some complications with athletics and a lot with swimming and table tennis. It’s because of that older generation and the ‘well, we did it like that’ scenario where the
organisation is unwilling to move away from what they have
traditionally always done. And then that puts a lot of pressure back on
the sport's UKSG coordinator. It comes down to the coordinator not
being strong enough or being able to relay what's been said at a UKSG
Operational Management Group meeting' (Mark De St Croix, UKSG
Operations Manager for Fast Track, interviewed 11th March 2003).

This comment highlights the gap between the guidelines for 'perfect
implementation' (Gunn 1978) such as the need for a single implementation
agency and the reality of sport policy implementation. Fast Track's efficiency
in implementing the UKSG policy is being hindered by their need to liaise with
additional organising agencies such as ESTTA (Gunn 1978).

As a supplement to the grant that ETTA allocates to ESTTA, the SA also
achieves financial stability through an on-going sponsorship from 'Butterfly', a
table tennis equipment brand. Butterfly has supported both ETTA and ESTTA
in their production of the 'More Schools' resource pack and the 'Butterfly Skills
Table Tennis Programme' aimed at providing schoolteachers with the
resources they need to introduce the sport to the school environment.

The separation of youth sport roles and responsibilities between the SA and
NGB is unique to England. Scotland, Wales and Ireland do not devolve the
responsibility for school sport to a separate autonomous body; these home
countries instead retain the responsibility within a single NGB, sometimes
within a 'Schools' subcommittee as observed within the Irish Table Tennis
Association (Irish TTA).

With just 29 table tennis clubs, the Irish TTA is the smallest of the four home
countries in terms of club affiliation. The NGB for Ireland was formed in 1937
and currently employs just two members of staff; the manager of the Irish TTA
and a 'Women in Sport' coordinator. All committee members are volunteers.

The Scottish Table Tennis Association (Scottish TTA) is slightly larger in
capacity than the Irish TTA. Since being established in 1935, the NGB has
formed over 50 table tennis clubs, which compete across 16 leagues. The
Scottish Table Tennis Association employs three members of staff (currently
one staff in post and two vacancies). Volunteers fill the remainder of the NGB’s positions.

The Table Tennis Association of Wales (TTA Wales) employs two full-time members of staff (National Development Officer and National Coaching Officer) and, similar to Ireland and Scotland, relies on volunteers to support the numerous other positions within the organisation. The TTA Wales was founded in 1921 and has since developed 10 constituent leagues (including junior leagues which have been established as a consequence of the UKSG development funding), which involve 32 clubs, collectively supporting over 1,000 members of the TTA Wales.

Similar to ETTA, the Irish, Welsh and Scottish table tennis NGBs receive supporting finance mainly from their equivalent home country sports councils. This funding has been supplemented through each of the NGB’s involvement in the UKSG. It was mentioned in Chapter 5 that the YST had originally intended to allocate the UKSG development funding to each sport as a whole, so that it could work on a UK-wide project as a unit, rather than as four separate home country NGBs. However, it soon became apparent to the Trust that fundamental differences between the home country NGBs, such as size, finance, staffing structures and historical traditions presented sports with significant barriers that could not be overcome just through an annual event. Several sports therefore chose to divide the UKSG development funding between each home country, so that each NGB within the sport could benefit in a way that was relevant to their strategic priorities. Whilst the YST did not fully support this approach, the organisation’s management team did recognise the need to account for inter-country differences:

‘The issue that we ought to recognise is that, what’s right for England at the moment in terms of school competition is not necessarily right for other home countries because education is a devolved function and there are other devolved administrations. If the YST went in there and tried to replicate what is right in England we would have a miss on a whole range of policy agendas’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).
Table tennis is one example of a UKSG sport that chose to divide its UKSG development funding across the four home countries. The sport is distinctive, however, in the way in which it did this. Unlike the remaining seven UKSG sports, the highly devolved nature of table tennis across the UK saw the TTA Wales take matters into their own hands and contact the YST CEO with regards to gaining the UKSG development funding direct from the organisation, as opposed to through the sport’s British TTF. As will be explored below, the outcome of the request allowed the TTA Wales (and subsequently the Irish and Scottish table tennis associations) to over-rule the British TTF, ETTA and ESTTA’s suggestion to make it compulsory for each home country table tennis association to ring-fence a proportion of the table tennis development funding to support the role of a ‘UKSG table tennis coordinator’.

‘I'm not sure how much work is required of this person to coordinate the UKSG...I'm a bit dubious, surely they (Fast Track) should know what is needed in each sport now?’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

The contact was made by the TTA Wales because the sport could not internally agree as to how to distribute the funding. ETTA and the British TTF were not only reluctant to direct funding towards each home country NGB and miss out on the opportunity to work jointly on a UK-wide project, but they were also concerned about the home countries not wanting to fund a coordinator role.

‘Without the coordinator role, the home countries would not have a link to the YST. There wouldn't be any consistency in reporting procedures and no-one would be able to monitor the progress of how the development funding has been spent’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

Despite these concerns, the preferences of Wales, which were subsequently supported by the Scottish and Irish table tennis NGBs, took priority over those of ETTA and the British TTF. Through negotiation, the YST agreed with the
sport’s organising bodies that each home country would receive an equal proportion of the UKSG development funding via the British TTF. ETTA would receive slightly more as they would part-fund the role of the UKSG coordinator. This post would oversee the development work within England and only liaise with the Scottish, the Welsh and the Irish TTAs at UKSG steering group meetings and on occasions when the YST required the UKSG coordinator to feedback information on how the UKSG development funding had been spent. The impact that this decision had on the working relationships between the home country NGBs and the way in which the six UKSG objectives were addressed are discussed below.

In reviewing the complex organisational structure of table tennis across the UK, it would be right to note that its competition structure is also relatively complex. Between the six governing bodies of table tennis within the UK, there are significant duplications in competition provision, or unaligned competition ‘pathways’ between grassroots participation through to elite success. As shown in Figure 7.3, the numerous ‘strands’ of competition present athletes with an overload of competitive opportunity. Moreover, with such variety comes a lack of consistency. Each competitor is likely to experience a very different pathway to elite level, which can inhibit a table tennis player’s rate of progress. The UKSG is a part of the YST’s NCF initiative which seeks to overcome the inefficiencies of such competition structures by improving the ‘coherence from local to regional to national level, clearing and un-cluttering pathways,’ [www.youthsporttrust.org](http://www.youthsporttrust.org) accessed 27th July 2010).
Scottish, Irish and Welsh equivalent structure

National Regional / Provincial (specific to number of regions/provinces)

Scottish Universities & Colleges Sport

British Colleges Team Competition

Separate to mainstream structure

Privately organized table tennis tournament across the UK. Within England, these tournaments are ranked from 1 star to 4 star.
7.2 Analysis of Table Tennis’ approach to the UK School Games objectives

Table tennis is a unique sport within the UKSG given the freedom that the Welsh, Scottish and Irish NGBs have regarding the use of UKSG development funding. Although the organising bodies are expected to align their project work with the YST’s six objectives for the event, without the post of UKSG coordinator in place for these three home countries, very little monitoring of progress on the objectives would take place. As already highlighted, the difference in size, strategy and tradition of the home countries led the four home countries to approach their UKSG development funding expenditure very differently. Whilst ETTA and ESTTA have chosen to support the UKSG coordinator role and engage in a ‘competition review’ of their current structures, the Wales, Ireland and Scottish table tennis committees considered that because of their smaller infrastructure and fewer player memberships in comparison to ETTA, they were not in a position to ‘review’ their structure, but should instead be building upon it. The latter home countries have therefore focused their development work around the creation of school table tennis leagues, whereas the English bodies have taken the opportunity to take a step back and explore how their competition structure could be more efficient:

‘We are using this project in a big way to help us as part of our transformation project. We want to modernise and change the sport for the better. We want more profile’ (Richard Yule, CEO of the ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

It is clear from Richard Yule’s comment that ETTA’s motive for becoming involved in the UKSG was to alter the culture of table tennis within England. They hoped that the profile of the UKSG could improve the popularity of the sport. ETTA, in conjunction with ESTTA therefore engaged in a competition review in order to reform the structure of the sport, to make it more appealing to young people and better able to accommodate an increasing membership base. The extent to which this has been achieved will be discussed below,
however it is worth highlighting that ETTA’s intentions have clear alignment with the UKSG’s second objective: ‘To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people’. The remaining home countries’ motives behind their involvement in the UKSG are less closely linked with the UKSG objectives. Wales, Ireland and Scotland table tennis associations have focused their energies on developing a system of school-focused competitions. For these organisations, their focus is on developing structures and increasing participation rates in order to meet the target-driven expectations of their respective sports councils. This raises the issue of how organisations respond when they are required to address a variety of policy objectives that are not always directly compatible. For the case of the TTA Wales, they subtly subverted the UKSG objectives in order to address targets set by the Sports Council for Wales:

‘The UKSG linked projects have helped us with the Sports Council because we’ve increased our membership because of it and they are results and numbers driven’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

This reinterpretation of the UKSG objectives resonates with theories of bottom-up policy implementation (Dunleavy 1981, 1982).

The focus of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish NGB’s on competitive school table tennis does however represent a degree of duplication with the associations’ pre-existing club-driven leagues. The same athletes are catered for within both competition strands, which somewhat detracts from the YST’s original UKSG policy intentions.

‘If it’s duplication that the governing bodies want to conserve or even introduce, then we don’t want to support it’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).
This statement raises an interesting point with regards to where the power lies with regards to the use of UKSG funding. Whilst the table tennis NGBs welcome additional resource provided by the YST, there is a hint of expectancy that they will receive such funding, particularly amongst the Table Tennis Association of Wales, which feels it is entitled to a fair share of the UKSG development funding.

‘Unfortunately, what that [the funding split] allows a little bit is for the home countries to think that they can decide what they can do with that money... They see it as them having a right to the money, and then you’ve got NGBs dictating to the YST about how the money should be split up’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

To date, the YST have avoided any explicit use of power through the threat of sanction (e.g. withdrawal of funding) in order to re-establish the hierarchical power relationship between themselves and the NGBs of table tennis. It is worth highlighting that although the YST did withhold UKSG funding from the sport in its first year of involvement in the UKSG, this was due to a missed application deadline, as opposed to a disagreement regarding objectives. No withdrawal or threat of withdrawal of funds has occurred since, suggesting that the YST do not feel that their organisation is in a position to exert power successfully over the table tennis NGBs, despite their clear statements that they are disappointed by the way in which the sport has distributed the UKSG funding:

‘We have always argued that the money should go in one block for the six themes of the games’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).

The TTA Wales’ threat to withdraw from the UKSG should the NGB not receive separate funding to the rest of the table tennis NGBs presented the YST with a dilemma with regards to how forcefully the organisation could exercise ‘power-over’ the UKSG sports. The YST is reliant upon the TTA Wales’ involvement in the UKSG in order that the Trust can achieve its
objectives through the event, therefore the YST had to change tactics and subtly utilise less observable forms of power, such as that of Lukes’ third form of regulatory power. In doing so, the YST, in alliance with ETTA and ESTTA, sought to gain the support of the more amenable Irish and Scottish table tennis associations. The YST and ETTA hoped that in doing so, the TTA Wales would conform to the preferences of the other table tennis NGBs.

‘This form of regulatory power is also the most subtle insofar as it assumes a capacity on the part of the regulators to achieve their goals through the manipulation of the attitudes and values or, in Lukes’ own words by ‘influencing, shaping or determining [a person’s] ... very wants’ (Lukes, 2005:27)…This shaping of preferences may be the outcome of the efforts of a range of socializing agents including teacher training institutions, the media, sports organizations and politicians…this dimension of power can also be ‘a function of collective forces and social arrangements [such as] ... the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups and practices of institutions’ (Lukes, 2005:64)’ (Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan 2010:100).

The UKSG coordinator for table tennis and Chair of ESTTA explain that this, more subtle, approach is likely to be more successful than more forceful and threatening efforts, which could be perceived by the table tennis NGBs as a bullying by the YST.

‘The UKSG caused some ripples at first. There was some resentment by the Home Countries about YST involvement and why they, an English based body, should dictate policy to other parts of the UK’ (John Arnold, President of the English Schools Table Tennis Association, interviewed 11th March 2009).

The UKSG Coordinator for table tennis also suggests that the policy preferences of the Scottish and Irish TTAs were vulnerable to external influence (or as terms ‘secondary aspects’) given that their support towards the current formula for allocation of funding was very much influenced by the TTA Wales, as opposed to a direct reflection of their own agenda.
'It was only really Wales that wanted to split the UKSG development funding, and only one influential person in the organisation that really pushed for it. I think Scotland and Ireland would’ve just gone with the flow' (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

It was hoped by the YST, ETTA and British TTF that, by subtly shaping the secondary aspect belief systems of agents such as the Scottish and Irish table tennis NGBs, the TTA Wales would also gradually shift towards the same belief system. The YST aspire towards a UKSG that encourages UK-wide communication through whole-sport developmental projects that benefit significantly through the use of economies of scale. Whilst the YST are very aware of the sensitivities associated with the issues of devolution made evident through the case of table tennis, it is a long term goal for the Trust to achieve UK-wide competition pathways, so that talented young people can benefit through a consistent approach to elite level competition. However, it is worth emphasising the relative status of this goal, given that some sports fail to perceive the UKSG as an event with underlying importance. Similar to the perspective of several UKSG sports, table tennis do view the event as ‘icing on the cake’ rather than a priority policy (Tony Phillips, Senior official, Irish TTA, interviewed 12th May 2009). This is particularly the case for table tennis in consideration of the sport’s decision to split the UKSG development funding per home country NGB. Each NGB now receives just £2,000 to work on UKSG related projects and therefore the money is seen as a complementary resource, rather than a substantial fund which can make a real difference to the sport’s infrastructure.

I would say the same splitting of funding is likely to continue in the future, but those involved are really going to have to look at the value of the project and whether they feel that getting just £2,000 each is really going to benefit their programme. Sometimes the admin eats into this money before it can be spent. At what stage do you draw the line and leave it to be discussed by the powers that be?’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).
Here, ETTA employees question the usefulness of the reduced funds, which raises the question whether an opportunity cost has arisen and greater impacts related to the UKSG objectives, could have been achieved through a UK-wide approach. The actual outcomes achieved through the split expenditure will now be analysed for each of the six UKSG objectives.

- **Objective 1). On going planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people**

Echoing the point made by swimming representatives, table tennis NGBs explain that their organisations are unable to fully address this objective to the extent to which they would have liked to due to a lack of financial and human resources. The sheer size of the sport’s competition calendar already places financial strain on the NGBs’ budgets and asks a lot of highly committed volunteers. It is therefore an unrealistic expectation of the YST for table tennis to stretch these resources further in order to accommodate the unique presentation elements of the UKSG.

“There are some really good things that go on at the Games, but in terms of the facilities, it would be very difficult to put into place due to the financial side of the sport. There’s not a huge amount we could bring over’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

The inability and/or reluctance to change was illustrated by the comment from Tony Phillips (Senior official, Irish TTA) who explains that the Irish TTA is unlikely to make any changes to its current competition format as it ‘would not then fit in with the organisation’s current arrangement’ (interviewed 12th May 2009).
- **Objective 2). To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people**

At time of interview (11th June 2009), the ETTA competition review, which is funded by the UKSG development funding and intends to address this UKSG objective specifically, was yet to be completed. Employees of the NGB have explained that the review intends to:

> *make sure there are at least seven dates in the competition calendar that are free of junior competitions. We’re trying to consolidate our junior competition, or at least get all of the ‘one star’ competitions happening on a few specific dates only* (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

Although the proposed changes to the ETTA competition structure are made with good intention, the structure still appears cluttered and complicated (see Figure 7.4). Comments from table tennis senior officials suggest that there has been an effort to rationalise the ETTA & ESTTA competition calendar, rather than limit the number of competitions within it. Table tennis players are still presented with numerous competitions that duplicate one another (for example, the ESTTA Schools Invitation International and the UKSG cater for the same set of athletes), however they are positioned at different times in the table tennis season. The review also proposes the introduction of a regional band of competition in order to reduce the travel costs of competitors, however this further adds to the array of competitive opportunities presented to young table tennis players. In essence only a few competitions have been merged through the YST funded competition review, with school and NGB competition strands still taking place alongside one another.

> ‘Some of the suggestions that have come out of the competition review have been perceived as being quite controversial within the table tennis community, so they are taking a long time to get approval from

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7 One Star competitions provide competitive opportunities for competitors with approximately 750 ranking points of less. These competitions therefore cater for players of ‘beginner’ level. Competitions are ranked between one-four stars.
the National Committee. So far we’ve merged the national trials for the under 13 and under 14 year olds which addresses some duplication, so that’s a major shift. So that one was quite controversial’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

‘The ESTTA school competitions are safe within the competition review; we just have to bid for a competition date with the ‘calendar working party’ (John Arnold, President of the English Schools Table Tennis Association, interviewed 11th March 2009).
As observed within Figure 7.4 the ETTA competition review proposes that the ESTTA Schools Invitation International (referred to on the diagram as ‘ESTTA Home International’) remains in place in addition to the UKSG. It is positioned slightly below the UKSG, however this is based upon the quality of competition presentation as opposed to the quality of the competitors. Both competitions cater for the same athletes from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
'When the UKSG came along, questions were asked about how this would fit in alongside the well established Home Countries Schools' Invitation International. One area of difference was that the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey were invited to the 'Schools' event but not to the UKSG' (John Arnold, President of the English Schools Table Tennis Association, interviewed 11th March 2009).

A reluctance to eliminate a competitive opportunity for the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey-based table tennis players, combined with the sport's scepticism as to the survival of the UKSG event beyond 2010 has prevented ETTA from addressing the issue of duplication within their competition calendar. In effect, the UKSG has added to the complex English competition structure, rather than contributed to its rationalisation.

‘With the UKSG being such a highly funded event, which could stop in 2011, you’re not suddenly going to change everything and stick all your eggs in one basket’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

This comment is indicative of the perception of policy among some delivery agents, insofar as it is considered dependent on government whim and lacks medium to long-term stability. The frequently changing priorities of Government (as experienced in the change in political administration in May 2012) present the YST with the dilemma of not being able to forward plan. This in turn hinders the decision-making processes of NGBs such as ETTA. As a consequence to this, UKSG implementation has been altered by ETTA so that UKSG development funding can be used in a way that is useful for the NGB, while still remain loosely linked to the original UKSG objectives. However, the reluctance of ETTA to eliminate long-standing competitions has meant that the actual impact of the UKSG has been to reduce the likelihood of a clearer competition pathway that reduces duplication of competitive opportunity for young talented athletes.
A more positive outcome of the UKSG-funded competition review has been its enhancing of communication between various subcommittees within ETTA and ESTTA.

‘The review process has certainly been useful in getting our departments talking. And it’s brought us closer to ESTTA. It’s got all the relevant people around the table to discuss how best to progress the sport’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

However, despite this benefit, the TTA Wales remain critical of ETTA’s decision to review its structure of competition:

‘It’s only England that’s got this big office to do things. And it’s amazing that they don’t want to develop, they only want to review!’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

Senior officials of the TTA Wales explained that the reviews associated advantage of enhanced working relationships is not relevant to the Welsh NGB given its small infrastructure. Communication systems are already well established within the governing body and there is instead a much greater need to develop the sport within Wales, rather than review it. Scottish and Irish TTA senior officials agreed with the TTA Wales and highlighted that their competition structures are so small in size, there was very little to review. In addition, they questioned ETTA’s capacity to act upon the suggested outcomes of the English competition review and therefore doubted that, with their infrastructure of voluntary human resource they would be able to cope. This supports the Welsh; Scottish and Irish TTAs’ decision to split the UKSG development funding across the four home countries and provides an example of the ‘street level’ capacity to undermine objectives set through top-down implementation.

In response to the doubts of the Welsh, Scottish and Irish TTAs, ETTA highlighted the unsustainable way in which the other home countries allocated their share of the UKSG development funding. As will be explained in relation to the third UKSG objective, Welsh, Scottish and Irish TTAs have made few
changes to their mainstream competition network, but instead have added to the ‘school table tennis’ competition strand. In doing so, the organisations have directed UKSG development funding towards meeting the cost of a coordinator role (or similar) within each of the home countries. ETTA emphasise that the support for this paid role is not sustainable if the UKSG event and its accompanying funding were to be discontinued.

- **Objective 3). Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve P.E. and school sport**

Once again, due to the way in which the British TTF split the UKSG funding, each home country has approached this objective differently. Within England, the UKSG event itself and the ETTA competition review has created an additional opportunity for ETTA and ESTTA to communicate and share ideas. What the review was not able to resolve was the ongoing duplication of competitive opportunities between the two providers of competition, despite the issue being raised by members of the ‘National Competition Panel’.

‘The National Competition Panel highlighted the duplication between the ETTA and ESTTA, they said that we do have two separate pathways. However, from our viewpoint, we don’t see it like that. The schools are one-off competitions, and the higher level you go, the more likely the child is in a club, competing in club competitions on a much more regular basis. Probably monthly competitions in the national junior league and the national cadet league. And these are on going throughout the year, whereas the schools events are one-off. And also, I think that there’s a strong argument to say that schools competitions have a value in their own right for the schools themselves...it promotes the sport for them and this is why the ESTTA competitions have remained in our sport’s competition framework’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).
The UKSG coordinator for table tennis refers here to ESTTA competitions as ‘one-off’ events, however, as shown in Figure 7.4, the ESTTA competition strand offers five rounds of qualifying competitions in both team and individual events and are therefore not ‘one-off’. Whilst the outcome of the YST funded competition review maintains a high profile for school table tennis competitions, the positioning of these events is not limited to grassroots level activity and instead is aligned more closely with the elite end of the sport’s NCF. This outcome maintains the duplication of competitive opportunity that the YST are aspiring to eliminate.

Within Wales, the evidence of duplicated competitive opportunity is extended. The TTA Wales has pooled its share of the UKSG development funding together with additional funds generated through sponsorship to create six new school table tennis leagues across the country. Whilst it is important to recognise that these leagues have proven successful in introducing and raising the profile of the sport to school-aged athletes, the leagues do run alongside club-based leagues, which already provide competitive opportunity for many school-aged players. Both leagues allow players of any standard to compete, creating the risk for keen young players of over-competition and under-training.

Similar to Wales, the Irish TTA have allocated its UKSG development funding towards the enhancement of school sport opportunities. The organisation is vague with regards to how exactly this is being carried out, however they are clear that the UKSG funding has been used to employ two part-time regional school officers and produce the promotional literature which is sent out to secondary and primary schools across Ireland. It is estimated that this expenditure has led to a 50% increase of primary school interest and 10% increase of secondary school interest in the sport. However, officials of the Irish TTA made it clear that the UKSG event itself had not impacted significantly on the organisation’s approach to school-based table tennis. The event and its accompanying funding had not prompted school sport development, but in fact had supported existing intentions to add an additional layer of regional primary school competitions to the NGB’s competition
structure. This regional layer of school-based competition would be in addition to existing club-based competitions already catering for an ‘under 12’ age group.

‘The UKSG is a little bit of icing on the cake, rather than actually part of any strategy that we have…it isn’t strictly affecting the way we do our business as far as schools are concerned’ (Tony Phillips, Senior official, Irish TTA, interviewed 12th May 2009).

The Scottish Table Tennis Association made use of the UKSG development funding to establish a Junior League within Scotland. According to the Scottish Table Tennis Association’s statistics, over 100 players competed within the league over three weekends, with several of the young people progression to School Championship qualifiers. The leagues have been positioned as ‘stepping stones’ to school table tennis competitions, as opposed to school competitions feeding into mainstream club and league competitions. Regardless of the direction of progression, the UKSG development funding had been utilised to raise the profile of school table tennis competitions, whilst extending the competitive provision for young people, without causing excessive duplication of opportunities. However, should the popularity of the sport continue to rise as a consequence to the introduction of the Junior League, it is possible that the standard of play within the league could match that of the School Championship qualifiers, leading to a duplication of competition provision.

A point of consistency that can be found within each of the home country NGBs’ approach to this third objective is their lack of focus towards school PE promotion and improvement. Although PE is mentioned within the UKSG objective, the sport, similar to swimming, has not allocated any of the UKSG development funding to this area. It is interesting to also note that the YST has not highlighted this as an issue to the table tennis NGBs. However it may prove difficult for the Trust to monitor the home countries’ progress towards this objective given that the role of UKSG coordinator is only able to supervise the development work undertaken within England. This difficulty signifies a
lack of top-down capacity to implement the UKSG policy in the way that the YST had originally intended.

The capacity of the YST to monitor the expenditure of the UKSG development funding is further hindered by the lack of strict procedures. The YST provide the UKSG coordinators of each sport with reporting guidelines, which are based upon several loosely defined ‘milestones’. These milestones provide the basis on which UKSG coordinators report progress of UKSG development work to the YST. Whilst this flexibility allows sports’ NGBs to interpret the UKSG objectives in a way that proves relevant to their own priorities, it has enabled some NGBs to diverge from the YST’s ‘single competition pathway’ objective and instead contribute to the development of a competition structure which houses several competition pathways. ETTA’s and the TTA Wales’ use of the UKSG development funding provides just two examples of this divergence.

The almost laissez-faire approach of the YST directly contrasts with the ‘no compromise’ stance adopted by UK Sport when allocating elite level funding. With minimal use of monitoring, an absence of performance indicators and the flexibility in the wording of the UKSG objectives, the YST are unable to hold sports accountable for a lack of developmental progress. Once again, this highlights a lack of top-down control over the implementation of the UKSG policy. However, with this approach comes adaptability, which has ensured that the sensitivities of home country relationships are accommodated by the UKSG policy, effectively maintaining the involvement of all the UKSG sports’ home country NGBs.

- **Objective 4). Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village**

The competition schedule for the table tennis competition at the UKSG is intense and consequently allows little time for the players to experience the
UKSG ‘Cultural and Education Programme’ or the other sporting events held during the Games.

‘The sports play so much during the UKSG, so they don’t get chance to view the other sport. The timetable is absolutely horrendous…they might as well have been in the same sports hall all on their own’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

Table tennis is yet to come to an agreement regarding the alteration of the UKSG competition format, so that athletes can fully benefit from the multi-sport educational elements of the event. In addition, the UKSG coordinator explains that he would like to implement ‘100% ME’ anti-doping workshops across table tennis prior to the actual UKSG event, however because of his workload (which incorporates roles and responsibilities that move beyond the UKSG coordinator post) he has not been able to do so. The UKSG coordinator for table tennis believes that if his role were to be extended across all four home countries, there would be enough funding available from the UKSG development budget to support his role full time. This would mean that his time could be devoted to addressing the UKSG objectives and tutoring 100% ME workshops, as opposed to coordinating the ETTA’s involvement in additional youth related initiatives such as ‘Step into Sport’ and ‘PESSYP’.

- Objective 5). Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers

Similar to other technical sports within the UKSG such as fencing, gymnastics and judo, there is a perception that referees of high quality must have numerous years of experience before being able to successfully officiate at major competitions. This perspective has presented barriers to young people hoping to contribute to these sports through officiating roles, effectively

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8 The UKSG Cultural and Education Programme presents competitors at the UKSG with a range of supplementary activities focused on the multi-sport element of the Games. The programme includes activities such as ‘100% ME’ workshops, which educates young athletes on the testing procedures of anti-doping agencies and ‘an evening with’, which allows the UKSG competitors to ask previous Olympians and Paralympians about their multi-sport event experiences.
leaving an aging population of referees and umpires to support competitive opportunities.

Table tennis has made use of the UKSG to overcome this barrier and encourage young officials to gain experience through a high profile, multi-sport event. Particularly within England, the sport to date has trained approximately 20 young people to referee with confidence. The UKSG coordinator for the sport explains that this work focused on the development of young officials is not specific to the UKSG, but is certainly supported through the event:

‘We’re doing quite a lot of work underpinning that with the young umpire and young official awards. But I wouldn’t say it’s come specifically out of the UKSG. But the Games are one event that we try to get them into. The UKSG provides an opportunity for our young people to officiate in a Table Tennis event and prove their worth within the referee community. Hopefully we’ll have 50% of the UKSG officials under the age of 25 by 2011. It’s been great to have the young people in the UKSG because I’ve been able to go back to our National Umpire’s Committee and say how successful it was’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

In this respect, the UKSG is demonstrating to existing umpires that young people are capable of performing referring duties well under pressure. The UKSG are therefore contributing to an attitudinal change across the sport.

In addition to the introduction of young officials, ETTA also makes use of five non-playing team captains to act as assistant team-managers to the lead team manager of the English teams. Whereas the Irish, Welsh and Scottish table tennis teams at the UKSG each have their own adult team manager, there is only one lead team manager for the five English regional table tennis teams that enter the UKSG. The voluntary role of ‘non-playing team captain’ therefore provides a welcome support network for the lead team manager. The team captaincy roles also present current players, who are just below the standard of UKSG play, with the opportunity to stay involved within the sport.
The training these team captains receive will support them should they wish to pursue a full team manager role in the future.

- **Objective 6). Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems**

This last UKSG objective has not been identified as an area of priority by the table tennis NGBs. The NGBs have engaged in little development work that moves beyond the UKSG child protection requirements of the Child Protection in Sport Unit. However the discussion of these requirements within the sport has highlighted how table tennis’ own child protection and safeguarding procedures could be improved. The sport is yet to take action on these improvements due to the current competition culture of table tennis. The UKSG coordinator reported that some UKSG table tennis officials (namely the more experienced volunteers) have been negative towards the strict welfare procedures and the requirement to undergo CRB checks. It is anticipated that over time, the officials will accept these procedures as everyday practice, given that every UKSG must undergo the same checks.

- **Headline achievements and main challenges**

Headline achievements that have occurred as outcomes of table tennis’ involvement in the UKSG are centred mainly on the development of school-based competition. The Welsh, Irish and Scottish table tennis associations have worked hard to raise the profile of school table tennis competition within their respective home countries. In contrast, ETTA chose to review the structure of English table tennis competition and in doing so merged National Championship competitions in order to make available competition-free training days for regional level players.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the UKSG policy and the addressing of the UKSG objectives have been challenging at times for the sport. Critical analysis of ETTA’s competition review also gave rise to a concern regarding the likelihood of the NGB taking action on the review’s proposed changes.
ETTA’s ‘National Council’ presents the sport with a significant barrier to change. The decision-making power possessed by the National Council has prevented the sport from making quick and timely choices, which has prevented policies such as the UKSG adding much needed momentum to proposals for change.

‘Table tennis within England is conservative when it comes to embracing change’ (Senior Official within YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

The YST have expressed concern with regards to ETTA’s decision making process, explaining that the longer a policy takes to implement, the more likely it is that sporting funding streams and priorities will have changed. The YST’s concern resonates with Kingdon’s ‘multiple streams’ analysis of the policy process whereby policy formation is an outcome of the random combination of ‘problem’, ‘political’ and ‘policy’ streams (1984). The multiple streams approach would suggest that the longer a policy takes to get started, the greater chance there is that the beneficial conjunction of streams will dissolve. Alternative solutions to a specific issue might be found or the problem will be replaced by new matters of concern on the political agenda.

Although table tennis’ decision to split the UKSG development funding across the four home countries has been criticised for not encouraging a UK-wide competition pathway, there have been some notable positive outcomes of the devolved approach. For example, the NGBs have been able to utilise the small amount of UKSG funding they receive to lever additional funding from alternative sources:

‘If you’ve got £5k, it’s not a huge amount in its own right, but if you’re then able to go to another sports body and find more funding that would want to develop similar areas in the local community’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ET TA, interviewed 13th January 2009).
The TTA Wales provide a successful example of such match-funding schemes, whereby the organisation teamed up with the TTK Greenhouse\(^9\) charity to establish six school table tennis leagues across Wales.

Further challenges that were experienced by the table tennis NGBs when addressing the six UKSG objectives relate to the size of the sport within the UK. Welsh, Scottish and Irish table tennis senior officials in particular emphasised how their small volunteer infrastructure was over-stretched by the YST’s ambitious UKSG objectives. The expected development work required to address the objectives was considered somewhat extensive for a table tennis volunteer to cope with. The ‘over-stretching’ of the table tennis human resource was confirmed by ETTA, which employs over 50 members of staff and therefore did not have to rely as heavily upon volunteer commitment as the Welsh, Irish and Scottish table tennis associations. The strain placed on table tennis staff or volunteers inhibited the sport’s progress with regards to the development of disability table tennis competition, which caused members of the EFDS to question the value of including table tennis as a UKSG disability sport. A lack of human resource to drive the development of disability table tennis led advocates of disability sport to criticise the sport’s involvement in the UKSG’s disability programme as a tokenistic, inappropriate and quite blatant attempt to remain ‘on-side’ with the YST.

A further issue associated with the infrastructure of the sport is an insufficient club structure across England, which undermines progress on UKSG objectives.

‘Our club structures are not as good as they need to be to take on the school children who have become interested in the sport’ (Richard Yule. CEO of ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

A poor network of communication between the YST and Sport England was blamed for the inadequacy of the English table tennis club structure. The CEO

\(^9\) TTK Greenhouse is a charity which seeks to empower young people through performing arts and sport. In particular, the charity focuses on improving the skills, behaviour and attitude of young people from deprived backgrounds. TTK Greenhouse forms community clubs, which helps young people overcome adversity and achieve their goals. [www.greenhousecharity.org](http://www.greenhousecharity.org) (accessed 29th July 2010).
of ETTA explained that without greater support from Sport England, the ETTA are unable to build upon its club capacity. This led to few table tennis clubs within England having the time, or human resource to liaise with the YST’s network of CMs, who are expected to support the implementation of the table tennis NCF. In essence, the YST were working hard with several sports to build upon the two extreme ends of their competition pathways (for example, through the employment of CMs at the grassroots level of the pathway and through the provision of the UKSG at the elite level), but Sport England were providing minimal assistance in developing a club-base that can support the middle tier of each sport’s competition pathway (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Areas of responsibility when developing the NCF / competition pathway for each sport, as described by employees of the ETTA
Finally, it is worth acknowledging the impact that the unconfirmed future of the UKSG had on the developmental projects. Without the comfort of knowing that the UKSG had a secure long term plan, the table tennis associations across the UK were largely reluctant to fully embrace the Games, or commit to its developmental aims:

‘At the moment, the UKSG are really perceived as an add-on event. It’s a bonus event because we don’t know how long it’s going to last. We were a bit dubious’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

However, each home country NGB agreed that the establishment of a UKSG steering group had been of significant benefit for the development of UK-wide table tennis. The group meetings have gradually improved communication and relationships between the table tennis associations, which in turn
supported their UK-wide communication on other initiatives such as the UK Coaching Framework led by Sports Coach UK.

7.3 Analysis of the UK Schools Games’ impact on organisational relationships

As emphasised in Chapter 6 in relation to swimming, the UKSG had a lasting impact on the quality of working relationships across the home country NGBs. The same can be said about table tennis’ involvement in the UKSG. However, relationships have tended to reflect an ‘England’ versus ‘the rest of the UK’ culture in which organisations, such as the TTA Wales, frequently referred to the ‘England Big Brother Syndrome’. Analysis highlights how table tennis NGBs within the UK have been affected by devolved traditions and how this has impacted upon the sport’s funding decisions and capacity to address the six UKSG objectives.

Analysis then explores the relationship existing between ETTA and ESTTA within England. The impact that the UKSG had on the quality of communication between these organisations is detailed, along with the NGB and SA’s capacity to stimulate change through the event. ETTA and ESTTA have been criticised by members of the YST for failing to take advantage of the opportunity to address the level of competition duplication between the two bodies. It is worth emphasising that it is only within England that there is a table tennis schools association separate from the NGB. All other home countries have incorporated a ‘School Table Tennis’ subcommittee within their respective NGBs and therefore do not experience the same extent of competition duplication. Consequently, only ETTA and ESTTA are discussed in relation to this issues.

The final section focuses more specifically on the relationships between the YST and the table tennis NGBs. The way in which the YST has handled table tennis’ issues related to devolution is explored, as is the corresponding impact that this has had on the English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish table tennis association’s perspective on the YST and the value of the UKSG. The
theories of power, policy formation and policy implementation are deployed to inform the analysis.

- **Home country relationships: the impact of devolution on the UKSG**

As explained earlier, the decision was made by the YST to allocate the UKSG development funding between the table tennis home country NGB, as opposed to UK-wide projects. The decision reflected the preferences of the Welsh, Scottish and Irish TTAs, which wanted to direct financial resource to projects that could enhance school competition provision. ETTA, ESTTA and the British TTF on the other hand made clear their opposition, which was to allocate the UKSG funding to a whole sport competition review.

It has been implied by the representatives from the TTA Wales and the Irish TTA that English-derived initiatives often dominate the working practices of the remaining three UK home countries. The CEO of ETTA has also picked up on these perceptions and has explained that this has led to feelings of resentment and a quite defensive outlook by the Welsh, Scottish and Irish table tennis *senior officials*.

> ‘The UKSG has not been the easiest project for all concerned, because we’ve (all four home country NGBs) got different agendas… Sometimes it is made quite clear to us that what is right for England isn’t necessarily appropriate for the other home countries’ (Richard Yule, CEO of ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

The grudging attitude towards English-designed initiatives is not limited to the sport of table tennis. Similar circumstances where English NGBs are seen to be playing the role of ‘Big Brother’, were mentioned by representatives of Scottish Swimming and Sportscotland (see chapters 5 and 6).

The TTA Wales took issue with ETTA’s insistent, but ultimately unsuccessful, push towards funding a UK-wide competition review with the UKSG development monies. There are two competing assumptions for why this was
the case. Firstly, the relationship of ETTA with the other home country table tennis NGBs resonates with Solesbury’s (2001) theory that policy implementation can result in power battles that privilege authority over logic and expertise. In this case, the TTA Wales are presumed to be using the UKSG to challenge the traditional dominance of England, encouraging Scotland and Ireland to adhere to these views, rather than logically assessing whether a competition review would be a fruitful outcome for Scottish, Welsh and Irish table tennis. The second suggested reason behind the TTA Wales’ stance is linked to the organisation’s lack of human resource to conduct a useful review and to efficiently implement any suggested changes.

The latter of these reasons appears quite logical and justifiable as it reflects a capacity problem for the organisation. In contrast, the former reason could be perceived as unfounded as it highlights ideological differences between the home countries, whereby the TTA Wales struggles with the ongoing ‘Big Brother’ dominance of ETTA. In reality, the information collected would suggest that the actual reasoning behind the TTA Wales’ preference for devolved funding (which was later supported by the apparently easily influenced Scottish and Irish associations) reflects both of the suggested reasons. There is a genuine lack of infrastructure across the Scottish, Irish and Welsh table tennis communities, but also an embedded ‘us and them’ attitude towards English-driven initiatives. This antagonistic attitude has been amplified through the design of the UKSG policy, which is not only led by the YST, an England based organisation, but also supports the UKSG table tennis steering group agenda which is controlled by England-based representatives.

“Our steering group meetings are generally led by England, with the other home countries being asked, “what do you think of this?”” (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

Given the significant difference in organisational capacity between ETTA and the remaining three home country NGBs, it is not surprising that English table tennis employees are dominant within UK-wide decision-making processes.
ETTA have a large network of employees who, unlike the other volunteer-reliant home country NGBs, are paid to develop the sport. However, senior officials of the TTA Wales imply that ETTA, and the YST for that matter, are incorrect when it is assumed that:

‘The review of England’s competition structure will have some significant benefits for Wales, Scotland and Ireland’ (Richard Yule, CEO of ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

In response, ETTA explain that they are aware of, and understand the defensiveness of smaller table tennis associations such as the TTA Wales, but agree that the decision to divide the UKSG development funding across the home countries has led to a possible opportunity cost for the sport at UK level.

‘We have bent over backwards to try and make sure that the whole UKSG doesn’t come across as though it’s just England…we have to split the development funding which came from the England Exchequer because the home countries have argued for the cash. They see England as Big Brother, the organisation with the money, with the resource, so what do we need more for?’ (Richard Yule, CEO of ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

The evidence regarding ETTA’s perception that the split of UKSG development funding across the home countries incurred opportunity costs is reviewed in Table 7.3.

Table 7.8: The costs and benefits of a devolved approach to UKSG table tennis funding, as highlighted by UK-wide table tennis senior officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits associated with allocating funding per home country</th>
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<tr>
<td>In each receiving a share of the UKSG funding, home country table tennis NGBs have the freedom to interpret the UKSG objectives in a way that is relevant to the organisation’s needs and strategy. Consequently, the NGBs have more ownership over the UKSG objectives and a vested interest to maintain involvement in the policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete control over a share of the UKSG funding, be it small in size, can allow NGBs to lever</td>
</tr>
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further funding from alternative resources through ‘match-funding’ charities.

The variation in UKSG developmental projects coordinated across the UK allows home country NGBs to share best practice at home country steering group meetings.

In terms of management of the UKSG, the split allocation of UKSG development funding has benefits for the YST. It is in the interests of the YST to maintain the involvement of all NGBs within the UKSG in order to maintain the profile of the UKSG, therefore granting the more volatile of the table tennis NGBs (for example, the TTA Wales) with their request of equal share funding means that a balance of power is restored between the YST and the NGBs. The TTA Wales’ use of power through sanction (the threat of abandoning the UKSG policy) is eliminated through a negotiation process.

### Disadvantages associated with allocating funding per home country

In dividing the UKSG development funding, each home country receives only a small amount of financial support to direct to UKSG-related projects. Subsequently, small scale and not necessarily sustainable projects have been implemented. Additionally, the cost of administration linked to the handling of the financial resource combined with the missed opportunity to exploit economies of scale across the wider area of the UK, soon leads to a depletion of the total funding available.

*The allocation of resource per home country has prevented the development of the UK-wide competition pathway intended by the YST. Consequently, athletes competing in the same sport, but in different countries or regions experience different competitive opportunities as they develop. The YST believe that inconsistency in athletic experience can hinder the rate of sporting progress for young people.*

Table tennis as a sport was slow to agree on how they were to allocate and spend the UKSG development funding. As a result, in their first year of UKSG involvement, the sport missed their funding application deadline to the YST. The sport missed £50,000 of development funding because of the inter-country differences which led to the now devolved allocation of funding:

> *it took us quite some time to work things through with our Celtic colleagues and agree a way forward* (Richard Yule, CEO of ETTA, interviewed 20th April 2009).

The decision of the home countries to not support the role of UKSG coordinator with their share of the UKSG development has been raised as a concern by ETTA and the YST.

*The level of influence the UKSG coordinator posts are allowed to have is a significant barrier. The amount of investment that has been put in to the sports warrants a good level of influence and I’m not sure we get it to the level that we need across all the sports and that’s down to the sport, but also down to the individual* (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

For ETTA, it is highlighted that the UKSG coordinator is directly involved in the progression of the UKSG funded competition review, which ensures that the review remains a priority for the sport, and in line with the sport’s own strategy. For those home countries that do not support or liaise with the role, with no paid member of staff available to drive forward the UKSG project work, there is a possibility that its momentum can evaporate, or divert from the NGB’s original project intentions. This diversion from original intentions has happened in quite an incremental manner for Welsh and Irish TTAs. For example, the Irish TTA’s funding application to the YST described ways in which the NGB would improve opportunities for disabled table tennis players, however limited progress has been
reported for the area.

‘The structure for sport in Northern Ireland has yet to encourage participation by disabled players in Table Tennis. We intend to establish contacts. Other commitments have delayed making contacts, but this should happen soon’ (quotation from the Irish TTA’s quarterly UKSG report to the YST).

The problems highlighted here by the Irish TTA suggest that the feasibility of the NGB’s original policy intention is limited. Consequently, the association has diverted funds to alternative areas, which are more viable. Lipsky (1980) refers to such action as ‘coping strategies’ as part of street-level bureaucracy, whereby poor conditions of policy implementation (such as insufficient time, paid staff and funding) have led to a slight manipulation of the original policy objectives.

Although the arguments against the YST’s decision to divide the UKSG development funding across the home countries is persuasive, there are also several counter arguments. Not only does the current approach allow each NGB to utilise the funding in a way that is relevant to their organisation, but also in allowing the sport to do this and in acknowledging the different agendas of each home country, the YST have maintained a relationship with the table tennis NGBs. It could be argued that the split of funding has undermined the conditions for successful implementation of the UKSG policy, such as adequate financial and human resource and authority. However, in dividing the funds table tennis NGBs have strengthened other conditions for effective policy implementation such as an increased agreement regarding each NGB’s involvement in the UKSG event (Gunn 1978).

What the division of funding has not encouraged is any rectification of the long-standing tension between the home countries within table tennis. There is an obvious lack of communication between the NGBs, which has improved only very slightly through all four home countries’ attendance at UKSG steering group meetings.

The UKSG policy has highlighted to the Welsh, Irish and Scottish table tennis associations that their organisations are in a similar phase of development, which differs significantly to that of ETTA. In placing the organisations at different ends of a development continuum, it could be suggested that there are two groups emerging in connection with the UKSG policy process associated with geography. As identified in swimming, the differences and similarities in table tennis’ home country NGB size, wealth and readiness for change, has formed what Sabatier refers to as two coalitions of interest, each
competing for UKSG resource and policy dominance (1998). There is the England based coalition consisting of ETTA, ESTTA and the closely associated British TTF and the ‘rest of the UK’ coalition.

- School Sport Associations and National Governing Bodies: the impact of role duplication on the UKSG

As noted earlier, it is only within English-based table tennis that there are separate organisations, which coordinate club-led and school-led competition. Prior to the introduction of the UKSG policy, ETTA and ESTTA had maintained a close and amicable working relationship. The opportunity to work jointly on the operational aspects of the UKSG has further enhanced the quality of communication between the associations.

‘We have a very good relationship with our schools association. Not every NGB is in that situation’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

Whilst the close relationship between the organisations portrays a sport that is in a sound position for development, in reality this has not been the case. The closeness of ETTA and ESTTA’s relationship has led to a gradual expansion of both organisations’ competition pathways, establishing a busy competition calendar for the sport, which present school-aged athletes with a duplication of competitive opportunity. Both ETTA and ESTTA organise separate competitions that channel talented athletes through local and regional competitions, leading to national finals that are broadly similar.

The UKSG development funding allocated to England has been directed towards a competition review of the sport. However, the review has proposed no changes to the structure of either of the two organisations’ competition pathways. Instead ESTTA must make a ‘bid’ to ETTA competitions department to secure a particular weekend to hold their school competitions. This review process has encouraged competition providers within English table tennis to avoid a clash in competition dates, so that athletes are not presented with a conflict of interest regarding which competition to attend. The
review has not, however, encouraged a reduction of the total number of competitive opportunities available to young players.

Representatives of both ETTA and ESTTA explain that there is no need to reduce the competitive opportunities provided by either organisation. In particular, emphasis is placed on the ‘occasional’ nature of ESTTA competitions and the opportunity they present to schools to promote themselves through the talent of their pupils. Additionally, the chair of ESTTA highlights the need to present school players with a higher level of competition. He explains that without national level finals, their school competitions would have minimal purpose and attractiveness to young people.

‘From a viewpoint of the actual competition itself, you get to zone level probably about 50% would be taking part in club competitions as well. And of course once you get higher, than yes, more of them will be in a club. I’d anticipate that once you get to the national finals, most of the youngsters would be playing as part of a club. And if they aren’t then there’s definitely something amiss. But because they [schools competitions] are one-off competitions, it’s really not an issue’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

It is one of the YST’s long-term aspirations to align the goals of SAs and NGBs across sports. However, with representative officials of both ETTA and ESTTA firmly stating that there is no intention to merge the roles and competition structures of the two organisations, the YST is faced with a significant challenge in relation to table tennis.

‘We’ve been working with a range of sports for quite a long while to encourage more ‘joined up’ working particularly in the competition arena. Where there’s a distinct School Sport Association, it does often get in the way of defining a single clear competitive pathway and the debate about rationalising NGB and School Sport Association roles. Many sports have had their own wider internal competition review, and made significant progress. In a few little it appears that
there has been less effective change’ (Roger Davis, National Development Manager for the YST, Interviewed 12th January 2009).

It therefore is apparent that a policy instrument such as the UKSG, despite it being accompanied with incentives such as YST support and UKSG development funding, is unable to alter the historic traditions of school and club sport separation.

‘Table tennis has got a lot of issues in terms of their NGBs and their SA. They have a fantastic relationship in England, but they perpetuate a dual system…they work closely, but they don’t change anything’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

According to Guin Batten (YST officer responsible for performance development), more forceful and direct initiative (unlike the UKSG) with long-term stability is needed to bring about change within sports such as table tennis. Guin Batten calls for cultural change within a sport, as opposed to more superficial alterations such as table tennis’ manipulation of its competition calendar.

‘It’s the SA that have a tremendous commitment to tradition. And what I think we have to do is encourage their responsibility to their tradition, to a move towards a responsibility to their athletes. There needs to be a culture change of tradition rather than operational tradition’ (Guin Batten, Head of Performance for the YST, interviewed 8th January 2009).

Such cultural change will be challenging to initiate given that the relationship between ETTA and ESTTA is stable and settled. Both organisations are comfortable with the ways in which they support table tennis development and see no cause for change. ETTA will continue to allocate part of their Sport England funding to ESTTA through grant aid until the NGB is encouraged or forced to do otherwise. Such pressured incentive is not presently within the reach of the YST, given its inability to engineer the resource dependence of NGBs through the offer of significant financial support (a form of one-
dimensional power which is commonly applied by the more wealthy and therefore influential UK Sport and Sport England sports councils). The YST have been unable to exert enough leverage, be it through the use of incentives, sanctions or socialising agents (Lukes 2005), to impact upon the combined goals of ETTA and ESTTA.

- Stakeholder relationships: the perception of the table tennis organisations towards the UKSG and their level of interaction with the Youth Sport Trust

Throughout the implementation of the UKSG, members of the YST have worked hard to maintain a cooperative relationship with the table tennis associations across the UK. At times, the relationship has been strained, but in most circumstances, this has been related to a difference in opinions between the home country table tennis NGBs, with the YST being expected to position itself in favour of one particular NGB and issue a directive to the remainder of the table tennis community.

The TTA Wales in particular has presented a challenge to the YST’s desire to maintain close relations with UK-wide table tennis senior officials. The Welsh NGB, as part of their determination to obtain a specific share of the UKSG development funding, directly contacted Steve Grainger, the CEO of the YST. A process that bypassed several key figures, linked to the implementation of the UKSG policy.

‘The funding decision was something that went from Wales right to the top with Steve Grainger, Wales bypassed a lot of relevant people’

(Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

Not only did the TTA Wales’ actions displease senior officials of the British TTF, which felt marginalised by the action, but the Welsh NGB also caused some internal conflict within the YST itself. In response to the TTA Wales’ threat to withdraw from the UKSG, the YST management team agreed to the division of the UKSG funding across the four home countries. The process of
negotiation between the NGB and the YST senior management team suggests that the TTA Wales were successful in what Bardach (1977) refers to as the ‘implementation power game’. The decision to formally split the funding was not well received by the ‘street level bureaucrats’ (UKSG coordinators and additional members of the UKSG ‘Development’ Group) who were expected to represent the YST and ensure the effective delivery of the UKSG policy. It was predicted by members of this group that without the UK-wide funding of a UKSG coordinator post, there would be little control over the home country NGBs’ use of the development funding and there would be consequently little impact in relation to the UKSG objectives. In response to the pessimism of the UKSG Development Group members, the TTA Wales defended their demand for the split funding approach:

“We talked to other sports in Wales who haven’t been able to do anything like what we’re doing. And so it annoys us that the YST team doesn’t like what we’re doing. They are still trying to get us not to split the money up….We’re still arguing. Scotland, Ireland and us don’t agree with the YST…that’s politics.’ (Ron Davies, Senior official, TTA Wales, interviewed 8th June 2009).

Comments from ETTA and British TTF officials reflect the disapproval of their organisations regarding the YST’s decision to support the TTA Wales’ funding proposal:

‘I’m quite happy to go on the record and say that it was the YST that agreed to the funding allocation. If they didn’t want the funding to be spent that way, they shouldn’t have agreed to it. It upset the applecart a bit’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 13th January 2009).

‘Since allowing the funding split, the UKSG money has turned into an opportunity for them [the TTA Wales] to develop something that I think they should be developing anyway with their own sports council funding’ (Alex Murdoch, Chairman of ETTA and British TTF, interviewed 12th April 2009).
Having lost some support and credibility from ETTA and the British TTF, the YST had to work hard to maintain amicable working relationships with the organisations. In doing so, senior employees of the YST have attended several UKSG Table Tennis Steering Group meetings in the hope that their presence and mediation skills will encourage the sport to work towards a UK-wide agenda. In particular, the YST have communicated with the Scottish and Irish TTAs which, as explained previously, were indifferent with regards to how the funding should be allocated. The YST’s attendance at these meetings has some similarities with Lukes’ description of a third dimension of power (1974). Here the Trust are attempting to subtly shape the interests and perceived needs of the table tennis associations. They then withdrew from the meetings to allow the NGBs themselves to formulate a forward plan, which they hope will be consistent with YST objectives.

‘I’ve attended UK steering groups of four sports, but it comes to a point where you have to let them go do it themselves and take ownership. Otherwise there will be no sustainability, which has to be. We [the YST] are very much trying to influence in the early stage and then try and let them go on and do their work, and offer support if it is required’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

Aside from the tensions linked with the funding decisions, table tennis interviewees have also been critical of the rate at which the YST develops and the rapid rate at which the YST expects table tennis to develop. As already highlighted, ETTA decision-making is slow moving due to its use of a ‘National Council’ which makes the major decisions for the sport. The Welsh, Irish and Scottish table tennis associations have also experienced slow development given their lack of staffing infrastructure. These organisations are unable to keep pace with the speed at which the YST turnover new policies and initiatives. ETTA do however acknowledge that this is the nature of current sport policy within the UK, which is quite often supported by ring-fenced money that is often time-limited or which can be withdrawn by an unsupportive sports minister.
‘We’re getting feedback from some people who want more change quicker. They want a ‘clean sheet’ approach, which is great in theory, but to implement change, you have to bring people along with you and therefore need to tread carefully…The clean slate approach is great in principle, but you hear of some NGBs doing a review, making big changes, and then having to change it again the following year. I think you start to lose credibility if you start doing that sort of thing. We can afford to move any faster in order to satisfy the YST. We would just loose a lot of valuable volunteers’ (Martin Ireland, UKSG coordinator for the ETTA, interviewed 11th June 2009).

Insufficient time has not been the only pressure on the table tennis NGBs. Inadequate resource has also been highlighted across the sport as another condition that has prevented the NGBs from making significant progress in relation to each of the UKSG objectives (Gunn 1978).

Less obvious factors, which have impacted on ETTA’s progress in relation to the UKSG objectives, include the extent to which the YST communicates with other sporting bodies. Following on from the points raised earlier, the YST have evidently strong links with Sport England across an array of sport policies such as the PESSYP strategy. However ETTA employees question the clarity in communication with regards to the UKSG and NCF policies. ETTA highlights a distinct lack of club development support from Sport England, which inhibits the progress that can be made in enhancing competitive pathways via the UKSG objectives. This gap in communication suggests that the UKSG policy is characterised by a ‘loose issues network’, as opposed to a tighter ‘policy community’ connecting all the stakeholders affected by the UKSG (Marsh & Rhodes 1992).

‘What is likely is a big shake-up of how sport is funded in this country after 2012…At present there are three main bodies of sport, UK Sport, Sport England (with equivalents in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and the Youth Sport Trust…they all have different budgets and remits but there is some overlap, which is hardly surprising given the desire to create a ‘pathway’ from amateur competition to the sharp end
of elite sport [Sport and Olympics Minister] Robertson, however, clearly sees some duplication of effort here. In a speech earlier this month [June 2010], the minister said he was pushing ahead with plans to bring the three bodies ‘under one roof’ while maintaining their separate roles and responsibilities’ (Slater 2010, www.bbc.co.uk accessed 22nd June 2010).

7.4 Conclusion

There have been two areas of focus within this chapter. Firstly, the way in which the six UKSG objectives have been approached by the six table tennis organisations across the UK has been discussed. Secondly, an analysis of the UKSG impact upon the relationships existing between the four table tennis home country NGBs, the English SA and the overarching British TTF, between ETTA and ESTTA as the only home country within the UK to have a distinct table tennis NGB and SA; and finally between the YST and the table tennis organisations. This second area of analysis placed particular emphasis upon the exploration on the home country NGB’s perspectives of the implementation of the UKSG policy.

The table tennis tradition of devolved responsibility across the UK has had a significant impact upon the way in which the UKSG policy has been implemented by the sport. In particular, long-standing issues between the home country NGBs which led to the splitting of the UKSG development funding, has influenced the way in which the UKSG objectives have been addressed by each table tennis association. It should be emphasised that due to the split of funding and resulting lack of resource, each home country NGB argued the point that they were unable to address adequately all six of the UKSG objectives.

The division of funding resulted in a certain amount of freedom for the NGBs to approach the objectives in a way that proved most relevant to their circumstances. ETTA, with the support of ESTTA, opted to review its structure

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10 The British TTF (BTTF), the ETTA (ETTA), the English Schools Table Tennis Association (ESTTA), the Scottish Table Tennis Association (STTA), the Irish TTA (ITTA) and the TTA Wales (TTAW).
of competition, however the review’s outcomes were deemed to be conservative by the YST. Although the review focused on rationalising the sport’s competition calendar within England, it does not recommend the eliminating or merging of competitions thus perpetuating what the YST refers to as a ‘dual system’ of school and club sport.

The remaining home country NGBs allocated their share of the UKSG development funding towards the creation of new school sport competitive opportunities, as they felt that their organisation’s infrastructure, supported only by a network of volunteers, was not sufficiently large to review. Whilst the introduction of new school competitions has increased table tennis participation rates in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the competitions now duplicate existing club-based competition opportunities. The home countries’ focus on improving the profile of school competitions (consistent with the UKSG’s third objective) has contradicted the YST’s original policy intentions for the UKSG, whereby a clear, singular competition pathway would be offered to young people competing in the UKSG sports.

Although there have been significant benefits to emerge from the UKSG development funding expenditure, such as increased table tennis participation rates, the capacity for the home country NGBs to obtain match funding and the training of new young officials to join the sport’s ever depleting database of volunteers, there have also been several opportunity costs that have emerged as a consequence to the split allocation of UKSG development funding. Such costs include the missed opportunity for the sport to communicate on a UK-wide basis, which has prevented the table tennis NGBs from developing the consistent competition pathway across the UK, which the YST had hoped for. Additionally, the decision to devolve the UKSG funding has led to a lack of support for the UKSG coordinator post within table tennis. Consequently, the sport has experienced an inability to monitor and control the expenditure of the development funding, which has allowed the home country NGBs to steer away from the YST’s original policy intentions.

In summary, it is clear that across the home countries, geographically defined coalitions of interest have emerged. For example, given the differences in
opinion with regard to the UKSG funding division, two categories of table tennis NGBs surfaced; the ETTA, ESTTA and British TTF grouped together in support of a whole-sport agenda; and the Irish, Scottish and Welsh table tennis associations became unified in defending the current practice of devolved funding allocation. After evaluating the positive and negative outcomes associated with the sport’s current funding approach, it was highlighted by several table tennis senior officials that the negative consequences outweighed the positive. However, it was also brought to light the YST’s decision to allow the UKSG development funding to be shared between the home country NGBs was perceived to be the only way in which the TTA Wales would remain involved in the UKSG. A devolved funding approach was therefore an outcome of the YST’s attempt to maintain the credibility of the UKSG and restore a balance of power between the organisations.

The quality of communication taking place between ETTA and ESTTA was already high prior to the introduction of the UKSG, but has been further improved through collaborative working on the operational and development elements of the policy. The closeness of the two organisations has placed ETTA and ESTTA in a position of comfort, whereby they share the resources received from Sport England and continue to provide competitive opportunities that duplicate one another. Unfortunately, because the YST’s offer UKSG financial and human resource has been unable to outweigh the support the associations receive from Sport England, there are very few incentives for ETTA and ESTTA to alter their current duplicated competition pathways.

In the chapter’s final section of analysis, the relationships existing between the YST and the table tennis NGBs were explored. Firstly, the reaction to the YST’s agreement with the TTA Wales to split the UKSG development funding per home country was analysed. The decision segregated the table tennis community into three groups. Firstly, the TTA Wales and YST were seen to join forces through the eyes of the second group consisting of the British TTF, ETTA and ESTTA, which all strongly disagreed with the decision. The YST
are now trying to rebuild its relationship with the organisations within this second group, by subtly influencing the beliefs and perceived needs of a third group consisting of the Scottish and Irish TTAs which are less concerned by the funding allocation outcome. The YST’s efforts to influence the Scottish and Irish bodies resonates with Lukes’ third dimension of power (1974) whereby ‘socialising agents’ are manipulated in an attempt (albeit unsuccessful) to encourage less easily persuaded bodies (such as the TTA Wales) to follow the true preferences of the YST, British TTF, ETTA and ESTTA.

The latter phase of the chapter’s analysis of YST relationships with the table tennis governing bodies focuses on the quality of conditions offered to the associations in their implementation of the UKSG policy. It was highlighted that inadequacy of time and resource inhibited the NGBs’ capacity to address all six UKSG objectives. Additionally, the sports raised concerns at the extent of communication that takes place between major sport organisations such as the YST and Sport England. Due to a lack of alignment in their policies, ETTA explained that it proved difficult for their sport to encourage young people to proceed along a straightforward competition pathway if there is not a corresponding development of table tennis clubs for the young people to train within.

The analysis of this chapter’s findings was supported by Kingdon’s multiple stream approach (1984). Not only did the approach highlight that the complex structure of the table tennis community hindered the sport’s ability to take full advantage of combining ‘policy, politics and problem’ streams – but it also highlighted that a lack of communication and agreement between the home countries meant that the TTAW became increasingly opportunistic in relation to non-UKSG agenda (in particular, the governing body’s persistence to remain independent from the rest of the UK table tennis governing bodies and pursue UKSG funded programmes that linked only loosely to the six objectives).

The lack of agreement and communication between the TTAW and ETTA was analysed further using Gunn’s 1978 guidelines of ‘perfect implementation’ of
policy. The analysis highlighted a disagreement and reinterpretation of policy objectives, with potential causes being linked to the TTAW’s need for a ‘numbers driven’ approach to targets set by the Sports Council for Wales. The receipt of sport council funding was deemed far more significant than the funding available through the UKSG. In reinterpreting the objectives, the TTAW demonstrated a bottom-up approach to policy implementation (Dunleavy 1981, 1982).

Pressman & Wildavsky’s description of top-down implementation theory was also utilised to understand table tennis’ approach to the UKSG. The theoretical analysis identified that a lack of top-down control of the UKSG policy, coupled with a high number of implementing agencies (TTAW, ESTTA, ETTA, YST and Fast Track) and a lack of powerful sanction by the YST (Dahl 1957) prevented the UKSG policy from being ‘perfect’ in its implementation (Gunn 1978).
8. Case Study Three: Volleyball

8.1 Introduction

In comparison to swimming and table tennis, the final case study sport, volleyball, has a far smaller UK infrastructure. It has fewer than 600 voluntary-led clubs, and an organisational structure that is predominantly coordinated by volunteers with just over 70 paid members of staff. Despite its small size, and its decreasing financial support from UK Sport (volleyball received £4.1m from UK Sport during the Beijing Olympiad, which decreased to £3.5m for the London Olympiad) the sport is buoyant. Despite the decrease in funding the volleyball NGB is perceived as being upbeat and appreciative of any form of financial support, or opportunities to be involved in major policy initiatives such as the UKSG.

‘Volleyball is probably one of the more opportunistic of the UKSG sports. It tries to get as much as it can from the event, so they really push the boundaries sometimes. But if we say no, they’re still a pleasure to work with because they are happy to make do with what they can get. They’re a flexible, young team’ (Representative of Fast Track interviewed 11th March 2003).

The 2009-2010 Active People Survey ranked volleyball 30th in the 38 sports listed in terms of monthly participation rates. The results show that the sport has suffered a 22% reduction in its participation rates since the first Active People Survey was conducted in 200711, however the proportion of participants joining volleyball clubs has increased from 12.78%12 to 21.97%13 (www.sportengland.org accessed 23rd July 2010). As new members of staff have joined the volleyball community, there has been a greater capacity for the home country governing bodies to recruit and train volunteers. With an increase in volunteer numbers and therefore human resource, more volleyball

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11 The number of people participating in volleyball at least once a month fell from 86,300 during the October 2007 - October 2008 Active People Survey, to 68,100 within the April 2009 – April 2010 Active People Survey.
12 Results from Active People Survey October 2007 – October 2008
13 Results from Active People Survey April 2009 – April 2010
clubs have emerged. This in turn will provide more training and competitive
opportunity for members of the public interested in volleyball participation.
This developmental process is taking place gradually and therefore it is
arguable that increases in participation rates will take time to surface in the
Active People Survey data.

It is also worth highlighting that the Active People Survey presents a measure
of participation for members of the public aged 16 years and over. As will be
discussed later in the chapter, the volleyball home country NGBs have chosen
to direct their proportion of the UKSG development funding towards the
development of junior (under 16 years old) leagues, and therefore changes in
participation rates that have resulted from such programmes will not yet be
reflected in the outcomes of the Survey.

Although the sport is growing in capacity, this is yet to impact significantly on
the sport’s international rankings. Across all three disciplines (beach
volleyball, sitting volleyball and indoor volleyball, the latter of which is included
in the UKSG) there is a lack of international success. Those GB team
volleyball players who are talented enough to play professionally do so in
continental European teams because the competitive opportunities available
are far greater than those in the UK. Professional staff members associate
this lack of UK high level competitive provision with insufficient financial
resource and a lack of player interest.

The sport’s lack of international success has prevented GB volleyball from
ever qualifying for an Olympic Indoor Volleyball competition. This limits the
sport’s experience of multi-sport competitions, highlighting the value of the
UKSG for the men’s and women’s GB team preparation for the London 2012
Olympiad, where the GB have received automatic ‘host nation’ qualification to
the Olympic Games.

Whereas the other case study sports are more wary of changes in political
administration, funding and salience towards sport, volleyball head office staff
are more relaxed. The sport has built in contingency funds which anticipate
changes in both government and sport councils support. For example, the
sport has outlined how it would introduce a new ‘British Volleyball Championship’ should the UKSG policy be transformed into the UK School Olympics in 2012, which will not include volleyball. This forward thinking approach (of Volleyball England in particular) suggests that the sport is used to changes in programme funding and direction and therefore aims to plan for sustainability.

Volleyball had relatively little involvement with the YST prior to the UKSG. Volleyball England staff representatives have associated this with a lack of profile for their sport, causing the sport to be overlooked with regards to its capacity to increase school sport participation rates. The sport’s inclusion in the NCF and UKSG initiatives have since changed this perception within the YST. Volleyball England now works with schools to develop young volleyball players and encourages the schools to register formally as a volleyball club. Beyond the school network, there are few youth volleyball clubs. Those that do exist compete within adult leagues, which can be quite intimidating for young players new to the sport.

Having demonstrated to the YST through the UKSG and NCF programmes that volleyball is an innovative and growing sport, the YST have selected volleyball to be included in the ‘Premier League 4 Sport’ initiative (www.premierleague.com accessed 28th October 2010). This publically funded initiative aims to increase community sport participation levels in accordance with the YST’s former ‘Five Hour Offer’ (www.youthsporttrust.org accessed 23rd July 2010).

Similar to table tennis and swimming, responsibility for volleyball coordination across the UK is devolved to the four home countries, with international team selection being the responsibility of an overarching GB body. As will be discussed throughout the chapter, prior to the UKSG there were only four volleyball governing bodies in place: British Volleyball Federation, Volleyball England, Scottish Volleyball Association and Northern Ireland Volleyball Association. The fifth governing body, Volleyball Wales, was not constituted until April 2009, as a direct consequence to the sport’s involvement in the UKSG. The five governing bodies are autonomous but there is a considerable
consistency in their working practices, competition pathways and support mechanisms.

**Figure 8.7: Structure of volleyball within the UK**

The structure of volleyball across the UK is relatively straightforward in comparison to other UKSG sports. As can be seen in Figure 8.1, the sport does not need to liaise with separate school sport associations. Responsibility for school sport is embedded within each home country NGB as part of a Schools and Youth Development commission. In addition to the sport’s simplified structure, volleyball is distinctive in that it is a relatively young organisation with a modest infrastructure of voluntary and paid workers. Whereas swimming and table tennis governing bodies were constituted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries respectively, it was not until 1955 that the Amateur Volleyball Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (AVA) was formed. This organization has since evolved into the five volleyball NGBs. One consequence of its more recent formation is that it is not hindered with long-standing traditions with regards to competition pathways and formats, however it is perhaps limited in terms of staffing capacity. With fewer people available to become involved in the implementation of a policy such as the UKSG, there is perhaps the opportunity for more direct policy delivery, with
clearer lines of communication and faster decision-making processes. These conditions reflect some of the ten required conditions that Gunn has associated with policy success (see Table 8.1, in particular factors 6 and 9).

Table 8.9: Proposed conditions for perfect implementation of policy

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<td>1</td>
<td>Circumstances external to the implementation agency do not impose crippling constraints</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Not only are there no constraints in terms of overall resources, but also at each stage in the implementation process the required combination of resources is actually available.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The policy to be implemented is based on a valid theory of cause and effect.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The relationship between cause and effect is direct and there are few, if any, intervening links.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>There is a single implementation agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success. If other agencies must be involved, the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>There is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>In moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>There is perfect communication among, and coordination of, the various elements of agencies involved in the programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience.</td>
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The role of the British Volleyball Federation (BVF) is to select, develop and organise the competitive opportunities for the GB volleyball teams, across all three versions of the sport. In particular, the GB-wide organising body is responsible for training the GB teams in the build up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. The BVF team of 25 professional staff includes coaches, nutritionists, development officers, talent scouts, psychologists and physiotherapists. Of this team, there is no position which has responsibility for maintaining close relations between the home country volleyball NGBs, hence the role of UKSG coordinator and the quarterly UK-wide meetings he organises to discuss and share best practice are valued throughout the sport.

Responsibility for the UKSG is based within Volleyball England, rather than BVF. Considering the level of involvement that each of the volleyball home country NGBs have with the UKSG policy, it is surprising that BVF have not

Figure 8.2: Abbreviations of volleyball organising bodies

National Governing Bodies (NGBs)
BVF: British Volleyball Federation
VE: Volleyball England
VW: Volleyball Wales
NIVA: Northern Ireland Volleyball Association
SVA: Scottish Volleyball Association
engaged with the event. Despite the ‘performance level’ positioning of the
UKSG within the volleyball competition pathways and the fact that the event
provides multi-sport competitive experience for talented young people, the
BVF do not recognise the Games as a valid tool for talent identification.
However there is scope for the BVF to have some level of involvement in
future UKSGs. At the time of data collection, the GB organising body were
considering contributing to the ‘UKSG referee clinic’ attached to the event due
to its potential to produce high quality referees capable of supporting
international competition.

Volleyball England is the largest of the four home country NGBs. It has eight
voluntary board members and approximately 30 paid members of staff
situated either within their head office, or across the nine volleyball regions as
‘Community Volleyball Development Officers’. Whilst this staffing capacity by
far exceeds that of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish NGBs, it is still
believed to be inadequate for the sport to begin to realise its ambitions. This
limitation of human resource highlights the relevance of Gunn’s ten required
factors for successful policy implementation (1978). As observed in Table 8.1
Gunn emphasised the need for sufficient resources to be made available to a
programme in order for it to be successfully implemented.

‘Volleyball could do more, particularly if more staff had time dedicated
and finance committed to it’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for
Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009).

Over 500 volleyball clubs have affiliated with the NGB
[www.volleyballengland.org](http://www.volleyballengland.org) (accessed 21st October 2010) and Volleyball
England is looking to expand this in line with the targets set within the 2009-
2013 Volleyball Whole Sport Plan, which has been supported by £5.6m Sport
England funding:

*The Whole Sport Plan for Volleyball has set ambitious targets for the
expansion of its membership. This includes an increase in affiliated
Clubs, of qualified, registered and active Coaches and Referees, of
Volunteers and of players of all standards and ages irrespective of*
Volleyball development within the school environment is the responsibility of the Schools and Youth Development commission, located within Volleyball England. The commission is one of seven areas which Volleyball England focus on and is governed by a sub-committee of volunteers. Representatives of the governing body explain that the use of sub-committees, as opposed to separate, autonomous school associations has led to faster and more efficient decision-making processes, which avoids delays in policy implementation. Pressman & Wildavsky refer to these delays as ‘implementation deficits’ (1973).

‘Because we are a sport with no school association and because we’re a sport that’s developing as we go we can make relatively large changes quickly. For example, if a more traditional sport wanted to change the format of a race, it would probably take them three or four years and they’d have to get about 40 people to say yes, whereas in volleyball, it would take a quick discussion, a yes or a no answer, amongst just a small group of people’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009).

With just 22 affiliated clubs and 7 members of paid staff, the Scottish Volleyball Association, is significantly smaller in organisational structure than its English counterpart (www.scottishvolleyball.org accessed 21st October 2010). The organisation is thoroughly supportive of the UKSG policy:

‘It’s really made a difference for the Scottish Volleyball Association. Just having that extra high profile competition has given our young members something to aspire towards, so it’s important in terms of increasing player retention rates. Before the UKSG, a lot of players lost interest after a while because there was very little competitive opportunity for them. I’m fully supportive in keeping the event going’ (Margaret Ann Fleming, CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).
The CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association is a member of the ‘UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group’ and is therefore heavily involved in the volleyball related decision-making processes linked to the UKSG (Figure 8.1 positions the UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group Meetings within the UK-wide volleyball organisational structure). The meetings allow for a direct line of communication between members of YST and the volleyball CEO, which from a top-down perspective of policy implementation, should ensure that the UKSG delivery reflects the YST’s original intentions. The CEO, along with two of the five Scottish Volleyball Association board members, are also actively involved in the UKSG each year as volunteers.

The Northern Ireland Volleyball Association was formed in 1970 by a passionate group of schoolteachers and youth workers. By 1977, both men’s and women’s leagues had been established. Since 1970, the Northern Ireland Volleyball Association has grown to a capacity of twelve paid members of staff, working with eleven adult volleyball clubs. Volleyball youth development is dependent upon school sport participation in after-school volleyball clubs, however talent development appears to be concentrated within two Northern Irish schools. The Northern Ireland boys and girls UKSG teams are dominated by players from these schools.

‘Our youth development squad comes from just couple of school across Northern Ireland. I think this is because they schools have very little opportunity to compete, therefore it’s been had to develop and identify talent’ (Nick Wright, Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

Despite these limitations, the association continues to work towards several ambitious targets:

‘The new millennium presents new challenges for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association to maintain and sustain the sport here. Courses and clinics for coaches and referees are held annually…no one in NIVA is complacent. We aim to encourage and retain players and to bring volleyball back into the shop window of Northern Ireland sport’

The participant development officer of the association is optimistic that the UKSG will continue to support the sport in its growth agenda. In particular, he links the multi-sport event with the opportunity to modernize and promote innovative change:

‘As an NGB, we’re working towards being younger every time there’s a new policy or something. The ‘blazers’ (long-standing officials of the sport) are kind of being moved to the side. But those are still important people’ (Nick Wright, Participant Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

Volleyball Wales was not formally constituted as a national governing body until April 2009. Because of this, the sport is severely limited with regards to competition structure, player numbers, volunteers and staffing. There are no paid members of staff involved in the management of the NGB and only seven dedicated volunteers who act as board members.

Long before the introduction of the UKSG instigated the creation of Volleyball Wales, an NGB for the sport in Wales had previously existed, however due to concerns of poor governance systems, the NGB was disbanded. It has taken a considerable amount of time to overcome the issues associated with the original NGB and even to this day, representatives of the new Volleyball Wales NGB struggle to deal with the negativity still linked to the circumstances in which its predecessor collapsed.

‘The UKSG steering group consists of a lot of young, dynamic individuals and this has certainly helped us (Volleyball Wales) to overcome some of long-standing issues associated with volleyball in Wales. Without the presence of a new generation of volunteers, the issue could have kept going on and on’ (Yvonne Saker, Chair of Volleyball Wales, interviewed 17th March 2009).

During the time period between the original NGB and new NGB for Wales, Welsh volleyball players were encouraged to participate in English volleyball leagues. This process was welcomed by Volleyball England, although it proved challenging for young players with limited funds and access to transport.
‘Because there were limited opportunities to compete in Wales, we lost a lot of players. Travelling to England is time consuming, and when you get there, there’s not a lot of crowd support for the players’ (Yvonne Saker, Chair of Volleyball Wales, interviewed 17th March 2009).

Whilst player numbers are increasing in Wales, the volunteer board members of the NGB have had to work very hard to develop a team capable of competing at the UKSG. In summary, Volleyball Wales is by far the smallest governing body for volleyball in the UK and has made use of the UKSG initiative to increase awareness of the sport across Wales and build a player base from practically zero.

Given that there is the consistent challenge of insufficient youth competition opportunities observed across all four home country volleyball NGBs, the motive for the sport to become involved in the UKSG was clear. There was a genuine desire across the home countries to utilise the UKSG event as a stimulus for competition pathway development. Representatives of Volleyball England also emphasised the potential that the UKSG has to build a sustainable link to YST. Having rarely before worked with YST, the sport perceive the multi-sport event as a way of laying the foundations of a new relationship with the Trust, and facilitating the sport to enter a new era of youth development across volleyball.

Figure 8.3 highlights the impact that the UKSG has had upon the sport’s competition structure. In comparison to other case study sports, the competition format is relatively linear in nature and aligned across all four home country NGBs. There are no separate school-led volleyball competitions, but rather ‘mini volleyball school festivals’, which feed into club leagues and championships. There are very few competitive opportunities that exist beyond the mainstream competition pathways, reducing the likelihood that young volleyball players will experience ‘competition overload’. As discussed in previous chapters, there is arguably an excessive number of opportunities to compete within table tennis and swimming, however this is not the case in volleyball. The sport has taken advantage of the UKSG event profile to drive forward the introduction of several new competitions (starred in Figure 8.3). The sport assumes that there is a causal link between competitive
provision and participation rates in the sense that increased competitive
opportunity provides young volleyball players with a reason to continue their
club training. The introduction of new competitions has therefore supported
the sport’s UK-wide ambition to raise volleyball participation rates.
* This diagram is specific to indoor volleyball competition. There is also competition stream organized by for sitting and beach volleyball.

**UK School Games / Youth Olympics**

- **Olympics / European Championships / European Club competition / Friendly International**
  - Northern Ireland Leagues & Cups
  - England National League and Championships (Club)
  - Mens & Womens National League, just 7 teams included
  - Senior Scottish National Leagues & National Team representation

- **BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport)**
  - Team & individual competition
  - There are no other non-mainstream competitions other than inter-school matches, or friendly matches with no significance.

- **British Colleges Team Competition**

- **UK School Games / Youth Olympics**
  - Sport Northern Ireland Youth
  - Under 16 School League
  - Under 16 School Cup
  - Volleyball Blitz
  - Under 14 Volleyball Final
  - Under 14 Mini Volleyball Festival
  - Under 18/19 Junior National Championships
  - Junior National League (Under 16 & Under 19)
  - Min Volleyball Festivals
  - Curricular and extra-curricular school programmes
  - Fast Track programme for talented players to be fast-tracked on to the senior national teams
  - Intention to establish a regional structure (North, Central, South Wales)

- **Min Volleyball introduced to schools through training programmes. Not enough capacity yet to compete across Wales**

- **Stars represent new competitions since the introduction of the UKSG**

- **Arrows represent where inter-country competition occurs**
8.2 Analysis of Volleyball’s approach to the UK School Games objectives

In contrast to the devolved approach to funding evident within the swimming and table tennis case studies, volleyball chose to allocate the UKSG development funding it received from YST towards UK-wide projects. These projects focused on the development of an aligned NCF across the four home country NGBs and the creation of an NGB for volleyball in Wales. These projects were fully supported by Scottish, Northern Irish and English NGBs, despite the fact that it required a larger proportion of the UKSG funding to be allocated to Welsh volleyball. It was agreed across all the NGBs that the creation of Volleyball Wales was essential in order for the sport to develop a consistent NCF across the UK. In addition, it was recognised that the introduction of Volleyball Wales would lead to more opportunities for volleyball players to compete across the UK, ultimately benefiting the home country NGBs with regards to improved game-play and a raised standard of performance. The level of agreement across the volleyball home countries reflects one of Gunn’s factors that are associated with successful policy implementation:

‘There is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved’ (Gunn 1978, cf. Parsons 1995:465-6).

The shared understanding of the UKSG policy and its associated objectives reflects a balance in power relationships between the home country volleyball NGBs, despite their variance in organisational size and wealth. There is a mutual dependency existing between the home countries whereby each NGB appreciates that a united approach to the development of competition structure can raise the standard of competition within volleyball across the UK. Should one of the home country NGBs withdraw from the NCF agenda, there is awareness that the resulting benefits for all governing bodies would not be so significant.
Agreement regarding the UKSG policy objectives is also shared between the volleyball NGBs and YST. As will now be discussed, each of the UKSG’s six objectives were approached by the UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group in a way that reflected YST’s anticipated policy outcomes. Evidence reveals that both parties perceived the UKSG objectives as important for their organisation and the development of youth sport as a whole although it should be noted that engagement with the objectives was uneven.

- **Objective 1). On going planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people**

In contrast to the swimming and table tennis case studies, there is considerable evidence that the UKSG volleyball competition has been replicated within regional level volleyball competitions. In particular, Volleyball England’s ‘Inter-Regional Championships’ have been substantially reorganised with regards to its event presentation by mimicking the dressing, format and atmosphere of the UKSG. The Inter-Regional Championships now makes use of commentators, DJs, sponsorship representation and statistical analysis tools to professionalise the image of what used to be, according to the sport’s UKSG coordinator, a straightforward competition that struggled in terms of energy and innovation. Although the sport has made a significant effort to transfer ideas from the UKSG to lower level volleyball competitions, representatives of the sport emphasise that they are often restricted by financial resource.

> ‘We contribute about £10,000 of our own funding to the UKSG pot, so clearly we have absolute buy-in, but without the extra £35,000 - £40,000 UKSG development funding [which is allocated to a variety of UKSG development projects inline with the six UKSG objectives], the changes we’ve made to our regional competition would have proven really difficult. As it happens, we are already limited by the funding that is available to us. We’d really like to do more’ (Lisa Wainwright, CEO of Volleyball England, interviewed 16th February 2009).
Not only have the Inter-Regional Championships been transformed with regards to their presentation, but the UKSG coordinator has also made a considerable effort to expand the size of the event. In endeavouring to replicate the UKSG, Northern Irish and Welsh volleyball teams have been invited to the English competition. The invitation has allowed the ‘visiting’ teams and the English volleyball regional teams to participate in a larger tournament, with more matches of greater variety. This ultimately presents young volleyball players with the opportunity to improve their tactical gameplay. In addition, the presence of home country national teams has raised the standard of competition played at the Inter-Regional Championships, allowing ‘different delegates, who are invited to watch the games, the chance to get video evidence of technical abilities, and share best practice with several team coaches. It’s essentially presented the relevant people with an educational tool and the opportunity to engage in talent identification’ (Yvonne Saker, Chair of Volleyball Wales, interviewed 17th March 2009).

One limitation mentioned during data collection was the low quality of event presentation that exists at levels above the Inter-Regional Competition and the UKSG. The ‘wow factor’ that is presented to volleyball players at the UKSG is not then replicated at subsequent volleyball competitions that are positioned higher up the sport’s competition pathway.

‘The minor negative part I would say, now that I’ve reflected a little, is that we’d like to give our national squad better support and provide them with better resources. This is difficult for us as a small NGB. The UKSG, with all its infrastructure and events management, by far exceeds what we can provide further up the talent ladder, so sometimes the players compare and are disappointed. They say ‘well I did play in the UKSG and represented England central, but when I represent my country, I do not get the kit, I do not get the support, I do not get all the bits and bobs that were offered at the UKSG’. It’s a bit of an anti-climax for them’ (Leo Trench, Talent Manager for Volleyball England, Interviewed 17th March 2009).
While this problem is presented as minor, it is echoed by volleyball representatives of the other home country NGBs. The ‘anti-climax’ experienced by players after competing at the UKSG has challenged the sport’s ability to maintain player retention beyond the event, when athletes must make the difficult transitions from junior and cadet age group volleyball, to senior league competition.

- **Objective 2). To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people**

The UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group has made use of this objective to drive forward the development of four home country NCFs, which are consistent and aligned with one another. Resulting from the successful implementation of the objective, several new youth-specific competitions have been introduced to the sport’s competition framework detailed in Figure 8.3. Prior to the UKSG, youth volleyball players were expected to compete within adult leagues, since no competitive outlets for ‘junior’ and ‘cadet’ level age groups existed. The need for the home countries to select UKSG teams prompted the four NGBs to create new competitions (and therefore develop a NCF) that would both develop and identify young talent as part of a long-term player pathway.

‘We’ve developed a volleyball competition pathway [NCF] in a way that is similar to that used in European volleyball. So we use similar age groups and similar pathways using scaled-down versions of the full game [2v2, 3v3, 4v4 matches which build through the pathway towards full-scale 6v6 volleyball matches]. We think that the UKSG could help us to shape this as a talent identification avenue and somewhere for our squads to have a better experience’ (Leo Trench, Talent Manager for Volleyball England, Interviewed 17th March 2009).

The UKSG coordinator for volleyball explains that the challenges, which arose during the implementation of the NCF, were not linked to a lack of willingness
or cooperation, which was perhaps the case for other UKSG sports. For volleyball, the hindering factors for successful policy implementation came in the form of limited financial and human resources. These factors have been listed by Gunn in Table 3.11 (Chapter 3), as conditions that are required for ‘perfect’ policy implementation to occur (1978).

‘What was quite a challenge when adapting the competition structure was the capacity to change. It wasn’t an issue about willingness to change; it was about the capacity to change and the speed that it requires. My understanding is that in a number of the other sports it’s quite difficult to bring change in competition structure, as its previously existing structure was very strong. But we didn’t have that. So the NCF has actually been a relatively natural progression in volleyball, but we are limited in terms of staffing capacity and finance’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 6th June 2009).

A prime example of the ‘challenges of capacity’ that Matt Rogers refers to above is evident within Volleyball Wales. Having only gained NGB status in April 2009, Volleyball Wales has no paid members of staff to devote time and effort to the development and implementation of its NCF. Whilst dedicated volunteers have made significant progress on the NCF, creating some form of competition structure which has increased player numbers, the pace of progress is not as fast as that observed in Volleyball England where a head office team of thirty members of staff can drive forward and maintain the momentum behind the process of change. Volleyball Wales remains highly dependent upon UKSG development funding, and the support of the UKSG coordinator.

Despite the lack of staffing infrastructure observed within the Scottish and Northern Ireland volleyball associations, there have been significant developments in the organisations’ competition pathways. These developments have again been largely driven by the continuous support provided by the sport’s UKSG coordinator.
‘In Northern Ireland there was no competitive outlet for players prior to the UKSG. Now we have developed a training programme for youth players. The UKSG gives the players a reason to train, and so they are happy to take part in the fifteen-month training cycle we have set up for UKSG teams’ (Nick Wright, Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

‘There has been quite a dramatic increase for Scottish volleyball since the UKSG. Previously we only had the senior international programme. We then moved to a cadet programme and then in the last six months we’ve restructured our long term player pathway, using the UKSG as an integrated element…The UKSG have retained players in the sport who might have gone to other sports who were offering better opportunities at that level. The development funding has helped to offer more competitive opportunity, so we’ve seen an increase in the competitor numbers in the 10-13 year old age group. Before the UKSG policy, there was nothing really for this age group in terms of competition. We couldn’t offer anything for them to aspire towards at the 15, 16 and 17 year age group, whereas the UKSG event itself does’ (Margaret Ann Fleming, CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

Objective 3). Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve P.E. and school sport

In parallel to the approach used by table tennis and swimming to address this third objective, volleyball did not direct any attention towards raising the profile of PE through their involvement in UKSG. In reflection of the event’s sub-elite focus, and its distinctiveness from PE, it has proven difficult for any of the eight UKSG sports explored to make an impact on school PE.
Volleyball has, however, satisfied the intentions of the YST with regards to raising the profile of school sport within the NGB. Through the use of ‘mini volleyball school festivals’ in the newly created NCF across the home countries, the sport has effectively addressed UKSG objective 3. This approach was praised by representatives of YST who perceive the sport’s NCF as a suitable reflection of their organisation’s long-term ambition to align school sport and club sport through a single competition pathway.

‘I believe volleyball are doing the right thing…volleyball is a shining example of progress. Their mini-volley concept is impressive. They are thinking about school-aged competitions as opposed to school and club competitions as separate entities. They are thinking about a single pathway and unified competitions’ (Roger Davis, National Development Manager for the YST, Interviewed 12th January 2009).

Because of the sport’s relative newness to the youth sport policy agenda, volleyball’s school sport programmes are underdeveloped. However, having minimal infrastructure in place prior to the UKSG has presented the volleyball community with the opportunity to make significant additions to it that will benefit the sport, without having to deal with the complication of altering previously existing programmes. Since focusing on the UKSG objectives, the volleyball NGBs have interacted with YST and the school network in a much more direct way than ever before. It is now increasingly common for school volleyball teams to affiliate formally as a youth volleyball club, so that the school pupils can enter more competitions and display their talent to volleyball scouts.

In Scotland, the CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association explains that the UKSG has strengthened the NGB’s link with Scottish schools. The UKSG development funding has contributed to the formation of a ‘Fast Track’ scheme where volleyball talent is identified in the school environment and then channelled towards Scottish national team training. The introduction of a new ‘Scottish Schools Cup’ competition, financed by the UKSG funding, has supported this fast track system.
‘The set up of the Scottish Schools Cup has increased the number regular volleyball players in the under 17 age group from almost zero, to over seventy’ (Margaret Ann Fleming, CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

For volleyball in Scotland, the UKSG has encouraged a reduction in organisational bureaucracy that previously slowed talent development and did not allow for active talent searches in the school sport system.

Volleyball Wales have also utilised the school sport network as a grassroots development tool to address the low participation rates evident across Welsh volleyball.

‘Through the support of the UKSG funding, we do six weeks worth of taster sessions in schools, free of charge. From that, anyone who has the potential goes to talent sessions which are based in the South, Central and the North of Wales’ (Yvonne Saker, Chair of Volleyball Wales, interviewed 17th March 2009).

The increasing involvement of volleyball within the school sport networks has not been without its challenges, particularly within England. Surprisingly, the challenge is not associated with a lack of contacts across schools (YST appears to be providing adequate support for the sport in their transition into school sport network through the provision of competition managers), instead the obstacles have been erected from within the sport, via the ‘Schools and Youth Development’ commission within volleyball.

The UKSG did throw up some challenges with our Schools and Youth commission...most people fear changes that deviate from normal procedure, but once you’ve gone through change, you’ve forgotten that fear. So it will prove to be a great tool which we can use as an example for encouraging future change’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009).

In this regard the UKSG provided the volleyball community with examples of positive change, which is expected to gain a greater level of volunteer and
official support as time passes. As the UKSG coordinator for volleyball explains ‘people need to buy-in to change for it to be a success’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009), which is what the UKSG appears to have achieved for volleyball. From a bottom-up perspective of policy implementation, it can be suggested that the ‘street level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky 1980), who are involved in delivering the UKSG have a clear understanding of the UKSG objectives’ relevance for long-term volleyball development. Whilst the deliverers of policy may not interpret the objectives in the same way as other sports, they are aware of how the objectives can impact on volleyball development in a positive way. The bureaucrats (or volleyball volunteers) therefore support the objectives and have little need to reinterpret them in order implement the UKSG policy in a way that suits their own preferences and coping strategies. Instead the volunteers remain ‘on-task’ with what is expected from the YST objectives, despite having a level of discretion to alter the direction of the policy should they wish.

- **Objective 4). Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village**

As previously discussed, GB indoor volleyball has yet to compete in a summer Olympic Games, therefore the NGBs across the UK lack experience of multi-sport competition and major international events.

‘Objective four never happened in volleyball before the UKSG. We didn’t have a multisport event, so effectively we just had straightforward competitions, rather than events with a wow factor. Because GB volleyball are competing in the London 2012 Olympics, we’ve tried to really make use of the ideas introduced to us at the UKSG at our own national competitions so that our potential Olympians gain some usual experience as part of their preparation’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009).
Ideas which have been transferred from the UKSG event to the wider competition framework of volleyball include the implementation of the ‘100% me’ anti-doping workshops across Volleyball England competitions and the use of a ‘talent athlete handbook’ which provides details of multi-sport events for youth athletes through either e-forums, e-books or hardcopy handbooks.

In addition, as a result of the UKSG operational requirements outlined by YST, the sport created a new ‘Team Manager’ role for volunteers. Whereas other UKSG sports would already have volunteers trained within this role, having never competed at previous Olympic and Commonwealth Games, the role has not been needed in previous years to provide support for volleyball players competing in multi-sport events. The UKSG has presented the volleyball community with the opportunity to observe how other sports have developed the role of team manager. In accordance with this learning process, ‘Team Manager Development’ workshops have been established to complement the creation of a team manager development pathway.

- Objective 5). Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers

The UKSG coordinator associates this objective with the ability to generate quantifiable impact, through relatively little resource expenditure. The objective largely complements existing volunteer programmes across the home countries, such as the YST ‘Young Officials’ project implemented by Volleyball England. This form of straightforward impact has proved popular amongst volleyball NGBs, given that the sport welcomes any opportunity to expand its volunteer database, while generating impressive outcomes for YST as the UKSG policy makers and the Legacy Trust UK as the charity that ultimately controls the UKSG funding purse strings. This perspective is representative of other interviewed UKSG coordinators from the other seven sports investigated.
From 2008 to 2009, Volleyball England saw the numbers of volunteers and officials supporting its annual Inter-Regional Championships increase eight-fold. The UKSG coordinator (who is also responsible for the coordination of the Inter-Regional competition) explained that the increase in event support came about as a direct result of the newly trained UKSG volunteers.

The sport has since taken the opportunity to start a ‘Referee Clinic’ prior to the UKSG. In consideration of the clinic’s potential to develop a fresh pool of high quality referees, the British Volleyball Federation may in future years, contribute to the cost of delivering this clinic. Senior referees, who act tutors for the younger referees, deliver the clinic. The use of both senior and junior referees supports the creation of a ‘volunteer pathway’.

- **Objective 6). Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems**

Through addressing this final objective, the home country volleyball NGBs have benefited from the development of a welfare team that can utilise the multi-sport event experience they have gained at the UKSG at other junior events. In addition, the requirement of the Child Protection in Sport Unit to ensure all UKSG volunteers and officials undergo a CRB check and attend a compulsory safeguarding course has left the volleyball community with an extensive database of appropriately trained human resource.

It is generally echoed across the UKSG sports that it is often challenging to ensure that the voluntary workforce remains up-to-date in the safeguarding workshop content. It is often cited that the more mature volunteers do not understand the legislation surrounding child welfare and hence are dismissive of NGB requests for them to attend safeguarding courses. Even for the larger sports, which have the finance to employ Welfare Officers, adhering to safeguarding legislation can be a difficult process to manage.

In accordance with the comments of other UKSG coordinators, the coordinator for volleyball states that the UKSG has proven really useful with
regards to encouraging all volunteers to attend the necessary welfare courses.

‘The fact that we work with the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) on the UKSG means that more credibility is attached to the safeguarding courses and CRB check. The CPSU make them compulsory for people wanting to be involved in the UKSG, so this has increased the likelihood that coaches and volunteers will attend them. Whenever someone is defensive towards change and questions why we’re toughening up on things like child safety and welfare, we say it is because of the UKSG’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 9th January 2009).

8.3 Analysis of the UK Schools Games’ impact on organisational relationships

As discussed throughout chapters 6 and 7, the UKSG policy has had some positive impact on the inter-organisational relationships existing between YST, home country NGBs and home country SAs with reference to the swimming and table tennis case studies. However, as attention turns towards the analysis of inter-organisational relationships for volleyball, it is clear that the impact of the UKSG has been perceived as overwhelmingly positive for the sport, effectively developing a strengthened network of interaction that reflects characteristics of Marsh & Rhodes’ concept of a policy community (1992). The following paragraphs present data that support this claim and highlight the collaborative working environment that exists between the home country NGBs, despite the fact that volleyball is traditionally a devolved sport. The level of unity across the volleyball governing bodies and the consistency between the approaches they use to implement the UKSG policy is assisted by the sport’s organisational simplicity (when compared to the complex organisational structures found within the swimming and table tennis case studies). The sport does not have the added complication of communicating with separate school sport associations. The Volleyball SAs were disbanded in the 1970s and are now instead represented by School and Youth
Development commissions within the home country governing bodies themselves. Therefore, in contrast to chapters 6 and 7, a discussion of NGB and SA relationships with regards to the UKSG policy does not feature within this analysis chapter.

- **Home country relationships: the impact of devolution on the UKSG**

It has already been highlighted that the governance of volleyball is devolved across the UK, however, there is a considerable amount of collaboration that takes place between the home countries. As a prerequisite to the receipt of funding from YST, the UKSG sports were required to establish a sport specific UKSG Home Country Steering Group that met four times a year and adhered to particular terms of reference. Members of the volleyball steering group have emphasised the significance of the inter-country meetings in relation to the progress that the sport has made towards the six UKSG objectives.

Whereas in sports such as table tennis and swimming, the UKSG steering group meetings have highlighted deeply embedded issues within the sport and left them largely unresolved, volleyball meetings have not unearthed any obvious tensions. Instead, communication at the meetings has identified ways in which the development of volleyball across the UK could be improved, through the accumulation of resource and sharing of ideas and best practice. The topics of discussion at the meetings were not confined to the methods of development and implementation of the UKSG. Occasionally other issues of UK-wide concern, such as Sports Coach UK’s ‘UK Coaching Framework’ policy will reach the agenda. The meetings therefore provide a forum for inter-country discussion. Volleyball interviewees explain that this is an opportunity that has not existed in the sport before.

‘The UKSG have given us a forum…it’s helped us in terms of being more professional and made people more happy to share information’

(Nick Wright, Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).
In particular, Yvonne Saker, the Chair of the newly established Volleyball Wales, was equally supportive of these meetings.

‘The UKSG policy and its steering group meetings brings together all of the home country NGBs and this has been fundamental to the development and creation of Volleyball Wales. We wouldn’t exist without the UKSG. The event and the funding gave us the impetus we needed to get the associated started and the opportunity to discuss how to go about the process with the other home country representatives gave us the support we needed to follow it through’ (Yvonne Saker, Chair of Volleyball Wales, interviewed 17th March 2009).

Here, Yvonne refers not only to the large proportion of UKSG development funding that was allocated to set up Volleyball Wales, but also to the support offered to the struggling NGB by the CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, whose membership on the ‘Small Countries Division’ and ‘Commonwealth Volleyball Association’ vastly accelerated the constitution procedure.

Once Volleyball Wales was officially formed as an NGB, the support mechanisms between the home countries did not cease. Collaborative working continued in order allow a Welsh team to compete in the UKSG. The YST were unable to fund the inclusion of an additional volleyball team for the 2010 UKSG, but rather than admit defeat, Scottish, Northern Irish and English volleyball associations pooled their resources and cut back on annual UKSG expenditure in order to fund the inclusion of Volleyball Wales within the competition.

The supportive atmosphere evident across volleyball in relation to the UKSG reiterates an earlier point, that there is agreement on policy objectives, which according to Gunn (1978) is an important contributing factor to the successful policy implementation. There is agreement across the home countries that the UKSG development funding should be used to develop the competition structure and governance of volleyball across the UK. There is also a shared
understanding that to achieve this, the majority of funding should be focused specifically on the enhancement of the underdeveloped Volleyball Wales. The interviewees explain that this latter focus on Wales will support the sport as a whole as it strives towards the development of four consistent home country competition frameworks that each direct talented volleyball players towards the UKSG as the pinnacle competition. Without the inclusion of Volleyball Wales, it is perceived that the sport could miss out on valuable, talented players who have much to contribute to the success of a GB junior volleyball team.

The nature of sport policy can be extremely competitive. There have been times when home country NGBs of the same sport have fiercely contested for access to limited amounts of funding. It is therefore highly unusual to observe the level of support existing between the volleyball home country NGBs. Whereas evidence from swimming and table tennis suggests there is some effort between the home countries to ‘do what is best for their own nation’ rather than what is best for the sport in terms of GB representation at international level, it is quite the opposite for the case of volleyball.

‘Even though the UKSG is a competition, where you’re trying to beat everyone else, everyone surprisingly seems happy enough to share ideas and encourage one another to develop. Everyone wants to make the competition better because volleyball as a whole will get better as a result’ (Nick Wright, Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

This form of partnership working suggests that there is no need for the ‘power games’ that many theorists have mentioned regarding policy process. Bardach refers to the methods of ‘bargaining, persuasion, and manoeuvring’ that organisations use to push for approaches of policy implementation that reflect their own interests (1977:56). However for volleyball, there has been no need for such tactics since the home countries shares power. Power is distributed evenly across the volleyball organisations, which has led to a harmonised approach to policy implementation. For volleyball, it is knowledge and expertise that shape policy developments, rather than the need to
manipulate other organisations and extend lines of authority (Solesbury 2001). Evidence suggests that there is no desire at present among any of the home country NGBs to increase their current level of influence over the policy process.

In combination, the absence of power battles, volleyball’s small, yet straightforward organisational infrastructure, and the amicable relationship existing between the home country NGBs allows the sport to make fast policy decisions with regards to the implementation of the UKSG. Volleyball representatives explain that the NGBs across the UK are ‘in sync’ with regards to their strategic objectives and what they wish to achieve through the UKSG. These objectives are closely aligned with what the YST wish to achieve from the policy. The favourable conditions for policy delivery have arguably prevented any delay or ‘implementation deficit’ (Pressman & Wildavky 1973) in the progress made with the UKSG policy.

However, these fast decisions are still largely managed by the sport’s UKSG coordinator. This coordinator role is the common denominator across the four home countries and it is questionable as to how much momentum would remain behind UKSG-related decisions if the role were not in place to facilitate home country communication.

‘If the UKSG coordinator post were to disappear, I think it would be significantly hard to drive the whole operation and communication systems between the home countries. The coordinator post is the gel that keeps everybody informed’ (Margaret Ann Fleming, CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

‘The level of influence the posts are allowed to have is a massive barrier for some sports. The investment that YST has put into the UKSG coordinator posts warrants a good level of influence. I’m not sure we get it to the level that we need across all the sports and that’s down to the sport, but also down to the individual. But some sports have come on leaps and bounds as a consequence to the post, so for example, volleyball has a UKSG coordinator with a great deal of influence. They’ve got the foot in the door, they’ve got the ear of the
In consideration of these statements it is clear that the role of UKSG coordinator is near essential for the implementation of the UKSG policy. Perhaps, therefore, Marsh & Rhodes’ (1992) concept of ‘policy community’ is less appropriate than initially thought. The sustainability of the UKSG policy is highly dependent upon one post and therefore the description of a ‘strengthening issue network’ may prove more fruitful in the analysis of policy process.

In review of the characteristics that Marsh & Rhodes use to define a ‘policy community’, some are applicable to the way in which the volleyball NGBs approach the UKSG policy. For example, the membership of the volleyball community reflects a consistently high level of agreement and a value consensus across its members at the policy making and policy implementation ‘phases’ of the policy process. These characteristics, along with the sharing of resource that has already been discussed, reflects the conditions which Gunn has listed as contributing factors to policy success (1978). Additionally, a degree of mutual dependency between the volleyball NGBs has been observed. These characteristics again are consistent with the conceptualisation of a policy community (Marsh & Rhodes 1992).

Despite the identification of policy community characteristics, there are other traits observed which instead resemble a looser ‘issue network’ with regards to policy formation and implementation. For example, membership of the volleyball community, or ‘network’ is not necessarily stable, given the reliance upon the role of UKSG coordinator to hold the group together. Nor is the membership tight and limited since the organisational structure of volleyball is growing. In addition to this the nature of the sport policy (i.e. youth sport development) that volleyball deals with is generally renowned for its weakness and openness to political hijacking by non-sport specific interests (Green 2003). The policy area is arguably unable to insulate itself from the conflicting interests / agendas and concerns of other policy sub-sectors (Houlihan 1991). Chapter 3 explains this point in greater depth, highlighting that youth sport policy has frequently experienced policy spillover from other policy areas that
have utilised youth sport initiatives to improve academic success, address the ‘obesity epidemic’ in the UK or reduce crime rates. This profile therefore has more in common with an issue network than with a policy community.

From a bottom-up perspective on policy implementation, the instability that is associated with the volleyball network prevents the group of NGBs from developing a standardised approach to, or an ability to cope with, the challenges passed down the policy chain from top-level policy decision makers. For example, frequent changes in funding arrangements and the ever expanding work force that the volleyball community has experienced, combined with the increases and changes in staff within other UKSG stakeholder agencies (such as the YST, Fast Track, the British Olympic Federation and the Child Protection in Sport Unit) has prevented volleyball NGBs from progressing the UKSG objectives in direct alignment with their previous intentions. These less than ‘perfect’ policy conditions (complex stakeholder involvement and changes in funding) have required volleyball NGBs to unexpectedly alter their initial plans regarding the UKSG. Bottom-up theorists such as Lipsky (1980) and Elmore (1985) believe that top-down ‘control’ by policy makers (suggested by theorists such as Pressman & Wildavsky 1973) over the policy process is often difficult to achieve given the extent to which ‘street level’ behaviour and inter-organisational interaction can impact on the direction of policy. With an unstable, but strengthening ‘issue network’ characterising the policy process used by volleyball, it is unsurprising that this sport, which is relatively new to the area of youth sport, has yet to develop skills in power negotiation. As a result, there have been some occasions which have limited volleyball’s progress towards the UKSG objectives, such as Fast Track’s ‘business-like approach’ clashing with the requirements of a small and financially hamstrung team sport.

‘We totally respect what Fast Track do and enjoy working with them, but the biggest problem we have, and it’s become more apparent now that hockey have come on board as a second team sport in the event, is that sometimes they don’t understand a team sport. And the implications of having a team sport’ (Senior Volleyball England Official, interviewed 9th January 2009).
- Stakeholder relationships: the level of interaction between the volleyball community and the Youth Sport Trust

Interview data reveal that the general perspective of the volleyball representatives towards the UKSG event, its accompanying objectives and the way in which the YST has managed the policy, is positive. Although the volleyball NGBs were not involved in the formation of the policy’s objectives, the NGB’s strategies still have a strong alignment with the policy. In effect, the sport shares and understands the policy intentions of YST, which is a circumstance that Gunn (1978) highlights as a trait of successful policy implementation. Consistent messages from all volleyball representatives reveal that the sport is willing to work with YST on several youth sport policies and it is hoped that volleyball’s involvement in the UKSG will instigate a lasting close relationship with the charity. Volleyball England’s recent involvement in the government-supported ‘Premier League 4 Sport’ initiative, upon recommendation from YST, suggests that this endeavour is beginning to pay dividends.

There are just five members of the ‘UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group’ and each of these members represent a home country NGB and have senior positions within their organisation: for example, the CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association attends the meetings, as does the chair of Volleyball Wales. The group’s limited membership, coupled with the seniority of members allows the sport to communicate directly with YST, rather than have to convey messages between the sport and the Trust through other intervening decision-making levels within their NGB. In this regard, the communication channels are clear and short with the consequence that policy intentions are clear and the UKSG objectives are more likely to be interpreted accurately and then implemented in a way that is approved by both parties. Gunn (1978) emphasises the need for ‘perfect communication’ if successful policy implementation is to occur (Gunn 1978, cf. Parsons 1995:466).

As volleyball’s strategic aim across the home countries is to build player and staffing capacity, the sport is willing to receive guidance from a range of funding partners, including YST. The difference in history and size of table...
tennis, swimming and volleyball makes for an interesting comparison of each sport’s perspective on the ‘conditional culture’ that now encompasses sport policy, whereby public funding distributed by the sports councils is nowadays only allocated to sports that address an array of targets. These targets are agreed between the NGBs and the sport councils through the development of a ‘four year plan’ (www.sportengland.org accessed 11th November 2010). Funding is no longer available to NGBs that consistently underperform or refuse to address set targets that link to national (and not always sport specific) concerns such as social inclusion. Whereas table tennis and swimming were founded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the volleyball home country NGBs were constituted much more recently between 1955 and 2009. The sport is therefore considerably younger and has come of age within the last decade, during this period of ‘conditionalism’ where sport development is characterised by resource dependency and target-linked policies. Having been less exposed to the ‘expectancy’ or ‘entitlement’ era (whereby sports councils provided funding without so many strings attached, or more specifically, targets-attached), that preceded the conditional culture, volleyball has become accustomed to procedures of professional funding applications and is accepting of the ‘hoops’ which sports councils often expect NGBs to jump through in order to be receive funding. Table tennis and swimming are consequently less accustomed than volleyball to accept the conditional funding regime.

In aligning volleyball’s priorities with those of YST and the home country sports councils (UK Sport is of lesser concern given volleyball’s lack of involvement in international competitions) volleyball has placed itself in a strong position in relation to the delivery of community sport and youth sport policies. To a greater extent than other sports involved in the UKSG, volleyball shares the long-term aspiration of YST and therefore accepts the objectives linked to the UKSG, rather than merely complying in the short term as a way of obtaining the UKSG funding. Borrowing a concept from the ACF, it could be suggested that the ‘policy core’ belief system of volleyball is well aligned with that of YST (Sabatier 1993; Green 2003). The organising bodies share the same ‘basic normative commitments and causal perceptions’ (Green 2003:39).
and therefore prioritise youth and school sport events such as the UKSG and believe that they play a vital role in the development of elite talent and lifelong sports participation.

Although the YST and volleyball possess the same policy core belief systems, evidence reveals that the sport has needed financial and organisational support from YST to progress towards the shared goals and policy objectives. The aforementioned ‘conditional culture’ that characterises current sport policy can perhaps be the cause for this.

‘Our relationships with the more financially dependent sports like judo, fencing and volleyball has given them the boost they needed to work with us and begin to see national development in schools. That funding largely came about through the UKSG and has made a big impact on how we can work with the sports’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).

The issue of funding was the only concern raised by volleyball representatives throughout data collection. Whilst the sport is grateful for the finances it received from YST, it echoed comments from other UKSG sports in that the funding is inadequate to address all six UKSG objectives sufficiently. A lack of resource has been described by Gunn as a concern that can impinge on the achievement of successful policy implementation (1978). From a bottom-up analytical perspective of policy implementation, inadequate supporting finance can be the cause of policy modification through ‘street-level bureaucracy’ behaviour, whereby sports representatives (such as volleyball officials for example) have to alter slightly the pathway of policy in order to ‘cope’ with the resources they are allocated (Lipsky 1980).

‘The biggest issue for us is that the UKSG policy started off with a substantial budget and that has retrospectively been cut year by year…the budget side of things has been intense. I know that there’s always been a philosophy that this programme would integrate in to the home country NGB’s funding streams, but unfortunately for us, our funding streams just don’t stretch that far. Our funding sources have not increased dramatically to match the expectations of the YST and
the needs of the UKSG policy. So that does significantly effect how much extra we can put on beyond the UKSG development funding and how closely we can stick to what YST expects from us’ (Margaret Ann Fleming, CEO of the Scottish Volleyball Association, interviewed 17th March 2009).

In response to the annual decrease in financial support and the uncertain future of the UKSG beyond 2011, Volleyball England has devised a form of ‘coping strategy’ (Hudson 1989) that has not been observed in any other UKSG sport and volleyball home country NGB. Volleyball England opted to set up a contingency fund that could be used to introduce a ‘British Volleyball Championship’ as a replacement for the UKSG. Whilst the contingency fund appears to be part of a well thought out process that displays evidence of forward planning and effort by the NGB to prevent the policy from diverging from its original intentions (as a consequence to changes in funding availability and other policy-linked conditions), the size of the contingency fund is relatively small and unlikely to be able to support a ‘British Volleyball Championships’ without additional financial support. The sport remains highly dependent upon external funding, in accordance with the conditional culture it has become accustomed to.

‘The loss of the UKSG would have a big impact for volleyball. We would lose the catalyst that is driving a lot of development work such as our workforce development and junior pathway work. It would take away the guidance and confidence we have had in recent years to do things in a better and more innovative way in school competitions’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 6th June 2009).

The discussion of conditional culture can support an analysis of the way in which the different sports have addressed the UKSG policy. Using the ACF, stakeholders with a vested interest in, or the capacity to shape or deliver the UKSG policy can be grouped into competing ‘coalitions’ depending on their policy belief systems. Unlike the policy community framework, where the actions of UKSG stakeholders and progress of policy are discussed with
reference to one, loosely bound policy community or issue network, the ACF can explore how different stakeholders can form various coalitions based on their beliefs and policy preferences. The analysis of how these coalitions compete for resources and dominance over policy direction can aid understanding of a policy’s formation and implementation, such as the UKSG.

When combining the data collected from the swimming, table tennis and volleyball case studies and the additional five sports discussed within Chapter 5, it can be suggested that there have been three coalitions of interest to emerge through the application of the ACF. The characteristics of these proposed coalitions are listed in Table 8.2 and will be explored in greater depth as part of the final discussion chapter. Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith propose that mediating between these coalitions are ‘policy brokers’ (1999). For the case of the UKSG, this role is occupied by the lead coordinator of the UKSG, an employee of YST, who is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the UKSG event and accompanying objects are delivered in a way that meets the expectations of both YST and the eight UKSG sports. This lead coordinator attended several UKSG home country steering group meetings, across the eight sports, in an effort to establish a reasonable level of compromise across the coalitions that would not impact on the original aims of the UKSG. Through the application of the ACF the impact of coalition interaction on the implementation of the UKSG policy will be discussed in the final chapter.

Table 8.10: The characteristics of three coalition/interest groups, as suggested through the application of the ACF to the UKSG policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Group</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Example of stakeholders included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation</td>
<td>In support of a professionalized approach to event management. Frequently exploring new ways to improve effectiveness, efficiencies and value for money. Aims to approach UKSG rationally, adhering to business principles. Growing increasingly independent of external funding resources.</td>
<td>Fast Track Swimming NGBs YST Child Protection in Sport Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy</td>
<td>Highly dependent upon public resource. Expectation that these organizations have the freedom to allocate public resource how they wish, to priorities that reflect their interests. Unwilling to explore new alternatives to traditional procedure. Threatened by significant change.</td>
<td>Swimming SAs Table Tennis (as a whole)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis of the UKSG policy thorough the application of the ACF is not entirely convincing for two reasons. Firstly the ‘coalitions’ are not in any obvious competition with one another, suggesting that while a policy broker may be required to mediate between the differing priorities of the UKSG policy stakeholders, the ‘coalitions’ are in fact only a representation of opposing ‘interest groups’. The second limitation to account for is that ‘at least ten years is required for the analysis of policy change’ (Houlihan 2005:173). In consideration of this time-scale, the application of the framework to the UKSG policy and the evaluation of what Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith term as ‘exogenous events’ (1999), may prove inadequate in years to come. The UKSG policy is in its fourth year and therefore the policy may yet to be fully matured. As an example, change could already be taking place within the ‘conditional’ interest group. The list of opportunities that the volleyball community has experienced as a consequence to the UKSG is continuously growing. The sport has enjoyed involvement in the NCF initiative, the ‘Premier League 4 Sport’ programme and the gradually increasing percentage funding that the sport receives from the home country sports councils. Such opportunities were unavailable to volleyball prior to the UKSG, which effectively placed the sport within the ‘conditional’ interest group. The sport has accepted the fact that it has to align the volleyball strategy with the priorities of other funding agencies in order to be in receipt of target-centred funding. However, as a result of increasing opportunity and policy-orientated learning from the successful sports residing in the ‘modernisation’ coalitions, the sport has gradually become more professional in its working practices. With growing ‘effectiveness, efficiency and independence’ (Investing in Change, Deloitte & Touche 2003:1) volleyball is a sport that may be experiencing a transition from the ‘conditional’ interest group, towards the increasingly popular ‘modernisation’ interest group.

‘The UKSG has had a big impact on volleyball in terms of opening doors. It’s still largely dependent on us for support, but the changes it’s
made to its organisation are impressive for such as small NGB’ (Senior official for YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).

Analysis over an extended period of time is needed to confirm this unexpected outcome of the UKSG policy.

### 8.4 Conclusion

Similar to chapters 6 and 7, there have been two key focal points within this chapter: firstly, an exploration of volleyball’s approach to the six UKSG objectives and secondly an analysis of the way in which the UKSG has impacted upon inter-organisational relationships relevant to the sport.

Evidence suggests that the way in which the sport has approached the UKSG objectives corresponds closely to the policy objectives of YST. In this regard, YST have been pleasantly surprised by the sports capacity to respond to the UKSG objectives and implement value-for-money development projects that have led to impressive outcomes.

In addressing the first of the UKSG objectives, unlike many of the UKSG sports, Volleyball England has successful transferred features of the UKSG event presentation to the sport’s annual ‘Inter-Regional Championships’. ‘100% me’ anti-doping information and athlete handbooks have also migrated to Volleyball England’s ‘UKSG qualification’ competition in an effort to address objective 4. Representatives of the sport explain that in view of their sport’s lack of international success and multi-sport event experience, YST’s ambition to provide a multi-sport experience to talented young players was very much shared across the volleyball community.

‘We try to raise the quality of volleyball competitions wherever we can, whether it’s in its presentation, or the standard of play’ (Matt Rogers, UKSG coordinator for Volleyball, interviewed 6th June 2009).

As mentioned here, a second motive for working with YST on the UKSG was the opportunity to raise the standard of play at volleyball competitions. To achieve this, the ‘UKSG Volleyball Home Country Steering Group’ opted to
direct a proportion of the UKSG development funding towards the creation of four consistent NCFs, one that was specific to each home country NGB. Each NCF presented clear and direct pathways of competition that would channel talent from school level ‘mini-volleyball festivals’ to the pinnacle competition of the UKSG. In developing the NCF (and therefore addressing UKSG objectives two and three) the volleyball home countries were given the impetus, funding and support they needed to address the issues of low youth participation in the sport. Several new competitions were introduced to the home country competition pathways (as starred in Figure 8.3), which provided young players with an opportunity to compete outside of adult, and sometimes intimidating, volleyball leagues. Whilst the introduction of new competitions was relatively straightforward for the English, Scottish and Northern Ireland Volleyball Associations (having only limited structure already in place that required the addition, rather than the replacement of competition) the process was not as clear-cut for Volleyball Wales. Prior to 2009, Welsh volleyball was not governed by an NGB and therefore there was very little competition structure provided across the nation for adult players, let alone the younger generation. Consequently, it was unanimously agreed by the members of the UKSG Steering Group, that a large proportion of UKSG development funding was to be directed towards the creation of a new NGB, Volleyball Wales. The sport collectively agreed that the introduction of a new NGB to the sport would lead to an increase of competitive opportunity not just for Wales, but for the rest of the UK too.

Objectives five and six were described as logical developments for the sport and simple to implement and monitor. The UKSG has led to the training of new young volunteers who have supported several other volleyball events since the UKSG. The event has also added credibility to child welfare and safeguarding courses, which has resulted in increased attendance rates by volleyball volunteers and officials.

The discussion regarding the inter-organisational relationship existing between the volleyball home country NGBs revealed that the sport is characterised by collaborative working, direct lines of communication and the
joint desire to increase youth participation rates through the offer of improved competitive opportunity. Several examples of inter-country support were mentioned, with particular focus on the collaborative approach used to create a new governing body for Wales, and pool the NGB’s own resources to financially support the Welsh team’s inclusion in the 2010 UKSG.

To support the analysis of the relationship existing between volleyball and YST, the ACF was used to depict the policy process of the UKSG and in particular, strengthen the understanding of how inter-organisational relationships have shaped the implementation of the policy and its six objectives. The framework identified three potential groups of interests with regards to the UKSG policy. However, these three interest groups were not in competition with one another, suggesting that accurate application of the ACF is not possible. The ACF instead highlights the weakness of the UKSG ‘policy community’, reaffirming that the UKSG displays characteristics of Marsh & Rhodes’ concept of an issue network (1992). With regards to volleyball’s positioning in the identified groups of interests, the sport was positioned within the ‘conditional culture’ coalition whereby NGBs are comfortable and willing to adhere to the target-linked funding that is characteristics of sport policy in modern times. It was noted that because volleyball is a relatively new organisation in comparison to the more long-standing and traditional sports of table tennis and swimming, volleyball has matured during a time when externally obtained funding has become conditional, rather than an ‘expected entitlement’ as it was prior to the establishment of the National Lottery in 1994. Consequently, volleyball has learnt to align its own strategic objectives with those of funding partners such as YST.

The UKSG policy has highlighted the alliance of YST and volleyball as the policy outcomes implemented by the sport are a reflection of the policy intentions of YST. In review of such direct policy implementation, Gunn’s ten factors contributing to policy success were applied to the relationship between volleyball and YST, and between the volleyball home country NGBs (1978). The analysis of collected data revealed that several ‘ideal’ factors were characteristic of the inter-organisational relationships including direct
communication, agreement on policy objectives and few organisational representatives involved in the policy implementation process.

In summary, Volleyball England, the Scottish Volleyball Association, Volleyball Wales and the Northern Ireland Volleyball Association are small, growing and modernising organisations, however they remain dependent upon the conditional funding issued from the sports councils or YST. The sport as a whole is willing to collaborate with YST. In addition, the strategic objectives of the volleyball NGBs reflect those that underpin the UKSG policy. This emphasises the importance of the multi-sport event in the development of volleyball across the UK. The NGBs not only view the event as an opportunity to build their competition frameworks and increase staffing and player capacity, the volleyball community also appreciates the role that the event has in ‘opening the door’ for the sport to further advance its youth development programmes.

‘The UKSG has been a natural progression for volleyball. They didn’t have significant structure in place before, so it has been relatively easy for them to introduce new projects and competitions as they didn’t have to replace any older ones. The UKSG has presented the sport with the opportunity to grow’ (Pauline Harrison, Independent consultant for the UKSG, interviewed 21st January 2009).

The growing profile of the UKSG has improved the reputation of the sport amongst funding partners and sponsors and proven that volleyball is a willing and capable sport.
9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

Empirical contributions made within chapters 5-8 are brought together in this final chapter. In the first section, the UKSG objectives are discussed in relation to how they have been interpreted, negotiated and delivered by the eight UKSG sports explored. Additionally the alignment of the policy’s outcomes with YST’s expectations of the UKSG policy will be analysed.

The second section of the chapter provides conclusions in relation to the three case study sports: swimming, table tennis and volleyball. Cross-case conclusions draw upon the theoretical frameworks and concepts that were discussed in Chapter 3. It is important to emphasise that it was not the goal of this research to ‘test’ theory, only to use the theoretical frameworks to make sense of the data and identify emerging patterns of NGB behaviour that could support more analytical generalizations in relation to youth sport competition.

The final section of the chapter provides reflections on the research process.

9.2 UKSG objectives

The sports were expected to address the objectives (listed in Table 9.1) as a condition of their financially supported involvement in the multi-sport event. However, each sport was allowed a degree of flexibility with regards to how they interpreted the objectives in order to make them relevant to their sport.

Table 9.11: The six UKSG objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UKSG objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve P.E. and school sport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems</td>
<td></td>
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However, the granting of an element of flexibility to the eight sports often resulted in a degree of interpretation that strained the boundary of acceptability to the YST. This is particularly the case for objectives 1-4 that demonstrate considerable disparity in expectations and outcomes.

Objectives 1 and 4 were somewhat problematic for the sports UKSG coordinators in terms of their implementation. Interviewees associated the lack of policy impact (i.e. cascading elements of the UKSG presentation and Olympic and Paralympic values to feeder events) with a lack of policy implementation ownership, volunteer capacity and finance. The UKSG sports felt it was the responsibility of the YST (who managed Fast Track’s visual delivery of the UKSG) to provide the necessary resources for the effective delivery of objectives 1 and 4 at feeder competitions. The YST therefore had to compromise on objectives 1 and 4 and allow for the UKSG to be a standalone, impressive event for the young people across the NGBs to aspire to, as opposed to an event that inspires the presentation and delivery of regional competition.

Sport governing bodies also emphasised the challenge of addressing objectives 2 and 3. These objectives required sport specific development projects to take place independently of the UKSG event. The sports therefore could not generate impetus and momentum behind the objectives simply through association with the event itself. For example, objective 2 requests a ‘step change in the content, structure and presentation of competitive sporting opportunities for young people’. Many of the UKSG sports chose to address this objective through publication of their sport’s NCF (a project introduced prior to the UKSG), however, many of the sports made significant ‘step changes’ to their framework to accommodate the UKSG. Instead, due to the history and tradition that surrounds NGB specific national level competition, most sports view the UKSG as a ‘bonus’ competition, rather than an embedded element of the sport’s strategy. A contributing factor to this disparity in policy expectation and policy outcome is that the devolved UKSG sports experienced difficulty in developing competition pathways that were
applicable across the UK. Each home country has different priorities, traditions and structural capacity and infrastructure.

The title and nature of the UKSG hindered progress towards objective 3. Whilst it would appear, given the title of the UKSG, that the event was a school-orientated competition, in reality the UKSG provided a multi-sport event for talented school-aged pupils, with little or no involvement from the pupil’s school. Because of this confusion, little impact was made with regards to improving school sport and PE (objective 3). It should be highlighted, however, that there was some impact to report back on. Of all the eight sports studied, fencing (which has previously had marginal involvement in school sport) has made considerable steps with regards to objective 3 through its mini and midi versions of the sport. In addition to this, the initial lack of clarity of the positioning of the UKSG meant that relationships between NGBs and SAs have improved. Long-standing issues that kept the two organisational types separate in the past were addressed, or at least acknowledged through the collaboration required for the delivery of the UKSG.

The implementation of objectives 5 and 6 was far less complicated and therefore resulted in a closer alignment of YST expectations and NGB delivery. The delivery of objective 5, in comparison to the other UKSG objectives, achieved the great level of impact. Young officials and volunteers were trained and deployed at the UKSG. Some have since volunteered at local, regional, national and international events. Additionally, sports such as gymnastics developed a ‘volunteer pathway’ to support and encourage young people to stay within their sport beyond their athletic career. There has been a culture change with regards to young volunteers. Through the evidence provided at the UKSG, long-standing members of sports (in particular, table tennis board members) are now realising the skill potential of young people.

With regards to objective 6, many sports already addressed this area of development prior to the UKSG, however the event facilitated this process further. The UKSG provided a reason for change and promoted the importance of child protection and welfare. Many NGBs involved in the UKSG
now have a database of volunteers who are safeguard trained and CRB checked.

The above analysis reveals that some of the UKSG objectives were more straightforward in their implementation than others. Objectives 5 and 6 resulted in impact that aligned with the expectations of YST. These objectives were reported to have minimal scope for reinterpretation, a reasonably high degree of consistency with the strategic aims of the UKSG sports, and a close link to the UKSG event itself, creating significant opportunity to drive the implementation of the objectives forward.

### 9.3 Policy implementation

Several factors contributed to the mismatching of anticipated and actual objective outcomes. As explained in the empirical chapters, these factors (such as inadequate resource, insufficient time, a high number of influential stakeholders and a misunderstanding or disagreement regarding the six UKSG objectives) suggested the possibility that both bottom-up and top-down perspectives on policy implementation could be used to understand the implementation of the UKSG objectives.

The use of theory to explore the policy process of the UKSG provided insight into the process of policy design and the relationship of design to policy delivery. For example, through reference to Gunn’s ten suggested conditions required for perfect top-down implementation of policy (1978), it was possible to provide an assessment (see Appendix I) of how efficient and effective the UKSG policy was in terms of its delivery of the UKSG objectives. It should be recognized that Gunn’s conditions are utilised only as a heuristic device and therefore it provides the research with a useful tool to support analysis and allow for empirical comparison.

Taking Gunn’s first suggested condition, ‘circumstances external to the implementation agency do not impose crippling constraints’, analysis identifies that for the case of the UKSG, this condition was not met. The sports included in the UKSG were, according to UKSG lead coordinator Will Roberts ‘big old
institutions…they are like big old rocks that we’ve got to try and move and they’re heavy and they’re slow and it’s a difficult, challenging process’ (interviewed 12\textsuperscript{th} January 2009). Here it is highlighted that whilst the UKSG presented an opportunity for change through the implementation of policy, there were factors external to the UKSG that had the potential to hinder progress. These factors came in form of:

- Logistical problems associated with devolution (for example, different home countries adhering to different school sport systems);
- Delays in decision-making due to the organisational structure and traditions of some NGBs (for example ETTA with their board of fifty county representatives);
- Unconfirmed financial support (for example, without a confirmed continuation of the UKSG beyond 2011, many UKSG sports were unable to access the home country sports council funding they needed to make larger impact on the six UKSG objectives) and finally;
- Exogenous events such as the change in political administration experienced in 2010 (Labour, to coalition government) and the resultant changes in political priorities and the economic downturn experienced from 2008 onwards and the impact this had on NGB funding.

Gunn also associated perfect policy implementation with ‘a single implementation agency, which need not depend upon other agencies for success’. In consideration of the number of organisations, governing bodies and agencies involved in the coordination and development of the UKSG, it is unsurprising that this condition was not met. There were often moments of miscommunication, delayed progress due to inter-organisational dependencies and differences in opinion when developing and delivering the UKSG. Whilst the number of organisations working together on both developmental and operational projects was challenging to coordinate efficiently, it is important to recognize that for several of the sports, the UKSG presented a welcome avenue to share ideas in a non-resource competitive environment. In this regard, the policy process that surrounds the UKSG
portrays characteristics of a ‘strengthening issue network’ (Marsh & Rhodes 1992).

Gunn’s 7th condition of ‘perfect policy implementation’ (1978) states that there must be ‘complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved’. With minimal use of monitoring, an absence of performance indicators and the flexibility in the wording of the UKSG objectives, the YST were unable to hold sports accountable for a lack of progress. However, with this approach came adaptability, which ensured that the sensitivities of home country relationships were accounted for, rather than ignored. This adaptability (and eventual reinterpretation of the UKSG objectives) allowed for UKSG sports to make specific and relevant impact for their NGBs. In essence, whilst ‘complete understanding and agreement upon objectives’ was not achieved, the policy was able to continue to remain relevant for the very different sports it included. The different ways in which the policy objectives were interpreted, understood and challenged by the UKSG sports can be analysed through reference to Sabatier’s ACF (2007). With each sport’s involvement in the UKSG come different agendas and motivations, or ‘belief systems’ (Sabatier 2007), which reiterates the analysis discussed in the latter stages of Chapter 8 (whereby ‘modern’ sports interpret and prioritise objectives differently to ‘expectant’ sports and ‘conditional’ sports, see Table 8.2).

Finally, through application of Gunn’s tenth condition of perfect policy implementation ‘those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience’, analysis of the research findings suggests that the power relationship between YST (the organisation, which on paper should have authority) and the eight sports was not always one-way and straightforward. The YST did, however, exert considerable influence over the policy area. Given that YST does not contribute significantly to the finances of the sports, it is surprising that YST had quite so much authority in relation to the sport’s involvement in the UKSG policy. Despite the limited financial incentive, many sports chose to remain involved in the multi-sport event, possibly as a result YST’s subtle use of third dimensional power (Lukes 2005). Through several interviewee
statements, it is apparent that the YST’s ideology of modernisation has been
gradually accepted by some of the sports through their involvement in the
UKSG. Whilst this level of influence is less evident in the more traditional
sports such as swimming and athletics, YST have displayed a capacity to
shape and influence the actions and intended policy directions of smaller
sports such as volleyball and fencing, not just in present day, but also in future
policies in review of the sport’s explicit intentions to self-finance future multi-
sport events or projects linked to the UKSG objectives. Analysis reveals that
this level of influence is associated with YST’s flexibility towards the
implementation of UKSG objectives. Whilst the analysis of findings (in
accordance with Gunn’s ten conditions (1978)) suggest that the delivery of the
UKSG policy was far from perfect, it is important to consider that if the YST
were heavier handed and more procedural in their management of the UKSG,
the extent of NGB cooperation may have been compromised.

9.4 The use of theory to analyse the UKSG policy process

It is clear from section 9.3 (and Appendix I) that there were numerous
occasions where the implementation of the UKSG did not fit neatly with
Gunn’s ten conditions for perfect policy implementation (1978). Evidence of
the capacity of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) to adapt and subvert
YST policy was significant. However the sources of this bottom-up capacity
varied across each sport.

For the three case studies, sources appeared to be ideological and / or
structural in nature. The analysis of data specific to devolved sports (such as
swimming and table tennis) suggested that these large, long established
governing bodies were less accommodating of changes linked to the UKSG
objectives and NCF, due to long-standing differences between their home
country associations. These latter case study sports are, in metaphorical
terms, larger and more complicated-shaped rocks to move. They are firmly
placed in the ground, with many obstacles to overcome in order to move from
their original position (or approach to youth sport). In order to move these
‘rocks’, conditions of implementation are key. In accordance with Gunn’s 10 factors, there is a need for a group of policy actors pushing the rock in the same direction, listening to the instructions and feedback from one leader. Table 9.2 provides examples of the ideological and structural challenges experienced by the ‘rocks’ or devolved sports in relation to the implementation of the UKSG policy. Also detailed in Table 9.2 is the more positive outlook of the volleyball governing bodies which are less restricted by the sport’s ideology or entrenched values, but more so by structural factors.

**Table 9.2: Examples of ideological and structural challenges experienced by case study sports when implementing the UKSG policy.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Ideological differences</th>
<th>Consequential structural differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table tennis</td>
<td>The organization of the sport is devolved across four home countries, a GB body and a schools association. Each organization varies in relation to their focus and long-term objectives. For example, the English Table Tennis Association prioritised the rationalization of competition structure, whereas the Table Tennis Association of Wales preferred to build on its existing competition structure. It was therefore difficult for the sports to align their work in order to interpret and address the UKSG objectives in a way that would accommodate all bodies.</td>
<td>As a consequence of the differences in agenda for the table tennis bodies, the UKSG funding was split evenly across the four home countries. This reduced the overall funds available for large-scale UK-wide projects where economies of scale could be exploited. With reduced finances available, it is possible that some large-scale projects were overlooked in order to focus on home country specific smaller and less costly projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>The organization of the sport is devolved across four home countries, a GB body and four school associations. Similar to the above example of table tennis, the complex organizational structure of swimming has highlighted ideological differences, between the home countries and between the NGBs and SAs. For example, the English Schools Swimming Association have prioritized a ‘traditional’ gala-led approach to their competition calendars, whereas the ASA’s preference is for a more modern ‘science-based’ aquatic skill-led approach to competition. Pre-existing and often implicit problems linked to financial arrangements that have existed in the sport prior to the UKSG are made explicit through the UKSG policy focus.</td>
<td>The complex organizational structure of swimming across Britain has resulted in growing tension in recent years with regards to governing body roles, responsibility and how policies (such as the UKSG where multiple organisations are required to interact) should be implemented. For the case of the UKSG, organizational power has been placed in the hands of the home country swimming NGBs, which receive UKSG funding from YST in preference to the swimming SAs. NGBs have since chosen to distribute this funding in accordance with several internally set conditions. The UKSG has therefore inadvertently supported the swimming NGBs to manipulate and control the separate SAs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike swimming and table tennis, volleyball (as a devolved sport also) communicates efficiently and frequently across the four home countries. Each home country NGB advocates a shared vision that the development of youth sport is a priority for the progression of volleyball and therefore a united approach to the UKSG is one that would benefit the whole sport. UKSG funding is allocated per project, rather than per home country as observed within swimming and table tennis.

The relative newness of the volleyball NGBs (with Volleyball Wales only being formed in 2009) has resulted in the sport receiving less sport council funding than other Olympic sports. Volleyball is yet to perform significantly at international level, and therefore the sport is struggling to avoid funding cuts, rather than obtain funding increases. With less overall finance being made available to the sport, the limited number of volleyball staff members struggle to provide the long term resources needed to fully support projects linked to the UKSG. However, it is important to highlight that Volleyball England is one of few NGBs involved in the UKSG that has used its positive attitude towards the multi-sport event to ring fence future sport funding for their continued involvement in the UKSG.

Structural and ideological issues affecting the three case study sports were analysed using two different perspectives on policy implementation. As detailed in Chapter 3, top-down and bottom-up perspectives of policy implementation associate policy inefficiency with different causes. Top-down perspectives (such as Pressman & Wildavsky (1973); Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) and Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981; 1983; 1989) ascribe disparity between policy expectations and outcomes to miscommunication, disagreement and a lack of policy control by drivers of policy. Bottom-up theorists on the other hand associate policy discrepancy with poor processes of negotiation and compromise. For the case of the UKSG, both approaches provide valid insights. Further insights are gained through the utilization of Matland’s ambiguity/conflict contingency model (1995). This model (see Figure 9.1) combines, as opposed to isolates, the perspectives of top-down and bottom-up theorists and presents four forms of policy implementation that can be applied to the various circumstances and stages of the UKSG policy cycle.
Matland (1995) describes four contexts of policy implementation based on the level of policy conflict\textsuperscript{14} and policy ambiguity\textsuperscript{15}. In determining the levels of policy conflict and ambiguity evident in the case of the UKSG policy and assessing these factors from both a bottom-up and top-down perspective of

\textsuperscript{14} Policy conflict: the extent of conflict or congruence when trying to determine the best way to action on an agreed goal (Luce & Raiffa 1957; Raiff 1970; Lave & March 1981).

\textsuperscript{15} Policy ambiguity: the ambiguity of goals and the means to achieve these goals.
policy implementation, Matland's matrix enabled the identification of specific features of the UKSG's policy process.

In the above analysis of the UKSG objectives and the way the NGBs have approached them, it is concluded that forms of both experimental and symbolic policy implementation have taken place.

In exploring 'experimental implementation' first, Matland links high ambiguity with low conflict to a policy. In view of the rushed formation of the UKSG policy and the lack of consultation that occurred in the development of the six UKSG objectives, it is deemed appropriate to associate the initial years of UKSG implementation with haste, experimentation and innovation. The policy was put into practice quickly as a result of relatively brief window of opportunity which opened as a result of the combination of policy, problems and politics (Kingdon 1984). The pace of implementation at the 'local' NGB level resulted in evidence of street level interpretation and coping strategy amongst UKSG coordinators. Due to a lack of initial clarification of UKSG objectives, sports were provided scope for NGBs to interpret the objectives in a way that benefited their own strategies. Here, the ambiguity linked to the policy led to a proliferation of policy interpretations.

Over time and as NGBs became more accustomed to the delivery of the UKSG policy, it appears that Matland's concept of 'symbolic implementation' (high policy conflict and high ambiguity) is more appropriate to describe the latter years of UKSG policy. The variety of NGB and SA interpretations of the six UKSG objectives led to an increasing level of policy conflict within the network of policy actors involved in the UKSG, particularly around issues such as the appropriate use of UKSG development funding. Tensions between NGB home countries and SAs have risen over time, however evidence described in chapters 5-8 would suggest that it is the English NGBs that appear to be dominating decision-making (which is arguably one of the primary sources of the inter-organisational tension).

When both conflict and ambiguity are high, macro-level policy actors responsible for implementation often see their top-down power or influences
diminish and transferred to the micro-level. This resonates well with Lipsky’s
description of bottom-up street-level bureaucracy (1980). As the UKSG policy
is reinterpreted to accommodate or ‘cope’ with local and sport specific
circumstances, effective top-down policy implementation became less
obvious.

This flexibility, as a consequence of high policy ambiguity and conflict, gave
some of the UKSG policy actors the opportunity to influence the policy agenda
and strongly voice their preferred direction of policy implementation. One
policy actor that was particularly vocal in the direction of the UKSG at
decision-making level was ASA and British Swimming CEO David Sparkes,
whose involvement in the event was largely dependent on the YST’s
continued acknowledgement of swimming’s strategic priorities.

In order to avoid further policy conflict, the sports of swimming and table
tennis in particular, increased their policy focus on UKSG objective five
(volunteers and officials) as opposed to the more complex and ambiguous
objectives two and three. Comments collected from the NGB’s UKSG
coordinator explained that this focus ensured some progress towards UKSG
objectives was made, due to an avoidance of controversy and disagreement
over policy goals and actions that had the potential to contribute to pre-
existing tensions between home country NGBs.

In combination with other factors, the evidence that sports have been
selective in relation to the six objectives (especially objective five), suggests
that the implementation of the UKSG policy has been far from effective.
However, even the prioritization of objective five has not been addressed
consistently across the sports, given their variety in structures, strategies,
supporting financial and human resources and interpretations of objectives.

In summary, both the top-down and bottom-up perspectives on
implementation have proved useful in the analysis of the UKSG policy. Firstly,
evidence has highlighted the prescriptive approach adopted by the YST and
the attempt to use the Trust’s control over access to UKSG funding as the
foundation for the top-down strategy for implementation. In their response to
the Trust’s strategy, the sports developed projects that were linked, but not accurately aligned with the objectives. This mismatch in terms of the policy expectations of the Trust and policy outcomes is partly explained by the specific implementation conditions, such as insufficient resources or a lack of agreement on policy direction across a sport’s home country NGBs. In response to the way the UKSG sports altered or subtly reinterpreted the policy’s objectives, the YST demonstrated a pragmatic willingness to accept a degree of interpretation of objectives to take account of the particular resource capacities and political tensions within individual sports. It became clear that both the YST and the sports were aware of their mutual dependence. As a consequence, policy implementation displayed characteristics that resonate with Lipsky’s bottom-up notion of street-level bureaucracy.

Whereas the top-down perspective would associate the sport’s reinterpretations of the UKSG objectives (and the ‘implementation deficit’ [Pressman & Wildavsky 1973] that may have occurred as a result) with a lack of decision-maker control and therefore policy failure, bottom-up theorists link the delay in implementation with the opportunity to learn and develop negotiation skills at a street-level. According to scholars such as Lipsky (1980), deliverers of policy improve their capacity to cope with less than favourable conditions for policy implementation and learn to reinterpret and shape policy objectives to achieve outcomes which protect their own agendas, whilst remaining loosely connected to the original intentions of the policy’s decision makers. In essence, street level bureaucrats become increasingly more effective at playing the ‘implementation game’ whereby their own (or their sport’s) interests are reflected in the outcomes of the end policy delivered (Bardach 1977:56). Matland (1995) would refer to this as a balance of policy ambiguity and policy conflict (refer to Chapter 3 for more detailed discussion of these preferred conditions). Theorists such as Sabatier (1993) would imply that the improved policy conditions are a consequence of policy learning over time between advocacy coalitions. The fast changing nature of sport policy can make it challenging for the case study sports and the YST for that matter, to learn from the implementation strategies adopted by other actors.
9.5 Policy implementation and meso-level theory

Policy implementation is part of a wider policy process and therefore analysis has been supported through reference to three meso-level frameworks. Whilst each of these frameworks contributed to the analysis and extended understanding of the development and implementation of the UKSG, some have generated sharper insight at different phases of analysis:

- The Multiple Streams approach (Kingdon 1984) which proved particularly useful in the analysis of Chapter 7 (case study two: table tennis);
- The Policy Network approach (Marsh & Rhodes 1992) which proved particularly useful in the analysis of Chapter 8 (case study three: Volleyball) and;
- The ACF (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999) which proved particularly useful in the analysis of Chapter 6 (case study one: swimming) and also in the latter stages of Chapter 8 where cross case comparisons were made.

All three frameworks were useful in sensitizing the researcher to a wide range of aspects of the policy process and thus informed the overall analysis.

The ACF supported the exploration of the relationships and shared belief systems (‘secondary aspects’) between the YST and other UKSG-linked organisations (in particular swimming and volleyball) and exploring how talent development and youth related goals are aligned through the UKSG policy. The attention that the framework directs to coalitions and inter-organisational dependencies highlights that the YST is not as independent as one might initially assume. In comparison to funding agencies such as UK Sport or Sport England, YST is less financially important to NGBs. As already mentioned, the charity is unable to support sports with significant funding in connection with their policies and programmes. As a consequence, evidence suggests that the YST is reliant on its capacity to subtly persuade NGBs, through a form of third dimensional power (Lukes 1974), into accepting ownership over YST policies. Whilst this acceptance of policy ownership is evident in some of the
UKSG sports (volleyball for example has embraced and extended the UKSG policy) it is less obvious in the larger, longer established and more organizationally complex governing bodies such as athletics and gymnastics. For these sports, the YST is unable to exercise the same degree of influence (second dimensional power [Bardach & Baratz 1962]) as available to Sport England and UK Sport. By borrowing concepts from the ACF, the researcher was able to unearth three clear clusters of interests (see Chapter 8): Modernisation sports (professional, efficient and business driven organisations), Expectancy sports (traditional organisations dependent upon public resource) and Conditional sports (strategic organisations, dependent upon public resource, but willing to monitor progress in return). In doing so, the actions of each of the studied UKSG sports and organisations were better understood.

The application of the ACF also supported the researcher’s understanding of the home country divisions witnessed in swimming (see Chapter 6) whereby reference was made to two geographical coalitions (Scottish swimming and swimming organisations in the rest of the UK) with differing priorities and perspectives of how to develop swimming.

Marsh & Rhodes’ concept of policy communities and policy networks (1992a), although not especially useful at explaining policy formation and change the theory proved useful in the analysis of the volleyball’s involvement in the UKSG and the strengthening issue network that the sport has formed around the policy. This network, which has been manufactured by the DCMS and YST, provided volleyball, in conjunction with other sports involved with the policy, with an opportunity to engage and learn from one another. However, any mutual dependencies beyond this sharing of best practice are minimal, implying that the network is unlikely to strengthen or even stay in place beyond the life of the UKSG policy.

Finally, the analysis of the UKSG policy process through the application of Kingdon’s multiple streams approach (1984) highlighted interesting opportunistic behaviour by the TTAW, whereby the organisation exploited conditions of combining policy, politics and problem streams to pursue non-
UKSG agenda and remain independent from the rest of the UK’s table tennis associations. Through its application, the approach was able to highlight that table tennis as a sport was slow to make decisions which, in spite of the YST’s efforts to encourage quicker and UK-wide representative action, ultimately allowed room for the TTAW to make use of the combining policy, problems and politics streams for their own benefit.

Each of the meso-level frameworks selected as heuristic tools in Chapter 3 proved useful in the analysis of the UKSG policy, but as with most empirical studies of policy, not one of the frameworks were able to neatly explain the whole of the UKSG policy development. Instead, each framework was used when appropriate to gain insight across the different case studies. The differing issues that were of significance in chapters 6 to 8 were accounted for and explained effectively by at least one of meso-level frameworks. The use of all three frameworks was therefore needed to gain a full understanding of the UKSG policy and the selected three case studies.

9.6 Policy process and theories of power

Whilst the study of power was not the central concern in the exploration of the UKSG objectives, its consideration did help to further understanding of the way the UKSG policy progressed. Three dimensions of power were referred to (Lukes 1974) when comparing the extent to which the eight UKSG adhered to the YST’s intentions for the UKSG. Throughout analysis, it became evident that the first dimension of power attributed to Dahl (1963) was the most obvious of dimensions used. The YST offered financial incentives (through UKSG development and operational funding) in return for the eight UKSG sport’s policy compliance. However, the impact of this form of power was lessened through YST’s lack of sanction when targets were not met by the sports. In addition, the extent of the financial incentive was minimal in comparison to the government support that the sports received from other sport organisations such as UK Sport and the Home Country Sports Councils.

The use of non-decision making is a second dimension of power developed by Bachrach & Baratz (1962). Their theory, that power can be exerted when
individuals deliberately place barriers in the way of the consideration of alternative options, was more difficult to identify in the UKSG policy process. It became evident that attempts by the YST to prevent alternative policy options to the six UKSG objectives were later undermined as a result of street level interpretation. Due to the number of actors that were involved in the UKSG policy, as the delivery of the UKSG objectives became localized and passed to new policy actors, the six UKSG objectives became diluted and reinterpreted to suit local circumstance.

Lukes’ third dimension of power details how power can be exerted through the subtle shaping and influencing of the opposition’s attitudes and beliefs (1974). Again, this form of power is difficult to capture through data collection. It is not observable, but instead implied through analysis. For the case of the UKSG, the use of third dimensional power was evident through the YST’s three-pronged approach to the modernization of youth sport. Evidence suggests that the UKSG policy supported existing programmes such as the NCF and CMs in order to gradually alter the way NGBs approached sport for children and young people. This form of power proved the most successful for the YST in terms of long term, embedded change amongst the NGBs. Sports such as volleyball, fencing and swimming now regularly refer to their ongoing commitment to youth sport in their strategic plans.

9.7 Reflections on the research process

This section draws on issues that were highlighted throughout the research process. Through reflecting upon key challenges and successes experienced by the researcher, this section reviews the appropriateness of the research design outlined in Chapter 4 and the challenges faced during the research process. This review of process then progresses into recommendations for future research in the subject area.

As already mentioned, a number of models and frameworks were used to inform the analysis of the UKSG. It is important to recognize that the research was not primarily concerned to test the validity of one particular model or framework, but rather to use a range of models and frameworks as resources
to guide the process of investigation and data interpretation. In this regard, this strategy proved appropriate for this study. In combination, the three perspectives on the policy process, three dimensions of power and the two opposing assumptions regarding policy implementation provided a rich set of resources to inform the analysis of the UKSG. In particular, the use of the varying bodies of theory (policy process, policy implementation and power) proved capable of illuminating the policy process from a variety of perspectives thus requiring the researcher to challenge data interpretation. The utilization of a range of bodies of theory required the researcher to constantly reflect on the validity of her interpretation of data.

Although the use of theory quite clearly supported the analysis of data, the collection of data was not always straightforward and in perfect alignment with the intended methods outlined in chapter 4. The problems and issues that arose will now be discussed along with how they were resolved or minimized.

The research project was a servant of two masters throughout its duration. Two, occasionally competing requirements were asked of the research and the researcher:

- meet the expectations of the funding body, the YST
- undertake a theoretically informed evaluation of the implementation of the UKSG.

The challenge lay in balancing the pragmatic requirements of the funder and demonstrating sensitivity to the political context within which the YST operated on the one hand, and a need for theoretically informed analysis. Whilst regular contact with the funding body prevented significant conflicts between these two requirements, there were occasions when YST were reluctant to accept findings that did not fit comfortably with their organisation’s aims and objectives. This occasionally led to the collection of further data to reinforce findings. Whilst it is useful to have such frequent contact with a large sports organization (for their contacts and research facilitation) situations such as these hindered the speed at which the project moved forward. However,
the validity and accuracy of the research was enhanced as a result of the additional data collection.

A second challenge experienced by the researcher was the sheer number of interviewees who potentially had information to share. With eight sports included in the study, each including various sporting bodies representing the home countries and separate school sport associations, the research had access to over forty additional interviewees. Due to time and financial constraints placed on the research, it was decided early in the design of the research that the number of interviewees would be capped at 55. In addition, an interviewee would not be included in the data collection if:

- They had been recommended by only one (as opposed to two or more) previous interviewees as part of a snowball sampling method
- They did not meet the sampling criteria outlined in Chapter 4.
- They had only of peripheral involvement in the UKSG and were associated with the five non-case study sports.

The willingness of potential interviewees to be involved in the UKSG research was high, emphasizing the need for the above mentioned interviewee cap. Just one potential interviewee (from TTAW) declined involvement in the study due to time constraints. As a consequence of this high level of access (and a capacity for the researcher to establish rapport with the interviewees), a large amount of grey literature was collected during the interview process. The close working relationship that facilitated this access was supported by YST, who put the researcher in contact with the UKSG coordinators for each sport through invitation to internal UKSG meetings. Initially concerns arose that these sport representatives would be suspicious of the researcher’s role at the meetings given her association with the YST (the employer of the sport representatives). These concerns were soon reduced through frequent informal discussions between the researcher and the interviewees, however as with all interviewer-interviewee interaction, the potential for researcher bias remains. The triangulation of data collected through various methods and the two-phase interview process used with the UKSG coordinators proved to be
successful in reducing bias and identifying potential anomalies resulting from interviewee and interviewer interactions.

The use of triangulation also supported the varying quality of data collected through semi-structured interviews. In most cases, the interviewees were highly knowledgeable of the UKSG policy and could provide both factual information and informed opinion. However, on some occasions, interviewees were further removed from the policy and therefore were unable to answer the semi-structured questions. Techniques such as probing only further highlighted the lack of topic knowledge when interviewees digressed. However, the lack of awareness of the objectives and mode of delivery of the UKSG did not prevent some interviewees, often occupying senior positions in NGBs, from processing strong opinion about the UKSG. The lack of awareness of UKSG objectives contrasted with the important role of these interviewees in affecting the delivery and impact of the UKSG. The prominence of this group of interviewees added weight to the bottom-up analyses of the implementation process.

Other challenges associated with the research related to the project’s evolving nature. As a way of managing the expectations of the research’s funding body (YST), the review of existing literature and theory supporting the analysis of the research findings took place at the same time as data collection. Whilst this proved difficult for the researcher at times, given the changing nature of the research process, its fluidity allowed for a more accurate and relevant approach to data collection. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with the eight UKSG coordinators. The initial round facilitated the shaping of the research, with the second round taking place upon completion of the literature review to explore further the common key issues.

9.8 Summary observation in relation to the research questions

The findings from the three case study sports (supported by the data collected from the five other investigated sports) make for interesting conclusions in relation to the three research questions below:
1. What are the key impacts of the UKSG on the competition structures of the eight sports?

Through investigating the eight sports' approach to the six UKSG objectives, empirical evidence was collected that related specifically to objectives 2 and 3. These objectives in particular related to the sport's approach to youth competition and their newly established NCF. Evidence identified these objectives as the most challenging of the 6 to address, due to the looseness of their definition and scope for reinterpretation across and within the sport organisations. Sports such as volleyball, associated their success with youth competition development projects that were introduced independently to the UKSG policy, with the additional resources provided by the YST and the structure of the UKSG that enabled the NGBs to drive forward their development strategy.

2. What is the relationship between the key organisations involved in the UKSG and the National Competition Framework? And 3. What is the perceived role of each of the organisations involved in the UKSG and the National Competition Framework?

Through utilizing a wide range of policy theories, empirical data were collected to identify who contributed to the UKSG and NCF policies, how significant their contributions were how contributing organisations related to one another through policy development and implementation. In particular, reference to Gunn’s ten suggested conditions for perfect top-down implementation of policy (1978) proved a useful heuristic device. The analysis highlighted where key organisations (identified through Sabatier & Jenkins Smith’s advocacy coalition framework [1999] and Marsh & Rhodes’ policy network theory [1992a]) such as YST, NGBs and SAs failed to agree on the specification and interpretation of objectives and policy boundaries. This analysis, combined with the use of Matland’s (1995) typology of policy implementation, allowed for the identification of structural and ideological differences between the three
case study sports (see Table 9.2). In turn, the identification of these differences informed analysis of the inter-organisational power relationships that existed between governing bodies and helped to explain how varying perspectives on policy implementation (top-down vs bottom-up) led to mismatches in policy expectations and policy outcomes.

The findings generated by the research have proved useful to several sport organisations (namely the funding body YST and the three chosen case study sports). The empirical evidence proved useful in the shaping of subsequent youth sport policies announced by the recently elected coalition government, such as the ‘School Games’ (a transformation of the original Labour-backed UKSG). One important outcome of this research has been to highlight the importance of the relationships between NGBs and SAs and the need for a more systematic analysis and review of the nature of the current relationship and its likely future directions. Through the YST’s reflection on the research findings, the School Games will now have a greater focus on school team development and a strengthened link between SAs and NGBs.

In summary, the research design adopted for the study proved to be effective, remaining in line with the task in hand, yet being flexible enough to accurately address the key research questions outlined above. It is recognized, however, that there is room for improvement in the study’s design and implementation in order to further enhance the quality of data and extend empirical knowledge of the UKSG policy. If the study were to be replicated, one refinement that could be made to benefit the research is the order of interviewees. A change in the interviewing procedure would see UKSG coordinators and deliverers of the UKSG policy being interviewed prior to those who made and developed the original UKSG policy. The rationale for this is linked to the knowledge level of the former. Policy deliverers provided the research with more contemporary insight than individuals who were involved in conceptualising the UKSG.

An additional change that may benefit the research if repeated relates to the research method. The researcher would like to expand the methodology used to incorporate quantitative techniques. For example, a questionnaire could be used to explore the opinions of a larger and more representative sample. The
addition of quantitative methods may complement the current qualitative methodology used in the research through triangulation.

Finally, there is the potential to explore Matland’s Ambiguity-Conflict matrix further as part of a longitudinal study. In future projects linked to the implementation of the UKSG it may prove insightful to investigate each type of Matland’s policy implementation typology could be applied over time to the eight UKSG sports. Matland’s model could then be utilized further to explore how forms of policy learning, coping strategies and what Bardach refers to the ‘implementation game’ (1977), can impact on how the UKSG sport organisations chose to implement the policy.
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## Appendix A

Summary of meetings and events attended as part of phase one and phase two of research design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Date</th>
<th>Meeting / Event Title</th>
<th>Brief Description of Meeting / Event</th>
<th>Groups of Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18/09/2007</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/11/2007</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/01/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/02/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/03/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/05/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/05/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Local Organising Committee Meeting</td>
<td>Discussions regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself, with specific reference to local organisers and community development programmes.</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; Members of the Local Authorities involved; Volunteer Manager; Community Development Manager; Cultural Officers; Facility / Venue Managers; Single Point of Contact for Host City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06/2008 – 07/06/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Team Manager Orientation</td>
<td>Training day provided for all Team Managers, Welfare Officers and Team Attaches recruited for the UKSG</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; Local Volunteer Manager; British Olympic Federation; Sports Coach UK; UK Sport; Medical Team; Team Managers, Welfare Officers and Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/06/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Local Organising Committee Meeting</td>
<td>Discussions regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself, with specific reference to local organisers and community development programmes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/07/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; Members of the Local Authorities involved; Volunteer Manager; Community Development Manager; Cultural Officers; Facility / Venue Managers; Single Point of Contact for Host City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/08/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Launch Press Conference</td>
<td>Media launch of the UKSG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/08/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Future Host City Tour Day – all venues and sports</td>
<td>National press, Local press, Fast Track, Rebecca Adlington (GB Olympic gold medalist swimmer), Jason Gardner (ex-Olympian and UKSG Ambassador), Steve Grainger Youth Sport Trust.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/08/2008</td>
<td>UKSG - Swimming</td>
<td>One day spent observing the swimming event at the UKSG, as a spectator and as a media representative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/08/2008</td>
<td>UKSG – Judo; Gymnastics; Hockey; Badminton</td>
<td>One day spent observing the variety of events at the UKSG, as a spectator and as a media representative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/09/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Group Meeting Wash Up</td>
<td>Summary of UKSG. Opportunity for honest evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/11/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/11/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Meeting Type</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Home Countries Steering Group Meeting</td>
<td>An opportunity for several sporting home country representatives to discuss the future and current progression of the UKSG. Discussions made to form consensus.</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Sport Home Country Representatives from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; 3 UKSG Coordinators who are presenting to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/02/2009</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/05/2009</td>
<td>UKSG Operations Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion regarding the organisation of the UKSG event itself</td>
<td>Fast Track; Youth Sport Trust; British Olympic Federation; NSPCC; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/2008</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/08/2009</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/11/2009</td>
<td>UKSG Development Group Meeting</td>
<td>Discussion relating to how the UKSG can be used to develop the youth pathways in competition for each sport</td>
<td>Youth Sport Trust; Mutual advisor; Single point of contact for each sport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

Summary of interviews completed as part of phase one and phase two of research design. [Phase 1 interviews in Bold]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Interviewee Name</th>
<th>Interviewee Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29/10/2008</td>
<td>Suzi Bowen</td>
<td>Swimming volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/10/2008</td>
<td>Tsubasa Nakagowa</td>
<td>Swimming competitor at UKSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/11/2008</td>
<td>Rachel O'Bryan</td>
<td>Competition Manager Lead at YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/01/2009</td>
<td>Alison Oliver</td>
<td>Sports Director at YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/01/2009</td>
<td>Guin Batton</td>
<td>Head of Performance at YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/01/2009</td>
<td>Louise Satherley</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/01/2009</td>
<td>Yvette Heywood</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/01/2009</td>
<td>Matt Rogers</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>Chelsea Warr</td>
<td>UK Sport Performance lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>Roger Davis</td>
<td>National Development Manager for YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2009</td>
<td>Will Roberts</td>
<td>UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/01/2009</td>
<td>Martin Ireland</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for table tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/01/2009</td>
<td>Dermot Heslop</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for judo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/01/2009</td>
<td>Stuart Attwell &amp; Rob Logan</td>
<td>UKSG coordinators for athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/01/2009</td>
<td>Anneli MacDonald</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for badminton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/01/2009</td>
<td>Pauline Harrison</td>
<td>YST consultant for the UKSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/01/2009</td>
<td>Champion Ambassadors</td>
<td>Champion ambassador re-launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/02/2009</td>
<td>Neil Brown</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/02/2009</td>
<td>David Sparkes</td>
<td>CEO of the ASA and British Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/02/2009</td>
<td>Richard Caborn</td>
<td>ex Minister for Sport and President of the UKSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/02/2009</td>
<td>Lisa Wainwright</td>
<td>CEO of Volleyball England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/03/2009</td>
<td>Mark de St Croix</td>
<td>Fast Track Account Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/03/2009</td>
<td>John Arnold (Table tennis schools)</td>
<td>President of the English Schools Table Tennis Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/03/2009</td>
<td>Margaret-Ann Flemming</td>
<td>CEO of Scottish Volleyball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/03/2009</td>
<td>Nick Wright (Volleyball)</td>
<td>Development Officer for Northern Ireland Volleyball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/03/2009</td>
<td>Yvonne Saker (volleyball)</td>
<td>Chair of Volleyball Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/03/2009</td>
<td>Leo Trench (Volleyball)</td>
<td>Talent Manager for Volleyball England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/03/2009</td>
<td>Dennis Yeoman Swimming</td>
<td>Swimming NGB England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/03/2009</td>
<td>Mavis Fox Swimming</td>
<td>Swimming school association England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04/2009</td>
<td>Steve Grainger</td>
<td>CEO of YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/04/2009</td>
<td>Alex Murdoch</td>
<td>Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association and British Table Tennis Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/2009</td>
<td>Sue Maughan</td>
<td>Senior National Governing Body Services Officer for the Sports Council for Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/2009</td>
<td>Richard Yule</td>
<td>CEO of English Table tennis Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/04/2009</td>
<td>Dorothy Roberts</td>
<td>CEO Swimming Scotland rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/04/2009</td>
<td>Mike Diaper</td>
<td>Executive Director of Children and Young People for Sport England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/04/2009</td>
<td>Leigh Robinson</td>
<td>ASA board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2009</td>
<td>Alan Macmillian</td>
<td>Employee representative of Sportscotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/05/2009</td>
<td>Hannah Carey</td>
<td>Champion ambassador volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/05/2009</td>
<td>Tony Phillips</td>
<td>Senior official, Irish Table Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/05/2009</td>
<td>Norma Bowman</td>
<td>Employee representative of Sports Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/2009</td>
<td>Colin Chaytors</td>
<td>CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/05/2009</td>
<td>Phil Chamberlain</td>
<td>Director of Strategy and External Relations for Legacy Trust UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/05/2009</td>
<td>Robert James</td>
<td>Swimming Wales representative and senior official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06/2009</td>
<td>Yvette Heywood</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/06/2009</td>
<td>Matt Rogers</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/06/2009</td>
<td>Ron Davis</td>
<td>Table Tennis Wales representative and senior official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/06/2009</td>
<td>Martin Ireland</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for table tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/06/2009</td>
<td>Anna Payne</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Sport Unit, DCMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/06/2009</td>
<td>Ian Broadbridge</td>
<td>DCSF PE department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/06/2009</td>
<td>Stuart Attwell &amp; Rob Logan</td>
<td>UKSG coordinators for athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/06/2009</td>
<td>Colin Allen</td>
<td>Sports Coach UK employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/2009</td>
<td>Dermot Heslop</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for Judo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2009</td>
<td>Anneli MacDonald</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for Badminton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/07/2009</td>
<td>Neil Brown</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for Fencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/08/2009</td>
<td>Louise Satherley</td>
<td>UKSG coordinator for gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/08/2009</td>
<td>Steen Hansen</td>
<td>Head coach or performance for English Table Tennis Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/08/2009</td>
<td>Jennie Jordan</td>
<td>Competition Manager lead at YST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/09/2009</td>
<td>Simon Wergan</td>
<td>YST head of talent and competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/09/2009</td>
<td>6 UKSG attendees</td>
<td>Competition Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/09/2009</td>
<td>Howard Todd</td>
<td>Chair of British Schools Gymnastics Association - England team manager for gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/09/2009</td>
<td>Russell Findlay</td>
<td>CEO of the London Youth Games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix C

## INTERVIEW DIARY WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee Job Title and Company:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date &amp; Time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Interview &amp; Notes of environment (noisy, relaxed, others present etc):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Question Response Notes**  
(Body Language & Backup notes): (Label for each Question – e.g. Q.a – Prompt 1) |  |
| Theme 1 |  |
| Theme 2 |  |
| Theme 3 |  |
| Theme 4 |  |
| Theme 5 |  |
| Theme 6 |  |
| Researcher personal commentary statements |  |
Appendix D

Participant Information Sheet Example

The impact of the UK School Games on the competition structure of eight sports

*School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK, LE11 3TU*

**Investigators**

Prof. Barrie Houlihan (Professor in Sport and Leisure Policy)  
Miss Sarah Melville (Ph.D. student)

**Study Overview**

The UK School Games is a multi-sport event for the UK’s elite young athletes of school age. This research project aims to identify and examine the impact of these Games, on the national competition structures of eight of the sports currently represented at the UK School Games. More specifically the research aims to identify the ways in which the UK School Games differs between sports, the extent to which the UK School Games have been integrated into the National School Competition Framework of the eight sports, and the ways in which the Games could be further capitalised on to develop and improve competitive structures. The 8 sports to be included are: athletics, badminton, fencing, gymnastics, judo, swimming, table tennis and volleyball. The research will encompass an examination of the impact of the UK School Games on both able-bodied and disability competition structures and development strategies.

**Subject Selection**

If you chose to take part in this research project, your suitability for the study will be judged upon the following criteria:

- You are involved within the organisation or development of the UK School Games in a senior management and/or strategic capacity.
- Sport-specific representatives are based within one of the eight following sports: Athletics; Swimming; Fencing; Volleyball; Gymnastics; Judo; Badminton; and Table Tennis.
- Non sport-specific representatives are based within one of the following organisations: the Youth Sport Trust; School Sport Partnerships and Fast Track.

It is important that you notify researchers if you do not fulfil these criteria.

**It should be noted that you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.**
**Methods**

You will be invited to attend a semi-structured interview in a location and on a date that is mutually agreed and of most convenience to yourself. Within this interview, the UK School Games will be discussed in depth, giving you the opportunity to voice your opinions with regards to how the Games are impacting upon youth sport and sport in general.

A brief overview of the types of questions that may be asked during the interview are stated below:

- What changes have been made to your sport’s competition framework since volleyball joined the UK School Games?
- Have the UK School Games had any impact on the way your governing body implements its strategies? Has it taken on a more modern approach?
- What do you think the underlying motives were behind volleyball’s decision to join the UK School Games?
- What is the working relationship like between the Youth Sport Trust and volleyball?

The topics that will be discussed are of a non-invasive nature and your answers can be referred to anomalously in any written text if you would prefer. The interview will last between 60-90mins and will be audio recorded. Written notes will also be taken throughout the interview in case of any technical failure.

**Possible benefits of taking part**

The interview will give you, as a representative of your sport, the opportunity to highlight the positive and negative experiences you have encountered as a result of the UK School Games initiative. As an outcome of the study’s collective comments, we can look to the future and build upon the current UK School Games and the National School Competition Framework.

In addition to this, you will hopefully find the experience of being a subject for a research study extremely interesting. You will also be playing your own part in contributing to the existing body of scientific knowledge.

**Confidentiality**

All data will be dealt with under the strictest of guidelines and according to the Data Protection Act. You will be numerically coded and your data will be discussed amongst only the lead investigators.

**Further Information**

If you require any further information or you would like to discuss the study with the investigators please contact:

Miss Sarah Melville
Tel No: 07886851150
E-mail: S.Melville@lboro.ac.uk

Prof. Barrie Houlihan
Tel No : 01509 226364
E-Mail: B.M.J.Houlihan@lboro.ac.uk
## Appendix E

A summary of the perspective and organisational climate of the eight UKSG sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives for involvement in the UKSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athletics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motives for involvement generally reflect the avoidance of ‘missing out’. The UKSG is perceived as a highly politicised event, which major sports cannot afford to decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• UKA maintains that it embraces the philosophy underpinning the UKSG. It asserts that it is not in the UKSG for the profile, nor the funding. The NGB instead claims that it wants to use the event to make a positive change in its competition provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Badminton</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motives generally reflect a desire to improve youth sport. In particular, the NGB feels that the UKSG presents the sport with a high profile event that can catalyse change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fencing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prior to its involvement in the UKSG, British Fencing had little connection with the YST. The offer to be involved in the event was therefore snapped up as part of a vital inroad into the development of youth sport. The supporting UKSG development funding and the support of a UKSG coordinator role were also perceived as attractive offers. The event has created an opportunity to publicise and improve the image of the sport for young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gymnastics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Similar to athletics, motives for gymnastics’ involvement generally reflected the avoidance of ‘missing out’. The UKSG were perceived as a highly politicised event, which major sports cannot afford to decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is worth noting that an initial misconception that the UKSG would offer the sport a ‘free event’ became the basis of the sports agreed involvement. Whilst this was subsequently clarified by the YST, the British Gymnastics Association (BGA) had not anticipated that the development funding provided to their NGB would decrease by £5,000 each year. If the BGA had been fully aware of this from the conception of the UKSG, the NGB would have been less willing to be involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prior to its involvement in the UKSG, The British Judo Association (BJA) was associated with the YST, but not to a large extent. The BJA therefore saw the UKSG as an opportunity to build on their relationship with the Trust and complement their work on the NCF. In addition the BJA viewed the UKSG funding as way of providing the much-needed financial support to renew its out-dated competition manual and strengthen the quality of the sport in its weakest home nation, Northern Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swimming</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The sport’s involvement in the UKSG was not motivated by the UKSG funding and the need to develop a NCF, instead, British Swimming used the event as a catalyst for cultural change. Refer to chapter 6 for fuller discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table tennis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motives for involvement generally reflect the desire to initiate a cultural change through a modernisation programme. Chapter 7 provides fuller discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volleyball</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volleyball’s motive for involvement reflects a whole sport desire to develop youth pathways through the aid of UKSG funding and UKSG event visibility. See Chapter 8 for more detailed analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Perspective on the UKSG

<p>| <strong>Athletics</strong> |
| • The UKSG development funding is not perceived to be of significant value to the sport, this is in comparison to alternative and much larger resource that the sport obtains. |
| • The Sport would like to be involved in future UKSG, however it would not prove overly detrimental to athletes if the event was to end. It is acknowledged across athletics (and other sport organisations) that the sport adds profile to the UKSG: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Badminton</strong></td>
<td>Despite the sport lacking sufficient funds to support the UKSG in future years, the sport has expressed a desire to continue with a GB level youth event. The sport has already replaced an existing National level badminton event with the UKSG: ‘The UKSG by far exceeds any other events in the UK’ (Anneli MacDonald, UKSG coordinator for Badminton England, interviewed 15\textsuperscript{th} July 2009). The sport is indifferent towards the event’s title, claiming that it causes internal incoherence about who the event is most appropriate for and what it is about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fencing</strong></td>
<td>The fencing community believe that the UKSG has sped up the process of change. If the event did not exist, the sport would still be striving towards similar developments, but at a slower pace as an officer wouldn’t be driving the work. The UKSG coordinator has lucratively used the UKSG as a ‘hook to hang things on’ (Neil Brown, UKSG coordinator for British Fencing, interviewed 29\textsuperscript{th} July 2009) effectively adding momentum to proposed changes and increasing the power of persuasion. It is a concern within the sport that should the event and the UKSG coordinator post discontinue; a lot of the developmental projects may also stop. The sport has very few members of paid staff who can fill the gap in expertise and impetus. The long-standing ‘Fencing Home International’ competition has been discontinued to avoid UKSG duplication. The UKSG is perceived as a more worthwhile event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gymnastics</strong></td>
<td>The sport has chosen to produce tangible benefits (event preparation guides) through the UKSG funding, rather than long-term intangible projects. This is because of the BGA’s perception that the UKSG has a limited ‘shelf-life’ in terms of funding. ‘We’ve (the BGA) always imagined 2011 to be the final cut off’. (Louise Satherley, UKSG coordinator for British Gymnastics Association, interviewed 17\textsuperscript{th} August 2009). External perceptions of the sport are that it is hesitant to evolve away from tradition: ‘There are certain personalities in the sport who are reluctant to change their island’. (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12\textsuperscript{th} January 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judo</strong></td>
<td>The BJA as a whole is supportive of the UKSG. There are few members of the sport that do not value the concept underlying the event. In addition, the UKSG coordinator for judo is highly influential within the sport. ‘I’ve got the influence I need and the credibility to make my own decisions on the behalf of judo. Everyone totally support me’. (Dermot Heslop, UKSG coordinator for the British Judo Association, interviewed 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 2009). The BJA has stated that the UKSG plays a key role in the development of potential 2014 Commonwealth Games judo fighters. Continuing the supportive stance of the BJA, the NGB now funds a significant percentage of the UKSG coordinator post. Unlike other sports, judo has not viewed the annual £5k decrease of UKSG development funding as problematic. The BJA have used the UKSG ‘as a bit of an excuse’ to change the sport. ‘Through the many changes judo has and wants to make in the competition structure, the UKSG and Review has played a major role in this by allowing the BJA to use the objectives and aspirations of the DCMS and Youth Sports Trust despite many of the changes not being popular with the general membership of the BJA we were able to hide behind this banner’. (Dermot Heslop, UKSG coordinator for the British Judo Association, interviewed 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 2009). This supports the change process and avoids too much internal conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘There is a degree of arrogance in the sport because they know they are the biggest sport in the UKSG...it’s almost like athletics is kingpin’. (Steve Grainger, CEO of YST, interviewed 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 2009). UKA representatives have suggested that for the majority of coaches and athletes across the UK, the UKSG is viewed as just another event and in particular, the disability element of the event is not fully valued: ‘The sport has a very tokenistic timetable in terms of disability events [at the UKSG]’. (Colin Chaytors, CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14\textsuperscript{th} May 2009).
Swimming

- The sport perceives the UKSG as an opportunity to inspire and motivate sub-elite swimmers, whilst at the same time providing the needed momentum behind changes in traditional competition hierarchies and structures.
- This perception is not shared by Scottish Swimming. Interviewees assume that Scottish Swimming would opt out of the UKSG if they were less politically constrained. Extended discussion can be found within chapter 6.

Table Tennis

- The sport doesn't perceive the UKSG as a part of their overall strategy. It is instead viewed as the ‘icing on the cake’ that supports the sport’s modernisation programme.
- In reference to the 6 UKSG visions, the sport highlights that some are not straightforward to achieve and in fact the YST are quite ambitious with the pace of change expected. This perspective is reiterated across several of the UKSG sports.
- At this stage, table tennis are reluctant to replace existing and similar competitions with the UKSG.

Volleyball

- As an indicator of the sport’s support for the UKSG, Volleyball England (VE) contributes significantly to the UKSG coordinator post.
- Volleyball has been perceived by members of home country sports councils as a young, sharing, yet small, organisation. Because of this, the sport can make quick and modernised decisions that have led to impressive changes despite a reliance on volunteers. The sports decision making process is mentioned again in chapter 8.
- The sport values the UKSG and has therefore allocated contingency funding to support its own British Championships beyond 2011.

Organisational and cultural climate

Athletics

- Athletics is a sport with a long history. A reliance on a vast network of aging volunteers has prevented innovative decision-making up until only recently (2010). The sport is traditional in its approach to competition, with a large infrastructure that results in slow paced decision making. Given the sheer size of the sport, the NGB struggles to develop momentum behind an initiative: ‘Athletics in particular seem to have had so many commissions and reports on it over the last 10-15 years. And I don’t know where they are going – they’re probably sitting on somebody’s desk…you do wonder if anyone is actually taking notice of the outcomes’ (Colin Chaytors, CEO of English Federation for Disability Sport, interviewed 14th May 2009).
- All four home country NGBs and SAs work together on the UKSG. Whilst evidence does not suggest any animosity between these organisations, there has been a small improvement in their relationships as a consequence of the UKSG.

Badminton

- The sport does not make use of a GB overarching body for the UKSG; instead badminton England has control over UKSG funding, which is distributed across the home countries on a needs basis. Two of the home countries have both an NGB and SAs.
- Particularly in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, badminton has a limited staff infrastructure. There are few paid members of staff for the England based UKSG coordinator to liaise with. ‘The problem in Wales is that there hasn’t been a national badminton CEO or club manager appointed…therefore there isn’t the power there…people have to muddle through and do what they can’ (Sue Maughan, Senior National Governing Body Services Officer for the Sports Council for Wales, interviewed 20th April 2009). However, the improved level of communication between the home country NGBs has impacted positively on the sport.
- The sport has emphasised the role that school sport has to play in badminton development. It situates school sport as a participation tool, therefore the UKSG (as a performance event) has little connection with the school environment.

Fencing

- The sport allocates UKSG funding through its GB body (British Fencing) to UK-wide projects. The sport does not have a separate school sport association. Therefore all decisions are a reflection of NGB preferences.
- The sport is structurally under developed, with few paid staff involved in the
hierarchy of the sport. The UKSG coordinator therefore is able to make quick decisions (having only a few people to liaise with) but he is also expected to follow through on a lot of the work himself given the reliance on committed, but time-constrained volunteers. ‘What does make life easier in being a tiny organisation is that I know exactly who is responsible for what… it only needs a few people to be persuaded that the stuff we’re talking about is a good idea and it can happen very quickly’ (Neil Brown, UKSG coordinator for British Fencing, interviewed 29th July 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gymnastics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics governance incorporates both home country NGBs and SAs. The use of two bodies initially proved to be problematic. The BGA were unsure whether to position the UKSG as a SA owned event or a NGB event. ‘The challenge for gymnastics has been that they have a strong SA, who advocated for a long time that the UKSG should a schools competition and a very strong performance department who said this competition is not appropriate for our most talented under 18 gymnasts, so we have had to work with the NGB to achieve a compromise and find a meaningful and relevant place for the Games within their competition pathway’ (Alison Oliver, Sports Director for the YST, interviewed 5th January 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between the home country NGBs are limited 1). Because their approach to youth development is varied and 2). Because they are in competition with one another and therefore are reluctant to share ideas. The UKSG coordinator has chosen to allocate UKSG funding per home country. Whilst this may lead to better use of funding, it doesn’t develop UK level communication as intended through the UKSG.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BJA’s staff infrastructure is limited, however the sport insists that all team manager roles are to be occupied by BJA payroll staff (rather than volunteers). This is due to the health and safety risks associated with judo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was an overall agreement across the sport that the BJA required an update of its competition manual and pathway, therefore there is little resistance to report on with regards to how the UKSG funding was spent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The UKSG funding is distributed by the BJA across the home countries. Unlike other sports there is little tension between the four countries. They are each involved in the NCF, despite it being an English driven initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judo in England is far more advanced than in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, therefore the BJA have directed additional UKSG resource to these countries with Northern Ireland receiving the majority as the weakest nation. The BJA is keen to balance the competitive playing field across the UK in order to raise the overall standard of the GB team.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swimming</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The UK infrastructure of swimming is large and complex, which at times results in slow decision making processes. It is divided into 1 GB body, 4 home country NGBs and 4 SAs. British Swimming chose to allocate the UKSG funding per home country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKSG swimming meetings have only English and host country representation, resulting in a missed opportunity to resolve any tension between the home countries. The meeting representatives are relatively closed off from outside influences when decision-making. See chapter 6.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Tennis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The devolved nature of table tennis and the various stages of development that each of the home countries are at has caused the British Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) to reluctantly allocate UKSG funding per home country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ETTA has a close relationship with the ESTTA, despite a lack of alignment. This has led to competition duplication between the bodies. See chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sport is governed by National Council, which includes a representative from each of the fifty English counties. A 70% vote is required to initiate change; therefore UKSG progress has been slow for the sport.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volleyball</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the UKSG, there was little opportunity (or need) for the volleyball home country NGBs to communicate. Volleyball rarely competed as a GB unit on the international stage. The UKSG have since changed this, and volleyball’s small infrastructure has allowed close-knit interaction to take place. Evidence suggests that there is a high degree of cooperation between the NGBs and a willingness to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main challenges for the sport in relation to the UKSG

| Athletics | • Representatives of the sport describe possible changes that the sport could experience, however the size and lack of role clarity in the sport prevents such intentions materialising. YST representatives state that UKA is not a risk-taking organisation and fails to evolve as it is unwilling to delegate responsibility sufficiently. ‘The recommendations (from the England Athletics/UKA competition review) don’t really appear to have been put in place, or at least communicated to YST. That review was partly paid for through their allocation of the UKSG development funding and that is very disappointing’ (Will Roberts, UKSG lead coordinator and Senior Development Manager for the YST, interviewed 12th January 2009).
• A challenge to the sport also comes in the form of the sport’s two UKSG coordinators who do not have the required level of influence to act on change. ‘Because of its real challenges around staffing, UKA have slipped back’ (Guin Batten, Head of Performance for the YST, interviewed 8th January 2009).
• The competition pathways across the four home countries are relatively varied within athletics, which results in the UKSG athletes experiencing very different competitive opportunities prior to the Games. |

| Badminton | • A heavy reliance upon volunteers in key decision-making positions has sometimes caused problems of capacity for the sport.
• The UKSG coordinator originally came from a non-badminton background and has been able to bring innovative thinking to the NGB and thus gain increasing influence within the organisation. The role has moved beyond a pure focus on the UKSG to other Badminton England events. |

| Fencing | • Similar to other sports, British Fencing representatives highlight the ambitious expectations of the YST and imply that some are unachievable for smaller sport dealing with an infrastructure of volunteers.
• The UKSG coordinator is expected to manage several other non-UKSG specific tasks. The workload sometimes becomes quite daunting.
• As the standard across the 4 home countries varies significantly within fencing, it was decided that the UKSG would target an older age range (under 18s). Whilst this ensures that all four home countries are able to enter full UKSG teams to high standard, it also allows young people who are no longer at school to compete in the UKSG. |

| Gymnastics | • The UKSG coordinator is not embedded within the sport’s infrastructure. The post states that UKSG operational decisions are devolved to more appropriate employees, as is work related to PESSYP and competition pathways. This has restricted the impact that the sport can make in relation to the UKSG visions. The role of UKSG coordinator has been allocated to a different BGA department each time that the UKSG funding has decreased. There are concerns that this has led to an opportunity cost whereby if the post had remained in one department with a £5k contribution from the NGB, the return on investment would be greater.
• Given the changing nature of the coordinator’s role, UKSG funding has created ‘fixed term projects’. This ensures quicker and tangible results before the UKSG coordinator post is disrupted again. Whilst this project work is beneficial to the sport, the less tangible yet fundamental issues within the sport are not addressed. Unlike other UKSG sports, the BGA have not experienced any deep-rooted culture change as a consequence of their involvement in the Games. |

| Judo | • Each home country selects its UKSG team differently. While the UKSG coordinator appears to have a significant level of influence in the sport, he believes it is not within his right to dictate how each home country should select their team. Although each home country is ‘encouraged’ to not select top-level players, it is questionable whether this guidance is followed by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as these three home countries would otherwise struggle to fill teams with athletes of similar quality to the England team if they did not select their best... |
• Other challenges have come in the form of the sports NCF that has focused solely on club competition, rather than school based judo. The National Competition Panel have disagreed with the sport's lack of school focus, despite the BJA’s insistence that the sport is too dangerous to be introduced by unqualified teachers in schools. The BJA are reluctant to resubmit a framework that they disagree with, just to ‘tick boxes’ for the NCF panel.

### Swimming

- The duplication of competition providers (SA and NGB) has almost proved detrimental to UKSG swimmers representing Scotland and Northern Ireland. These home country SAs have attempted to protest through the event. Whilst in both cases the threatening of team withdrawal was resolved, the underlying tensions between the school and club bodies still exists.
- Despite efforts to improve relations between the ASA and English SA (ESSA), conflicting assumptions of what is ‘best for the swimmer’ remain.
- Extended discussion on both constraining issues can be found within chapter 6

### Table Tennis

- The lack of consensus between the home countries has impacted on the role of the UKSG coordinator post that now only focuses on English driven UKSG initiatives. This is discussed further within chapter 7
- The sport’s organisational capacity is over-stretched. A criticism made by the ETTA is the lack of provision given to clubs. Therefore the NGB struggles to fully implement their NCF and work with CMs.

### Volleyball

- Volleyball has suffered with low player retention rates because it has few competitive opportunities to offer young people.
- The British Volleyball Federation (BVF) is yet to fully embrace the UKSG as a talent development tool.
- Given the small size of the volleyball volunteer community and the annual decrease in UKSG development funding, the sport has been restricted in what it can achieve through the UKSG.

### Headline achievement through the UKSG

#### Athletics

- The UKSG development funding has financed the sport’s competition review. Although few of the suggested outcomes have been implemented, discussions surrounding the athletics competition pathway and where the UKSG sits within it has facilitated communication and relationships between various athletics providers (school associations, club competitions and league organisers). There is an overall recognition of the need to reduce competition duplication.

#### Badminton

- The sport has experienced a sharp rise in the number of young officials who are actively supporting badminton competitions. This development has been supported through a UKSG guided culture change where existing officials accept the introduction of new, younger ones. ‘Everybody’s really keen to develop young officials. It’s been enthusiastically embraced across all four home nations’ (Anneli MacDonald, UKSG coordinator for Badminton England, interviewed 29th July 2009).
- Two new ‘gold’ events have been created as a consequence of the UKSG and the need to provide a qualification pathway. Players in Northern Ireland and Wales no longer have to travel across their country’s border to compete in a high standard of competition.

#### Fencing

- The sport has benefited from an increased profile within the school environment. The sport has proven capable of change: ‘We’ve engaged with the YST which has led to the NCF, which has led to the CMs and all this other stuff. It might have happened anyway, but I’m sure our involvement in the UKSG has sped up the process’. (Anneli MacDonald, UKSG coordinator for Badminton England, interviewed 29th July 2009).
- This capacity for change and willingness to comply with the youth policy agenda has improved the sport’s image in the eyes of funding agencies such as Sport England: ‘Fencing has really upped its game by being involved in the UKSG. It’s now one of the sports we [Sport England] fund as part of our 09-13 NGB investment. This includes funding to create school/club links. They have really used the UKSG to transform the sport from being seen as twee upper-middle class to reaching out to others and...’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **Gymnastics** | - Tangible resources such as the ‘Gymnastics Education Programme’ have been developed through the UKSG development funding. The programme prepares gymnasts for the multi-sport experience. This idea has been shared at UKSG development meetings and consequently other sports have tried to develop something similar.  
- In connection with the 2008 UKSG, England Gymnastics have set up a volunteer academy where young officials are trained and encouraged to support the CM network in the delivery of grass-roots competition. |
| **Judo** | - Through the UKSG media coverage, judo has enjoyed increased profile amongst young people and key sport organisations.  
- The UKSG funding paid for a BJA competition review and Competition Manual which has been implemented at a fast pace. The review has presented an opportunity to rationalise judo’s competition pathway and eliminate inappropriate county/regional level school events. ‘Part of the review process was to consult with the British Schools Judo Association who was an autonomous judo organization affiliated to the BJA. Following many hours of deliberating and stewing over the many great traditions of the BSJA, the BSJA unanimously through their constitution agreed to dissolve themselves as an organisation and become the British Schools Commission of the BJA. This allowed for much greater cooperation and cohesion between the NGB and the group of people representing judo in schools. This was a somewhat arduous and drawn out process but has finally proved to be a success’ (Dermot Heslop, UKSG coordinator for the British Judo Association, interviewed 2nd July 2009). |
| **Swimming** | - The UKSG has provided a competitive opportunity for late maturing swimmers and competitors who would otherwise drop out of the sport. The Games therefore acts as a retention and talent developmental tool  
- The creation of a UKSG funded, participation-focused Aquasplash resource has proved popular across the home countries.  
- In 2008 67% of the UKSG volunteer and officials workforce were under the age of 25. A ‘volunteering pathway’ has been developed alongside other swimming events, with existing officials acting as young official mentors. |
| **Table Tennis** | - The creation of a UKSG table tennis steering group has gradually improved the relationships between the four home countries.  
- The TTAW has used UKSG development funding to establish six sustainable school leagues across Wales.  
- The Irish Table Tennis Association has used the funding to employ two regional school officers who have built on school competitions.  
- The ETTA competition review (financed by UKSG development funding) has led to the combination of under 13 and under 14 National Championships, and the introduction of regional training days that are free of competition. |
| **Volleyball** | - The creation of the Volleyball Wales NGB has been solely attributed to the UKSG and the supporting coordinator post.  
- New competition and training programmes have been developed in Northern Ireland and Scotland.  
- The quality of UK-wide feeder competitions has improved. This is both in terms of presentation and standard of play.  
- New volunteer pathway opportunities such as ‘Referee Clinics’ have increased the number of young volunteers.  
- Increased UKSG media coverage has improved the profile of the sport for policy makers, sports councils, sponsors, schools and leisure centre sport camps. |
Appendix F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM : The Impact of the UK School Games on the Competition Structures of Eight Sports

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethical Advisory Committee.

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.

I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

________________________________________

Your signature

________________________________________

Signature of investigator

________________________________________

Date

________________________________________
Appendix G

Sport specific examples of how the six UKSG objectives have been addressed

**Objective 1). On going planning and delivery of a UK level sports event showcasing talented young sports people**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>The enhancement of UKSG feeder events is not seen as a priority to the sport. UKA feel that the UKSG funding is better directed to other UKSG objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The EFDS express concern that UKA are not communicating with its disability sport organisation given the lack of disability events offered to athletes. This concern is across all athletic events and not just observed in the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>The sport is restricted by budget, particularly when it comes to transporting equipment such as specialist flooring. This has prevented the sport from addressing this objective and improving the quality of feeder competitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The CMs who are invited to the UKSG annually to learn from the event’s high quality presentation would struggle to implement UKSG ideas in school based badminton competition. For badminton, school events are more participation focused and therefore would require very different planning and delivery to the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>Fencing has directed UKSG funding towards the training of referees and competition administrators to improve the quality of feeder competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The sport is working towards its own kitemark system called ‘Swordmark’ which will be awarded to high quality fencing events. Whilst this area of development is separate to the UKSG, the training of event staff through UKSG funding complements the programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>The BGA feel that its current competition content, delivery and presentation across the youth pathway is already well established, therefore this objective is not seen as a priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
<td>The BJA have allocated UKSG funding towards updating the sport’s competition manual. The manual supports UKSG feeder competitions to replicate the presentation and delivery standard observed at the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>British Swimming believe that its competitions are already well organised. Whilst the sport would like to make use of elements of the UKSG at lower level competitions, the sport does not have the funding and volunteer capacity to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table tennis</td>
<td>Table tennis is one of many sports that agree with swimming’s comment regarding a lack of sufficient funds to fully act on this objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>The sport has enhanced the presentation of the UKSG volleyball selection event (VE Inter Regional Championships). This event now makes use of statistical analysis, various media avenues, branding and several other presentation tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The match duration at the UKSG is longer than most UK-wide volleyball events. The UKSG game length replicates international practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VE have developed UKSG team manager job descriptions and person specifications that will be externally advertised.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Objective 2). To bring about a step change in the content, structure and presentation of**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>competitive sporting opportunities for young people</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athletics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In addressing this objective, UKA have directed UKSG funding towards a competition review of England Athletics. Outcomes of the review suggest that school and club country competitions should be combined and a new layer of regional competition added. The sport intends to make these changes a reality, however have been slow to initiate the implementation process. There have been concerns that there is no one in the organisation taking responsibility for this process and the longer this takes, the less valid the review outcomes become.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- UKA are reluctant to believe that the UKSG alone will drive forward the competition review outcomes. They acknowledge that there are several other factors that inhibit progression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The unconfirmed future of the UKSG has prevented UKA from replacing a very similar competition (the Schools International) with the Games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Badminton</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The UKSG funded Badminton England competition review is addressing the duplication of club and county association competitions. Unlike other sports, the review will not need to address any duplication between school and club competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It is likely that Scotland, Wales and Ulster badminton NGBs will take on board the suggested outcomes of the Badminton England competition review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The sport is currently standardising its competition across the home countries. This is through the franchising of ‘gold level’ Badminton England events to Northern Ireland and Wales. Previously, there were no competitions of this standard in these home countries. These gold level events form part of the badminton ‘Super Series’ which has recently been developed as a way of ensuring that young badminton players have access to competition which is ‘fit for purpose’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prior to the UKSG, the four badminton home countries competed in the ‘Under 17 Quadrangular tournament’. This event catered for the same standard of players as the UKSG, but with far less opportunity for athlete education and high quality presentation. The event has now been discontinued in order to take full advantage of the UKSG package.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fencing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- At present, the NCF is deemed to be more important to the sport than the UKSG as there is a general capacity problem in fencing that is being addressed by CMs through the promotion of safer ‘mini’ and ‘midi’ versions of the sport within schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Initially, the UKSG was held in addition to the ‘Fencing Home International’, which caters for similar athletes to the UKSG. This event has since been discontinued in order to avoid duplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gymnastics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The research does not provide any clear evidence of progress in relation to the objective for gymnastics. It is suggested that there remains a lack of clarity between the role of British Schools Gymnastics Association (BSGA) and BGA competitions. There are some elite and club dominated competitions owned by the SA, which projects a confusing pathway for gymnasts. According to a BGA representative, efforts to develop the sport’s NCF have led to an increase in competitive opportunity and the potential risk of over-competing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The UKSG funding has paid for a BJA competition review. From this, judo has created a British championship competition for five levels of ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In addition to the previously mentioned Competition Manual, the BJA now makes use of a ‘tournament licensing system’ which does not endorse or insure judo competitions which do not comply with competition review’s changes. This has improved the sport’s control over the BJA competitive season, and reduces the likelihood of children over competing. The competition review is encouraging the sport’s culture to shift towards a player-centred approach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Swimming

- There are few UKSG sports that are happy with the date of the UKSG. There are numerous reasons for this, ranging from the differences in school systems across the home countries and the timing of seasons within the sports. Although it is accepted that there is not one date that is appropriate for all sports, swimming has associated the inconvenient timing of the event and the uncertain future of the UKSG, as the explanation for the UKSG are not perceived as an essential building block in any of the home country NGB’s competition pathways.
- British Swimming representatives are reluctant to attribute any changes at grassroots level directly to the UKSG. It is instead the influence of the NCF which is promoted through the UKSG.

Table tennis

- Each home country has approached the UKSG funding differently. The TTAW are critical of the ETTA’s decision to use the UKSG funding to ‘review’ their sport, rather than develop it. However, in response, the ETTA are dubious of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland’s approach to individual projects and just how worthwhile they are with such a limited amount of split funding available.
- The UKSG funded ETTA competition review has highlighted that the sport has a crowded competition calendar offering too many competitions for young people. However the sport remains adamant to provide competitive outlets for both club and school sport.
- The review has proven useful in getting various table tennis departments and bodies around a table to discuss how to best assemble the competition calendar
- These issues are discussed in chapter 7

Volleyball

- The UKSG (and the NCF within England) has led to the creation of 4 home country specific volleyball pathways that incorporate different versions of the game suitable for each level of player.
- The UKSG development work has driven forward the creation of new ‘cadet’ competitions in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Prior to 2009, the Volleyball Wales did not have NGB status and therefore had very few clubs and competitive opportunities available to young people. This has changed as a direct consequence of the UKSG and the employment of the UKSG coordinator.

Objective 3). Use the event itself, and themed branding of local and regional competitions to raise the profile of school age competitions and the young people taking part, to promote the work undertaken in each nation to improve PE and school sport

Athletics

- UKA does not believe that the UKSG will directly support the work of CMs at grassroots and school level, but it is assumed that the event will make the competition pathway that they work towards more visible.

Badminton

- From a badminton perspective, the UKSG are elite focused and club driven. The event therefore has little impact on school sport and PE. School competition is believed to be more the concern of NCF and network of CMs. The UKSG can facilitate this work, however it is not perceived as a catalyst.

Fencing

- Of all the eight sports studied, fencing has made considerable steps with regards to this vision. Fencing has traditionally been a sport that is low on the school agenda. The UKSG media coverage is helping to change this by making the sport more attractive to young people.

Gymnastics

- The BGA feel that the UKSG has very little impact on gymnastics within the schools. This is because the event offers disciplines that would not be practical in the school environment. ‘I almost see it as two separate sports – gymnastics and school gymnastics. In one of them you would use a sports hall, and the other one you’d use a purpose built gymnastics venue... I’m struggling to think of any occasion where the UKSG would be able to have an impact for gymnastics at
Given the difference in disciplines offered, school and club led competitions are seen as two separate pathways. However, both types of competition have national level finals creating a duplication of competition, rather than feeding into or complementing one another.

| Judo | The BJA make it clear that the sport is club-driven and rarely associated with school sport and PE. ‘School based competition is only appropriate at Level One at grassroots level, in some cases it could be unsafe to hold such events without being organized by the NGB. The NGB take the lead after this low level to ensure a proper and safe pathway for players leading up to the British Schools Championships which is now a Level Three Development event through to the UK Schools Games which is a Level Five event the highest possible level in the UK for players of school age and is of International represent status e.g. the four Home Nations. Therefore in some sports the UKSG has not directly improved the profile of school sport or PE… ‘I fail to see how that could possibly have an effect on PE in sport when not all sports are involved in the Games and many of the Athletes do their chosen sport outside of their normal school activities’ (Dermot Heslop, UKSG coordinator for the British Judo Association, interviewed 2nd July 2009).

| The event has, however provided an opportunity to rationalise the sport’s competition pathway and eliminate inappropriate county and regional level school events. The originally separate British Judo Schools Association has since been incorporated into the BJA as a schools commission with no influence over the UKSG.

| An officer of BJA has expressed some concern over how it will adjust its NCF in order to accommodate school sport and meet the criteria of the NCF Review Panel. It has even been suggested that because the sport does not receive financial support to alter its competition framework, the sport will make superficial changes to pass the panel process and then fail to implement them. |

| Swimming | British Swimming interpreted this objective differently to other sports. The sport wanted to use the UKSG to lower the profile of elite school competition, but increase the profile of participation-based school competition. The event has provided a platform from which home country NGBs and SAs are able to sit around a table and discuss a way forward.

| The approach and perspective of each home country SA within swimming varies with reference to this objective. |

| Table tennis | Although a good relationship existed between the two bodies prior to the UKSG, the event has presented an opportunity for the ETTA and ESTTA to work together.

| The Irish Table Tennis Association (ITTA) has allocated part of its UKSG development funding to the employment of two part-time regional school officers.

| The Table Tennis Association for Wales has pooled UKSG funding together with other sponsorship to develop 6 new school Table Tennis leagues across Wales. |

| Volleyball | Whilst school competition does not form part of the UKSG qualification pathway, volleyball frequently communicates with schools as a way of getting more players into the club environment. To facilitate this process, UKSG funds allow volleyball Wales to implement six-week coaching courses within schools. |

<p>| Objective 4). Integrate Olympic and Paralympic themes into the UKSG by ensuring that the Olympic and Paralympic values are promoted through volunteer training, opening and closing ceremonies and an Athlete Village |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| Athletics| - The 100% ME element of the UKSG has been embraced by UKA beyond the competition. It is now implemented at ‘Young Leaders Camps’ where young officials are trained in anti-doping matters.  
- There is limited additional evidence to suggest that the UKSG’s Olympic and Paralympic values are influencing other athletics competitions. The same can be said about several other of the UKSG sports, which have tended to focus in on the 100% me work, as opposed to other elements of the UKSG Cultural and Educational programme. |
| Badminton| - 100% ME workshops have been implemented across England to 14 –19 year olds. This is attributed to the UKSG coordinator’s training as a 100% ME tutor.                                                                 |
| Fencing  | - In an effort to replicate the experience gained at the UKSG, British Fencing representatives take 100% ME educational stands to its National Championships.                                               |
| Gymnastics| - In response to this objective, the BGA have established a tangible resource called the ‘Gymnastics Education Programme’. The programme sends weekly newsletters to gymnasts who qualify for the UKSG. The newsletters contain information that supports an athlete’s preparation for the multi-sport experience. This idea has been shared at UKSG development meetings and consequently other sports have tried to develop something similar. |
| Judo     | - The 100% ME element of the UKSG has been embraced by the BJA. There are now 100% ME sport specific tutors in each of the four home country NGBs. However, the cascading influence of the 100% ME programme beyond the UKSG is limited given that the responsibility lies outside the remit of the UKSG coordinator. |
| Swimming | - British Swimming has explained that it is restricted by budget and therefore limited Olympic and Paralympic themes have filtered through to lower levels of competition. |
| Table tennis | - The table tennis competition schedule at the UKSG is intense and therefore athletes have little opportunity to experience the UKSG Culture and Education Programme.                                  |
| Volleyball| - Given the UK’s limited success on the international volleyball stage, the sport has had few opportunities to take part in multi-sport competitions. Olympic and Paralympic values are new to the NGB.              |

**Objective 5). Create opportunities for young people to become engaged in volunteering at major sports events both as technical officials and event volunteers**

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<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>- UKA state that the 5th and 6th UKSG visions complement areas of work that are already well established in the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>- This vision is one that all four badminton NGBs are enthusiastic towards. It is perceived to be the largest area of change that has transpired through the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>- In the 2008 UKSG, all fencing referees were under the age of 30 and all volunteers under 18. The sport now uses an under 30 policy for several of its competitions beyond the UKSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>- In connection with the 2008 UKSG, England Gymnastics have set up and financially supported a volunteer academy in the Bristol and Bath host cities. Not only did this academy develop the skills of young officials to support the delivery of the UKSG, but the establishment of a volunteer network has enhanced the</td>
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work of CMs in the South West region.

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<tr>
<th>Judo</th>
<th>• The BJA sees the value of sending young volunteers to the UKSG to support the delivery of the event. However, the sport is reluctant to allow young people to move beyond the volunteer and timekeeping role. There is the perception that judo officials require years of experience in order to maintain the safety element of the sport.</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Swimming | • British Swimming is currently trying to introduce the young official’s initiative at other swimming events, to establish a ‘volunteering pathway’.  
• The sport identifies this 5th UKSG vision as the most sustainable of the visions. |
| Table tennis | • Table tennis’ use of 5 non-playing team captains at the UKSG has proven to be a good opportunity to train young athletes as potential TMs and encourage them to stay involved in the sport. |
| Volleyball | • The sport has developed a ‘Referee Clinic’ linked to the UKSG. Senior referees act as tutors supporting the development of young referees. This supports the creation of a volunteer pathway as well as a competition pathway. |
| **Objective 6). Ensure the event advocates and demonstrates the highest level of child protection and welfare systems** |  |
| Swimming | • British Swimming representatives do not view this final UKSG vision as a priority for the sport. |
| Volleyball | • The welfare and safeguard courses that are administered in connection with the UKSG has supported volleyball’s move towards professionalism in its approach to youth competition.  
• Similar circumstances have been reported in several other UKSG sports. |
## Appendix H

Criteria considered for case study selection, application to the eight UKSG sports

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>UK governed body. High communication between NGBs</td>
<td>Close links between SA and NGB. SA competition highly reputable</td>
<td>Large, historical sport with substantial tradition. Implemented change requires significant momentum and support in order to prove successful. Large school links in curriculum</td>
<td>Discounted. Although analysis could explore the organisational problems within the sport, there are no clear issues in terms of devolution and school sport to report on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Autonomous home country NGBs. High communication between NGBs</td>
<td>Two home countries have separate SAs. Close links between the two.</td>
<td>Medium sized sport. Limited history and tradition, therefore fewer barriers to change</td>
<td>Discounted: Shares similarities with volleyball, however larger in size, greater pre-existing links with school sport and less impact to report on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>GB governed body. High communication between NGBs</td>
<td>No separate SA and very little link to schools prior to UKSG</td>
<td>Small sport, allowing for quick decision making. Historical sport with some traditions. Limited school links</td>
<td>Discounted. Shares similarities with Volleyball, however less progress and fewer knowledgeable interviewees available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>GB governed body. Limited communication between NGBs</td>
<td>Separate SA and NGB, with poor role clarity between the two bodies</td>
<td>Large, historical sport with substantial tradition. Implemented change requires significant momentum and support in order to prove successful</td>
<td>Discounted. Shares similarities with Swimming, however fewer knowledgeable interviewees available and very little impact to explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judo</strong></td>
<td>GB governed body. High communication between NGBs</td>
<td>Separate SA recently dissolved into a NGB commission. Close links between the two</td>
<td>Medium sized sport. Limited history and tradition, therefore fewer barriers to change. Limited links to school sport</td>
<td>Discounted. Shares similarities with badminton; surface level impact, with few internal developments to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swimming</strong></td>
<td>GB governed body. High communication between NGBs. Not always amicable</td>
<td>Separate SAs across home countries with long history of competition. NGBs financially support SA, although reluctant to do in future due to competition duplication</td>
<td>Large, historical sport with substantial tradition. Large involvement in school curriculum. Implemented change requires significant momentum and support in order to prove successful</td>
<td>Included. Large sport with complex governance system. A willingness to change, however limited due to tension between SAs and NGBs and between the home countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table Tennis</strong></td>
<td>GB governed body. However, limited communication between NGBs with high levels of disagreement</td>
<td>Close links between SA and NGB. SA competition highly reputable. High competition duplication</td>
<td>Large, historical sport with substantial tradition. Implemented change requires significant momentum and support in order to prove successful</td>
<td>Included. Large sport with complex governance system. Priorities differ across the home countries causing tension. High duplication between SA and NGB, however not perceived to be problematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volleyball</strong></td>
<td>Autonomous home country NGBs. High communication between NGBs</td>
<td>No separate SA and very little link to schools prior to UKSG</td>
<td>Small sport, allowing for quick decision making. New sport with little history. Limited links to school sport</td>
<td>Included. Small, evolving and modern sport. Limited in terms of human and financial resource. Agreement and support across home countries leads to innovative programmes</td>
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## Appendix I

A comparison of Gunn's ten proposed factors for policy success, with the delivery of the UKSG policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1). Circumstances external to the implementation agency do not impose crippling constraints</th>
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<tr>
<td>The majority of the UKSG sports were included in the multi-sport event due to their potential for impact. As Will Roberts (UKSG coordinator) explains ‘Including these sports presents a great opportunity for YST to try and stimulate a change. But they are big old institutions there and they are like big old rocks that we’ve got to try and move and they’re heavy and they’re slow and it’s a difficult, challenging process’. Here it is highlighted that whilst the UKSG present an opportunity for change through the implementation of policy, there are factors external to the UKSG that had the potential to hinder progress. Examples of such factors include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Logistical and historical factors linked to devolution. For example, the development of the NCF in England has left Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland fostering different school sport systems that have varied characteristics and capacity. There was rarely a UK-wide agenda that can be developed in connection with the UKSG.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Due to the nature of NGB funding from UK home country sports councils and YST, it was unrealistic for sports to commit to the multi-sport event without confirmed financial support. This meant that due to financial constraints and uncertainty, the eight NGBs studied had not been able to fully confirm their long term involvement in the UKSG beyond the 2011 funding end date. As a consequence of this, the sports were reluctant to make substantial changes to their own competition pathways to accommodate an event vulnerable to external funding changes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● For some NGBs with a complex history, tradition and organization structure (such as table tennis and swimming) the pace of decision-making is slowed through consultation procedures between board members and paid staff within the NGB.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● In addition to the above, there are several ‘exogenous’ events, which according to Sabatier &amp; Weible (2007) have the potential to shift a policy agenda, direction, focus, or level of support between a variety of organisations. Examples of these exogenous events included: the change in political administration experienced in 2010 (Labour, to coalition government) and the resultant changes in political priorities and salience placed on sport policy; the economic downturn experienced from 2008 onwards and the impact this had on NGB funding.</td>
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2). Adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme. & 3). Not only are there no constraints in terms of overall resources, but also at each stage in the implementation process the required combination of resources is actually available.
YST’s use of financial and human resource incentives to encourage NGB conformity in relation to the UKSG policy has, to date, proven relatively effective. This one-dimensional form of power (Lukes) is observed through the YST’s provision of ‘development funding’ to the sports, and the offer of access to 225 CMs across England.

The way in which the NGBs have chosen to allocate this funding across their sport has varied. Some sports have opted to allocate funding equally to home country NGBs, rather than on UK-wide projects. Whilst this may avoid political unrest across the home countries of a sport, it has possibly also led to an ineffective and restricted use of funding. Good ideas, particularly in the case of table tennis, have been abandoned due to lack of finance.

In order to avoid a top-down / bottom-up mismatch of sporting agenda and an inappropriate and unsuitable use of the funding, YST agreed to be flexible in its approach to funding allocation. Whilst this approach may discourage sports from striving towards a top-down policy implementation process (Gunn 1978) and a UK-wide streamlined competition structure/pathway, in reality it ensures that each sport NGB buys in to the UKSG event.

4). The policy to be implemented is based on a valid theory of cause and effect & 5). The relationship between cause and effect is direct and there are few, if any, intervening links.

While the genesis of the UKSG was more the produce of a coincidence of interests and issues than evidence-based research, the underpinning assumption of the UKSG had elements of a cause and effect theory. For example, it was assumed that ‘if’ NGBs were given experience of a well organized UK-wide youth sport event it would ‘then’ change their policy and practice in relation to their own youth events. A second example is the assumption that ‘if’ NGBs were offered finance, ‘then’ they would be more inclined to reform their competition structure to conform with the NCF.

6). There is a single implementation agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success. If other agencies must be involved, the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.

In consideration of the number of organisations, governing bodies and agencies involved in the coordination and development of the UKSG, it is unsurprising that there are often moments of miscommunication, delayed progress due to inter-organisational dependencies and differences in opinion. Whilst UKSG development and operational group meetings have facilitated formal and informal discussions between the sports themselves, and with the YST, BOF and SCUK, there are often times where confusion occurred. The dual agenda of the UKSG (developmental and operational focused) has in itself caused some delay due to a cross over of dependencies and concerns.

Whilst the number of organisations working together on both developmental and operational projects has been challenging to coordinate efficiently, it is
Important to recognize that for several of the sports, the UKSG present a welcome avenue to share ideas in a non-resource competitive environment. In this regard, the policy process that surrounds the UKSG portrays characteristics of a ‘strengthening issue network’ (see Table 9.4)

Table 9.4: Review of Marsh & Rhodes (1992) policy community and issue network characteristics (see Chapter 3) in relation to the UKSG policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Network characteristics</th>
<th>Policy Community characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large number of policy actors / organisations involved in the policy.</td>
<td>Resources / ideas are shared through a non-competitive, mutually dependent and non-zero sum relationship (observed particularly well in Chapter 8’s description of how Volleyball Wales as an NGB was created through allocation of English, Scottish and Northern Irish UKSG funding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable membership to the policy area. Dependent upon YST’s continued commitment to the UKSG policy.</td>
<td>Common goals observed (to increase talent and competitor retention), but the priority of this goal varies between organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although goals are shared, organisations vary in size, capacity and commitment. NGBs have differing targets to focus on and therefore may not all view the ‘end goal’ as a priority.</td>
<td>UKSG objectives are interpreted in very different ways across NGBs.</td>
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7). There is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved & 8). In moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.

With minimal use of monitoring, an absence of performance indicators and the flexibility in the wording of the UKSG objectives, the YST were unable to hold sports accountable for a lack of progress. However, with this approach comes adaptability, which has ensured that the sensitivities of home country relationships are accommodated by the UKSG policy, effectively maintaining the involvement of all the UKSG sports’ home country NGBs. In essence, whilst the UKSG objectives have not always been interpreted in the same way, there has been sport specific impact observed in each NGB. A concern that does remain for YST is the capacity for the reinterpreted UKSG objectives to remain relevant to the sports in future years without the continued support by YST.

There are areas of disagreement, or lack of clarity in relation to the UKSG objectives. For example, sports such as table tennis question the disproportionate amount of funding that is allocated to operational objectives as opposed to the more developmental objectives. Additionally, all UKSG NGBs disagree that it is their responsibility to concentrate on the delivery of objective 4. As explained in table 9.2, the NGBs believed that the YST were better placed to develop the multi-sport element of the objective.

The different ways in which the policy objectives were interpreted, understood and challenged by the UKSG sports can be analysed through reference to
Sabatier’s ACF (2007). With each sport’s involvement in the UKSG comes different agendas and motivations, or ‘belief systems’ (a concept frequently referred to by Sabatier through the application of the ACF). Sport governing bodies and organisations can be grouped into ‘coalitions of interest’ according to these assumptions, preferences and belief systems. Table 9.5 below details how different coalitions have become evident through the UKSG. However, the resemblance to coalitions as defined by Sabatier is limited by the fact that these ‘coalitions; are not contesting policy leadership (and members do not always see each other as allies) but they do represent clearly contrasting interpretation of YST policy.

Table 9.5: The characteristics of three coalitions of interest, as suggested through the application of the advocacy coalition framework to the UKSG policy (mentioned previously in Chapter 5)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coalition</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Example of stakeholders included</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation emphasis</td>
<td>In support of a professionalized approach to event management. Frequently exploring new ways to improve effectiveness and achieve efficiencies and value for money. Aims to approach UKSG logically and rationally, adhering to business principles. Growing increasingly independent of external funding resources</td>
<td>Fast Track, YST, Swimming NGBs, Child Protection in Sport Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy culture</td>
<td>Highly dependent upon public resource. Expectation that these organizations have the freedom to allocate public resource how they wish, to priorities that reflect their interests. Unwilling to explore new alternatives to normal procedure. Threatened by significant change</td>
<td>Swimming SAs Table Tennis (as a whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional emphasis</td>
<td>Highly dependent upon public resource. A willingness to align their strategic objectives to the funding organisation’s priorities. Increasingly experienced in monitoring the progress of funded projects and programmes</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis suggests that it is the modernization coalition that is the strongest of the three listed above. It is the coalition with increasing organizational support, and growing financial focus for NGBs (i.e. public financial support is frequently linked to professional and modernized practice). Through the UKSG, and the opportunity for interaction between the sport representatives, it became apparent that a form of policy-orientated learning took place for some sport organisations. For example, as volleyball increases in its wealth and experience as an NGB, the sport slowly learns from the actions of other NGBs in the UKSG and alters its existing procedures in order to gain more influence and financial support across UK-wide sport.

9). There is perfect communication among, and coordination of, the various elements of agencies involved in the programme.

The UK School Games are part of an overall youth competition pathway which is the concern of a wide variety of sport actors, ranging from the DCMS to YST and to those employees who implement sport policy at a local, grassroots level such as CMs and NGB officers. The UKSG policy is therefore designed, delivered and interpreted by several organisations, each with their own motives for policy involvement. According to bottom-up theorists of
policy implementation, as the number of policy actors increase, the chain of delivery lengthens, leading to an increasing likelihood of street level interpretation and discrepancy between policy expectations and outcomes. For the case of the UKSG, data analysis has revealed that policy makers such as DCMS representatives misunderstood or underestimated the work pressures on street level bureaucrats such as CMs and development officers. This misunderstanding from ‘the top’ has caused ‘the bottom’ of the policy to re-interpret the task in hand, and implement their own version of the style of policy that suits the situation existing at the ground level. Examples of miscommunication and street-level interpretation include:

- Table tennis and gymnastics' continued separation of school and club competition pathways through the UKSG funding, rather than a combination and rationalization of the duplicating competitions.
- Gaps in communication and an imbalance of power regarding control of UKSG resources between swimming NGBs and SAs and even between swimming home country NGBs has led to feelings of uncertainty within the sport. This has impacted on the speed at which decisions and progress has been made in relation to the UKSG objectives.

In both of these examples, there are two potential causes linked to the theory of street level bureaucracy (in addition to Gunn’s policy success factors). Firstly, the number of organisations involved in decision making has led to a complex and possibly ineffective form of communication. Secondly, local delivery agents have an understanding of the policy, but decide to, or are forced to, adapt policy to suit local circumstances.

In the smaller sports, such as volleyball and fencing, concerns of miscommunication and its impact on policy implementation are not as pertinent. Given that communication methods within a small sport such as volleyball are relatively straightforward and direct, YST’s liaison with the sports is seen to be more effective at bringing about change through the negotiation of interests.

It should be noted that whilst communication within NGBs is not always straightforward, mechanisms that facilitate discussion are improving as sports begin to modernize and professionalise (as touched on above). Particularly worthy of mention are the improved communication systems between the various sport organisations included in the UKSG. Through UKSG developmental and operational meetings, frequency of inter-organisational interaction is increasing.

The improving lines of communication, alignment of policy intentions and collaborative working through the UKSG suggests that there has been a gradual (but in no means complete) move from a loose ‘issues network’ of organizational relationships, towards a tighter, more integrated network, but not quite the policy community described by Marsh & Rhodes (1992).

A prime example of the improved working relations is the ‘National Competition Review Panel’ formulated by YST. This panel consists of a wide variety of organisations with traditionally different agendas (UK Sport, Sport England, Youth Sport Trust, NGB chief executives, school head teachers). These organisations have combined forces to provide expert advice to NGBs formulating their new NCF.

The need for the NGBs to coordinate and link the work completed through the English-driven NCF project, with the UK-wide UKSG project, has also encouraged sports to move further towards a policy community. Sports with traditions of devolved responsibility for the sport organization (such as case
studies swimming and table tennis) have increased the frequency of their communication through the multi-sport competition. Whilst it is unlikely that an event such as the UKSG has the capacity to resolve historical issues of devolution, the event does present a window of opportunity to highlight and begin to confront the issues that for many years have been avoided (Kingdon 1984).

In view of the challenges presented to the UKSG as a result of home country devolution, it appears that home countries differ in terms of their priorities, rather than goals. Whilst all NGBs are unlikely to disagree with the need to address youth talent development, the perceived importance of the goal varies across NGBs. In particular, smaller NGBs (as observed with the Table Tennis Association for Wales in Chapter 7), view the need to build capacity as more pressing than the need to develop youth talent. This difference in priority is linked to the ‘geographically defined’ coalitions of interest mentioned in chapter 6. NGBs, through the UKSG policy, have tried to avoid the ‘English Big Brother’ syndrome whereby they follow the practices of the English governing body for the sake of the sport. Instead some NGBs (namely Scottish Swimming and the Table Tennis Association for Wales) have pushed for UKSG objective interpretation that will benefit their nation as well as the sport. In these circumstances, the sports’ UKSG coordinators have acted as a policy broker between competing interests (Sabatier & Jenkins Smith 1999).

Evidence also suggests that windows of opportunity are presented to smaller NGBs, through their involvement in the UKSG. Volleyball, presents a particularly suitable example of such opportunity whereby the UKSG policy of has presented more ‘open doors’, opportunities to improve communication and connections to school sport. This window of opportunity can be explained through reference to Kingdon’s Multiple Streams approach (1984) whereby the chance coming together of three streams has resulted in policy impact across all three case studies. Another example of a sport making use of an open window of opportunity is observed in swimming’s efforts to bring closer the working practices of the sport’s NGBs and SAs. The empirical analysis of table tennis suggested that the sport found it more challenging than the other case study sports to take advantage of the window of opportunity. This was linked to the complex and long-winded nature of its decision-making process, whereby a national council of 50+ members must be consulted.

10). Those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience.

Throughout data collection, it became evident that the power relationship between YST and the eight sports was not always one-way and straightforward, but the YST did possess significant authority. Given that YST does not contribute significantly to the finances of the sports, it is surprising that YST had quite so much influence in relation to the sport's involvement in the UKSG policy. Despite the limited financial incentive, many sports chose to remain involved in the multi-sport event, possibly as a result YST's subtle use of third dimensional power (Lukes 2005). Through several interviewee statements, it is apparent that the YST's ideology of modernisation has been gradually accepted by some of the sports through their involvement in the UKSG. Whilst this level of influence is less evident in the more traditional sports such as swimming and athletics, YST have displayed a capacity to shape and influence the actions and intended policy directions of smaller sports such as volleyball and fencing, not just in present day, but also in future policies in review of the sport's explicit intentions to self-finance future multi-sport events or projects linked to the UKSG objectives. Analysis reveals that this level of influence is associated with YST’s flexibility towards the implementation of UKSG objectives. The eight sports are given a degree of freedom to interpret and address the objectives in ways that would benefit their sport most significantly. This flexibility encourages sports to value the work that YST focuses upon. If the
YST were heavier handed and more procedural in their management of the UKSG, the extent of NGB cooperation may be compromised. Authority was also gained by the YST through its offer of human resource and support, which allowed some NGBs to make faster paced developments and impact. An achievement that is viewed positively by funding agencies such as Sport England and UK Sport.

Source: adapted from Gunn 1978