An analysis of public policy toward adult life-long participation in sport in Australia, Finland and New Zealand

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An analysis of public policy toward adult life-long participation in sport in Australia, Finland and New Zealand

by

Shane Collins

A Doctoral thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of
The degree of PhD of Loughborough University

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Abstract

This thesis explores the development of public policy aimed at achieving adult life-long participation in sport in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. Adult life-long participation has frequently been claimed as an aspiration of sport policy in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. This study identifies the characteristics of the sport systems and sport policy process in each of the three countries and outlines the development of policy concerning participation in sport amongst adults.

A case study approach was adopted focusing on each of the three countries in turn. Adopting a qualitative methodology the study utilised document analysis and semi-structured interviews to elicit data regarding the development of, and factors impacting upon, the development of sport for all. Focusing upon the meso-level of analysis, policy networks was found to be a useful lens through which to view Finland, drawing attention to a policy sub-system where there has been a consistent focus on sport for all over the last 40 years. The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) provided the greatest utility for providing insights into Australia and New Zealand. The ACF drew attention to competing coalitions within the New Zealand and Australian sport sub-systems highlighting the tensions that had surfaced between elite and mass sport development.

Despite little evidence in Australia, Finland or New Zealand of a policy or strategy that could be ‘pulled off the shelf’ and called adult life long participation the findings indicated that Finland has been able to achieve high levels of adult participation in sport. Over the last 40 years successive Finnish governments have been consistent in their approach with regard to the role of national and local government in promoting SfA. In contrast the Australian federal government has consistently expressed a desire to increase levels of sport participation amongst all Australians, however, despite consistent exhortations policy implementation has failed to reflect the rhetoric. Recent changes to the New Zealand sport policy landscape have made identifying a clear sport development pathway difficult, however, grassroots sport appears to have remained outside the current public policy focus. This study concludes that despite the existence of broadly similar factors such as rising levels of obesity, declining levels of physical activity and continued aspirations for sporting success, quite different sport policy approaches have been adopted in each of the three countries. This draws attention to the role of domestic factors, such as the distinctive socio-economic political and cultural systems in shaping the direction of, and salience of, sport policy to government.

Key words: adult life-long participation, sport policy, Australia, Finland, New Zealand, Sport for All, grassroots sport, mass participation
Chapter 1
Introduction

Research aim, objectives and context

The aim of this thesis is to explore the development of public policy for adult life-long participation in sport in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. The thesis focuses upon the extent to which each country has developed or maintained policy concerning participation in sport amongst adults (those in the post-school group).

For the purpose of this report the term sport for all (SfA), unless otherwise stipulated, has been used interchangeably with terms such as grassroots sport, adult life-long participation, mass-sport and recreational sport. The Council of Europe definition notwithstanding, the concept has often been interpreted loosely as participation in sport for recreational and/or competitive purposes in an organised and/or unorganised setting - participation in sport that is undertaken at international level has been excluded. The policy aspiration of adult life-long participation (ALLP) has been defined as being able to maintain levels of participation amongst adults in sport across their life-span with little or no deterioration in participation rates with age.

To assist in achieving the research aim outlined above three more concrete objectives were identified:

- to identify the characteristics of the sport systems in the three countries;
- to examine the status of increasing adult sport participation as a policy focus and its development in Australia, Finland and New Zealand; and,
- to identify characteristics of government policy that impinge on adult life-long participation in sport.
Rationale for investigating adult life-long participation

Sport for all has existed in a range of countries for over 30 years. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s, facility development and mass participation were political priorities for England, Germany, Norway, Canada and Finland. By the 1960s several Nordic countries already had a number of SfA schemes while Germany had established a SfA office (Houlihan, 1999). Indeed, the ‘1960s and 1970s were considered a ‘golden age’ for sport for all policies’ (Bergsgard, Houlihan, Mangset, Nødland, & Rommetvedt, 2007: 203). Assisting its early development and acceptance as an area of government interest were the changing social, political and economic conditions of the day. As Houlihan (1999) highlighted, the acceptance of welfarism, confidence in the state extending its responsibilities combined with a lack of competing sporting ideologies (such as elite sport) and a continued belief in the power of sport made the 1970s a fertile period for the acceptance of SfA as a concept.

However, in countries such as Australia, the 1970s saw changing government priorities with regard to SfA. While participation in sport during the early 1970s was seen as a tool to improve the social conditions of outer-urban and regional Australia (Booth & Tatz, 2000), by the end of the 1970s there was growing concern for the development of elite sport (Green & Houlihan, 2005). Since the late 1980s, however, the salience of SfA policies has dropped down the political agenda or experienced radical redefinition (Bergsgard et al., 2007).

The considerable volatility of SfA policies, exhibited over the last 30 years has, in part, been driven by the lack of clear definition of SfA, the instrumental use of sport to achieve governmental goals/concerns and the impact of cultural, historical and political factors in shaping the policy process.

The European Sport for All Charter asserted that ‘Every individual shall have the right to participate in sport’ with the basis for SfA being that sport was an ‘important factor in human development’ and an ‘aspect of socio-cultural development’. However, while the Charter provided a broad definition of SfA, there was considerable variation in the way in which SfA was interpreted and policies implemented within different countries. During the 1980s, France
interpreted SfA as managing the tension between elite and non-elite competitive sport, while Finland saw SfA as a means of keeping fit. More recently, Australia has used sport participation as a way to establish a pool of athletes from which elite athletes will surface (Commonwealth Government, 2001). Other applications of SfA have seen it utilised as a means of social control, a substitute for meaningful employment, reproduction of the status quo and more recently as a means to address rising health concerns (Bergsgard et al., 2007; Donnelly, 1991). What is apparent is that little progress has been made in finding a consensus as to the meaning and use of SfA (Donnelly, 1991; Stewart, Nicholson, Smith, & Westerbeek, 2004).

As argued by Bergsgard et al., (2007), this ambiguity may also be due to difficulties in defining the rather fluid concept of 'sport'. While the European Sport Charter provided a definition (see Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, 1992), the broad nature of the definition of sport in part reflects the variety of ways in which different countries conceive sport. Within the context of SfA, Germany, Norway and Finland conceive sport as physical exercise while, Canada, Australia and England adopt a narrower concept of sport and sport participation whereby greater emphasis is given to competitive games by comparison to non-competitive physical activities (see, Bergsgard et al., 2007). The diverse range of views, interpretations and uses of SfA is also reflected in the number of international organisations associated with the concept including the Trim and Fitness International Sport for All Association (TAFISA), the International Olympic Committee and the Council of Europe (Skirstad, 1991). It is, therefore, unsurprising given the range of interpretations and uses of SfA that the concept has remained amorphous.

In more recent years, and highlighting the ambiguity of SfA, the development of elite athletes and youth sport have emerged as more sharply defined areas of government policy. In contrast with SfA, both elite and youth sport have been able to define relatively clear objectives and measures of performance. In the case of elite sport this is demonstrated through achievement on the international stage, increasingly measured through success (numbers of medals) at the Olympic Games and other high profile international events (see,
Likewise, youth sport has focused upon school-aged youths with time spent in physical education often used as a measure of success with regard to increasing levels of participation. In the case of the UK a goal of participation in physical education for two hours per week for 85 per cent of children by 2008 was set while in New Zealand sport policy aimed at providing one hour per week for all primary school children (Houlihan & Green, 2006; Mallard, 2004). As argued by Green, sport policy in the UK has shifted away from a sport for all ethos to one focused upon the "active (child) citizen" and elite performance' (2006: 24).

A number of studies which pre-date and/or overlap this current study highlight the gap between policy at the rhetorical level and at the level of commitment of resources with regard to SfA (Bergsgard et al., 2007; Green, 2006; Houlihan & White, 2002; Stewart et al., 2004). Concerns regarding increasing levels of obesity, along with escalating health and social costs, and declining levels of physical activity have, however, increased the importance of sport (and physical activity) participation to governments. However, at the level of policy analysis there remains a problem in clearly identifying the primary objectives of SfA with there being difficulty in separating SfA conceptually and methodologically from physical activity policy and community policy.

**Research phases**

This study has been undertaken in five phases: i) a literature review of theories of state and the policy process to provide a theoretical framework, ii) an investigation into the availability of Finnish literature, iii) a systematic review of sport policy literature in Australia, Finland and New Zealand, iv) data collection using semi-structured interviews, and v) a thematic analysis of the data.

Phase one involved a review of literature on theories of the state and the policy process to assist in identifying concepts and approaches that may be useful in guiding preliminary decisions with regard to research questions.
The purpose of the second phase was to ascertain the availability of written English language information relating to the development and trends in Finnish SFa sport policy. Finland is the only country involved in this study where English is not the native spoken language and it was unclear the extent to which this may prove a barrier to accessing information. To assist in scoping this issue semi-structured interviews were conducted (between May and June 2005) with selected personnel from the Finnish academic and sport policy community. The aim of these interviews was to: establish the availability of English language written sources, both academic and official/governmental in relation to the Finnish sport policy sector; identify other possible interviewees including other academics, government officials and officers within Finnish sports organisations; and, obtain views on the current priorities in Finnish sport policy, especially in relation to SFa. This phase was crucial as it highlighted the limited, but adequate amount of English language information on Finnish sports policy. Due to the limited availability of English literature on Finnish sport policy, increased emphasis was placed upon information gathered through the interview process. Phase three involved a systematic review of national policy documents, national governing body documentation, archive material and academic commentary on sport participation in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. The analysis of documents and the subsequent identification of themes, trends and areas requiring further exploration provided direction and focus for phase four. Informed by the data in phase one, two and three, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Selected personnel from national governing bodies, national sporting organisations and government officials at both national and local level, who were currently or had been, involved in SFa policy making at a senior level were interviewed based upon several themes: the relative emphasis placed upon SFa activity by government in relation to achieving adult life-long participation; the degree to which, and the ways in which, government policy played a role in these activities; the relative stability of SFa as an area of policy development; the potential drivers for change in relation to SFa. The fifth and final phase involved a thematic analysis of the data, based upon an iterative process, which involved both an inductive and deductive process (Blaikie, 2000; Bryman, 2001).
Thesis structure

In Chapter 2 *Theorising the policy process* the study's analytic framework is outlined. The first section explores three theories of the state pluralism, Marxism and corporatism. In reflecting upon the underlying assumptions incorporated within each of these concepts it is argued that corporatism (as interest group mediation) and neo-pluralism provide the most useful lens through which to consider the Australia, Finland and New Zealand. Despite the identification of a number of distinctions, it is argued that there are certain areas of convergence that make discussing theories of the state in isolation increasingly difficult. Following the review of macro level theory, three theories of the policy process are reviewed, multiple streams, the advocacy coalition framework and policy network theory. It is by placing the meso-level theories within a broader social, political and ideological context (the macro-level) that it is possible to explain, for example, both the membership of meso-level advocacy coalitions and the policy outcomes of SfA (Green, 2005).

Furthermore, it is by understanding the way in which coalitions take the form they do and how they relate to the broader political environment, which provides insights as to how (SfA) policy outcomes might be facilitated or constrained (Daugbjerg & Marsh, 1998). It is, therefore, necessary to consider which state theory offers the greatest potential to reflect interest group relationships within the sport policy subsystem. As argued by Houlihan (1997) the policy network and ACF approaches are instructive metaphors for policy making when placed within a broader theory of power, with the most persuasive foundation a 'combination of elitist and neo-pluralist analyses' (1997: 257). This chapter concludes by suggesting that the policy networks approach and advocacy coalition framework offer the most utility for this study.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to outline the methodology adopted for this study. After briefly reviewing the objectives of this study three major research paradigms are discussed setting out the key assumptions incorporated within each one. After reflection upon each of the three paradigms, it is the critical realist paradigm, based upon the work of Bhasker (1989), which is adopted. Central to critical realism and the outcome of social phenomenon is the
dialectical relationship between structure and agency (Bhaskar, 1989; Cruickshank, 2003; Lewis, 2000). Structure and agency are linked via the notion of emergent properties, or in other words, current structures are created by the actions of individuals in the past, and now have causal properties of their own. It is through power that structures and agents are able to influence and shape policy outcomes and the setting of policy agendas. While power remains a contested concept, both at a theoretical and empirical level, the work of Lukes and Foucault is discussed with both considered to provide useful insights into the development of SfA policy. The chapter also considers the validity and reliability of the methods adopted for this study, which include a comparative research approach, a systematic review, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. While acknowledging the issues and limitations of each of these methods, solutions are offered as to how these can be mitigated.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide a discussion of adult life-long participation as a focus of sport policy in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. In selecting the countries to be studied a number of selection criteria were considered. First, sport is a significant cultural element in each country; second, SfA has been a stated government policy; third, democracy is well established and stable; and finally, the economies are relatively mature in all three countries. At a more practical level issues considered were language (the researcher speaks only English) and accessibility to senior policy-makers and officials within government and non-governmental organisations. Each chapter provides a historical context against which to consider the development of ALLP, a review of the contemporary structure of the sport subsystem, levels of sport participation, and the development of ALLP within varying time periods. The separation of sport policy in each country into different time periods reflects the differing socio-historical events and development of sport policy within each country.

Chapter 4, Australia, has been separated into four sections. The first section provides a brief discussion on the background of Australia before a review of the levels of sport participation in Australia. The section on sport participation
draws attention to the lack of robust longitudinal data from which to draw conclusions with any certainty. The next section considers the contemporary structure of the sport policy subsystem highlighting the relations and interdependencies between different organisations and agencies. It is against this backdrop that the development of sport policy is considered. Within the Australian chapter the development of ALLP has been separated into four times periods. The first period, the 1970s, reflects a period of considerable change in Australian sport policy and signalled the decline of SfA as an area of government focus. The second period, the 1980s, emphasises the growing focus upon elite sport development with the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport in 1981 and increased levels of investment in elite sport development. The penultimate period, the 1990s is dominated by the awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney, alongside the continued rhetoric to support grassroots sport. The final time period to be reviewed covers 2000, the year in which Australia hosted the Sydney Olympic Games, through to June 2007.

Chapter 5, Finland, follows a similar structure to that of the Australian Chapter, however, the development of ALLP is discussed under three time periods. Consistent with Australia is a discussion on the levels of sport participation and the contemporary structure of the sport policy landscape. The first section provides a discussion of three significant events that have impacted on the development and direction of sport policy in Finland highlighting the significance of external events in shaping both structure and sport policy. The second section discusses levels of sport participation and identifies Finland as a country that has been able to achieve considerable success in adult life-long participation in sport. This is followed by a discussion on the contemporary structure of Finnish sport which also includes a review of the legislative framework within which sport policy operates. The fourth section separates the discussion of Finnish sport policy development into three times periods. The first period covers from 1945 (after World War 2) through to the mid-1960s with the emergence of the welfare state. The second period, from the mid-1960s through to the major restructure of Finnish sport in 1993, highlights the consolidation of SfA as part of social policy and attempts to overcome the
tensions created in sport through political ideology. The third and final time period covers from 1993 until December 2006.

Chapter 6, *New Zealand*, begins by providing a brief review of the context of sport policy in New Zealand by comparison with Australia and Finland. The second section provides an overview of available participation statistics. However, from the data available it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions with regard to the levels (or trends) of adult life-long participation. Three time periods were identified through which to consider the development. The first period covers 1970 through to 1987, beginning with the elevation of sport as an issue in the run up to the general election in 1972 and ending in 1987 with the establishment of a single government organisation to deal with sport policy issues - this period is characterised by the emergence of sport as an area of government concern and the development of coalitions of interest. The second time period begins with the establishment of the Hillary Commission (in 1987) and ends with the establishment of a new government entity, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) in 2002. The final time period begins in 2002, with the establishment of SPARC and concludes in June 2007.

Finally, Chapter 7, *Discussion and Conclusions*, returns to the research question identified in the opening chapter and identifies the salience of the methodological insights provided in Chapters 2 and 3. The first section reflects on the ambiguous nature of 'policy' as discussed in Chapter 2 and the impact of each country's historical context in shaping the direction of sport policy. The second section considers each country in turn with regard to the impact of government policy on achieving adult life-long participation in sport. The final section reviews the study's theoretical framework in more depth. While the discussion on the role of power has been interspersed throughout the analysis, a review of macro level theory provides further consideration of the underlying assumptions and the impact upon policy outcomes. Finally, a review of the salience of the three meso-level approaches is discussed with regard to Australia, Finland New Zealand. The analysis is conducted against the emergence of ALLP as an area of policy focus and what this reveals about the balance of power and influence between different (often competing) interest
groups in each sport policy subsystem. While it is concluded that the policy networks approach provides the most useful framework against which to consider the Finnish sport policy subsystem, it is the assumptions of the ACF, which appear to fit more coherently with the Australian and New Zealand sport sub-system.
Chapter 2  
Theorising the policy process

Introduction

In conducting an analysis of sport policy, it is important to examine variation in political structures and policy processes to assist in attempting to assess why and how public policy has developed and changed (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). However, as will be discussed later, gaining consensus on how to characterise the policy process in different countries can be problematic.

While the focus of this research is at the meso-level it is important to examine and explore the network of power relationships at the macro-level. Understanding the wider context in which meso-level frameworks operate allows consideration of constraining or enabling effects of power upon interest groups, networks or individuals and the linkages between macro and meso-level theory. The need to examine the system of relationships between organisations and groups, as well as an examination of the role of the state, will assist in understanding the wider context in which these phenomena exist (Ham & Hill, 1993). State theory explores the relationship between the state and civil society and the distribution of power, therefore, reviewing macro-level theory will provide a theoretical framework in which to place power relationships and the role of the state, all integral aspects when analysing public (sport) policy.

This chapter will firstly consider the strengths and weakness of three state theories, pluralism, Marxism and corporatism, before assessing their relevance and applicability to the countries upon which this study is focused. Three meso-level frameworks will then be reviewed, the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), multiple streams (MS) and policy networks. This will be with the intention of identifying strengths and limitations as well as identifying an appropriate lens through which to examine the sport policy environment in Australia, Finland and New Zealand.
Theories of the state

In attempting to understand the policy process, it is necessary to consider and highlight assumptions regarding the policy process as well as the distribution of power amongst certain groups, organisations or institutions (Hill, 1997). Pluralism, Marxism and corporatism are all based upon broad assumptions regarding the distribution of power and the policy process. However, before providing an overview of these three theories, it is necessary to consider first the problematic issue of how 'the state' and 'policy' are defined.

While the state is at times seemingly all pervasive in both social and political environments, it is also 'intangible, elusive and almost impossible to pinpoint finely and specify tightly' (Hay, 1996). Despite being able to identify institutions such as the government, the judiciary and the civil service, it is agreed that the state, by its very nature, is not unified (Smith, 1993). Conflict between groups such as elected politicians and non-elected civil servants frequently occurs, as does conflict between politicians and different parts of the state over policy and resources. This, as Smith (1993) posited, causes difficulty in identifying the interests of the state, as different parts of the state will subscribe to different combinations of values, and consequently have differing profiles of interests.

Dunleavy and O’Leary (1987: 3) highlighted that functional definitions of the state can be expressed in two forms. The first, ex ante defines the institutions of the state which seek to achieve particular goals, purposes or objectives while post ante defines the state by its consequences, such as the maintenance of social order. Hay (1996) noted that while core practices or functions can be specified, the precise boundaries of the state are variable and often in a condition of flux. Increasing access to the policy making process by many areas of civil society combined with government funding or partial funding of a number of groups, has caused further uncertainty as to where boundaries should fall when attempting to define the date. State institutions are located at various levels, not just across various sectors, leading to further uncertainty as to the boundaries of the state (Ham & Hill, 1993: 23-24). Of particular relevance for this study is the ambiguity created when comparing
different countries as there is additional variation as to which institutions comprise the state (Hay, 1996). All of these issues support Hay’s contention that ‘the contemporary state is something of a paradox’ (1996: xii).

Furthermore, Heclo has noted that ‘Policy is not ...a self evident term’ (1972: 84) and suggests that policy may be considered as a ‘moving course of action or inaction’ (1972: 93). This highlights that policy is about both action and inaction - what has been done but also what has not been done. To highlight the problematic nature of defining policy, Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 13-19) identified 10 different ways in which the term ‘policy’ has been used, highlighting the difficulty in establishing a common and agreed understanding of the concept.

A useful definition of policy has been proffered by Jenkins (1978: 15) who suggested that policy is ‘a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve’. Jenkins’ definition identified a number of key attributes of public policy. First, that decisions are not discrete but are part of a cluster or sequence of decisions; second, that the reference to ‘political actors’ highlights the relationship between power and policy influence, which draws attentions to assumptions of pluralist politics where power and resource control are not monopolised by holders of formal offices; and third that policy is about setting, implementing and achieving objectives (Houlihan, 1997: 4). However, as Hill and Bramley (1986) discussed, this definition restricts policy to things that can be achieved, therefore, it does not allow for policies that may be symbolic or chosen despite knowing that they may not be able to be achieved. This criticism draws attention to the complexity of the policy environment and the power relationships that operate within it including how certain policies are included or excluded at the agenda setting phase.
Pluralism

Pluralism has been defined as an enigma, a theory that is remarkably under-theorised and as a result many different interpretations have emerged (Smith, 1995: 209). It is not possible nor is it intended to cover all of these variations here. A brief overview of the key features of classical pluralism will first be presented, before the development of neo-pluralism, constructed primarily in response to criticisms aimed at classical pluralism, is considered.

The essence of the classic pluralist theory as developed by Dahl (1956) has at its core the investigation into the distribution of power amongst western democracies (Held, 1996: 202). Pluralists contend that it is groups that wield significant amounts of power and it is because of this that they are crucial in determining policy outcomes (Smith, 1993: 15). Key to pluralism is the difference or diversity of groups, which ensures that no single group can dominate the policy making process. A range of constraints operate that prevent groups, or small numbers of groups, from gaining too much influence and, therefore, allowing a single group to dominate the policy process. Unlike Marxists and elitists, pluralists maintain that there are a number of constraints on business (and its power), to ensure that it does not become a dominant power on the policy process (Smith, 1993). For pluralists power is something that is non-hierarchically and competitively arranged, it is non-cumulative and it is dispersed amongst groups, therefore power is something which has multiple centres none of which entirely dominates (Held, 1996).

Pluralism sees a separation between the state and civil society; a difference between economic and political power; and a variation in the interests that are successful in particular policy areas (Smith, 1993: 210-211). The role of the state is to regulate conflict rather than to dominate society in pursuit of particular interests as asserted by Marxism. The state is a discrete organisation that creates policy in response to the myriad of pressure groups which are pressing on government. It is, therefore, largely passive with its decisions reflecting the balance between interests groups, while maintaining independence (Rhodes, 1997).
There have been a numerous critiques of the classic pluralist position over the years with one of the key critiques revolving around its failure to articulate adequately how power and power relations were conceived (see Held, 1996 for further discussion). The tendency of pluralism to treat business as just another group and failing to recognise its advantages over other groups has also been problematic (Smith, 1995: 217). This issue was responded to in the theoretical development of neo-pluralism, of which Dahl and Lindblom were two major contributors.

**Neo Pluralism**

There have been a number of critical changes to classic pluralism by neo-pluralists, largely as a result of the criticism that was levelled at it by other theorists. Neo-pluralism has retained some of the views of classic pluralism, including the ability of liberal democracies to generate a variety of pressure groups and the existence of competitive policy areas (Held, 1996). However, in responding to the criticisms, and departing from the original theory of pluralism, Lindblom, a major proponent of neo-pluralism, argued that interest groups cannot be treated as equal and that policy making is inhibited by the workings of capitalism (Smith, 1995). Neo-pluralism recognises variation in group resources and, therefore, there is differentiated access to the policy process. There is recognition that business due to its access to resources is able to wield disproportionate power over the policy making process, yet despite this business still fails to dominate completely the policy process as the existence of competing interest groups ensures some balance in the use of power. This disproportionate influence of business is based upon a structuralist argument that it is an inevitable necessity ‘for the state to operate in conditions of stability and therefore political equilibrium – business needs must be met first’ (Evans, 1995: 242). The importance of business to the successful running of government means that government will automatically respond to the interests of business. Neo-pluralism acknowledges that power can be exercised in an unobservable way through structure, anticipated reaction and ideology (Taylor, 1995). It is this recognition of structural power, which moves neo-pluralism closer to a neo-Marxist view.
Another key departure from the classic pluralism is the contention that the state can no longer be viewed as a neutral arbiter (Held, 1996: 216). These changes to neo-pluralism were not minor changes and as Smith highlighted 'neo-pluralism is much more than a minor amendment to pluralism it is a significant break' (1990: 312). Despite this, neo-pluralists have been careful to note that there are no fixed forces that underpin democratic politics, rather an array of interest groups and organisations competing for their own interests to be heard.

**Marxism**

Classical Marxism is based on the assumption that the state is merely an instrument of bourgeois domination and that there is in fact no such thing as a neutral state or a free economy (Held, 1996). The foundation of Marxism is based on the premise that economics is the essential factor, which governs everything, including religion and morality, and it is the driving and common factor which governs politics (John, 1998; Vigor, 1966). Marxism claims that the state does not represent the individual but rather maintains the rights of individuals with capital (the bourgeoisie) at the expense of the working class (the proletariat). Therefore, at the very heart of Marxist theory is the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the social structure of a capitalist society, essentially a class structure (John, 1998).

While a number of Marxist models have developed (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987) Marxist theory in relation to class and the state has been advanced in two main ways, the instrumental approach and the structural or functionalist approach (Held, 1996; John, 1998). Taylor (1995) argued that the most influential account of the relationship between the state and class is the instrumentalist view – it is a view of the state as an instrument of the dominant class (bourgeoisie) which performs the crucial function of coordinating its long-term interests.

The instrumental approach was founded on Marx and Engel’s position that ‘the state is nothing but an Executive committee for the bourgeoisie’ (Marx & Engels, 1848). Capitalists by virtue of their economic power are able to use the state as an instrument for the domination of society. In exploring the
relationship between economic and political power, Miliband (1969) contended that there were three main reasons why the state is an instrument of bourgeoisie domination: similarity in the background of the members of the state elite and capitalists society; the power that the bourgeoisie is able to exercise through personal contact and networks; and a constraint placed on the state by the objective power of capital - that is the dependence on a successful economic base for their continued survival in government. The state is, therefore, not a neutral agent but is instead an instrument for class domination (Ham & Hill, 1993: 35). However, Miliband asserted that the state does have some autonomy, which explains why reforms may be carried out that are in the interests of the proletariat.

Therefore even though capitalists do not directly control those who rule, their power ensures that decisions are made in the best interest of capitalism. This argument according to Marxism shows the influence of capitalism on policy, by both direct and indirect means (John, 1998) and has much in common with the neo-pluralist position. The instrumental approach does not contend that other groups do not have any influence on policy, however it claims that policy reflects the power of economic interest groups, which in turn protect the capitalist system (John, 1998).

A critic of Miliband’s instrumentalist approach was Poulantzas, who asserted that Miliband applied a mainly pluralist model to Marxism. Poulantzas contended that it is the structural constraints that have been placed on the state by the objective power of the state that are key, not the class background of officials, which is important (John, 1998). Poulantzas’ position, therefore, sits most comfortably with the third set of factors, proposed by Miliband, which actually explains the bourgeois or capitalist system.

Structuralism, the second strand of Marxism, uses the concept of relative autonomy to explain the disjunction between economic power and political power (Ham & Hill, 1993: 37). Poulantzas contended that the class struggle is actually reproduced in the heart of the state apparatus itself (Jessop, 1990). As the capitalist state is divided into factions itself, any domination by one of these
factions would destroy the unity or the state and ultimately capitalism (Smith, 1993: 39). This also explains why the state may at times act against a particular faction of capitalism. The capitalist state, therefore, does not directly represent the interests of capitalism but, by its very nature, protects the interests of capitalism.

Offe, in challenging the terms of reference of Miliband and Poulantzas, mixed the organisational and functional definitions of the state (Held, 1996). He has defined the capitalist state as institutional political power that 'seeks to implement and guarantee the collective interests of all members of a class society dominated by capital' (Offe, 1984: 120). Offe argued that the institutional operations of the state are guided by three conditions, the first being that investment decisions lie with capitalists and are outside capitalist control, that policy is constrained due to the need for capital accumulation (through taxation revenue) and thirdly state officials, for the sake of their own power in guaranteeing and safe guarding healthy capital accumulation, which anticipates the neo-pluralist position (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987).

In more advanced systems of state regulated capitalism, Offe asserted that various exclusion rules operate that are intrinsic to the institutions (Ham & Hill, 1993). The purpose of these exclusion rules is to ensure the suppression of needs that if articulated could endanger the system. Therefore, these rules allow for certain issues to be selected for attention while others are omitted. While contending that the capitalist state must claim neutrality as a condition of its survival, Offe nevertheless proposed that the state does intervene to support capitalist interests and, therefore, bias exists. While the state must intervene it must disguise its preoccupation with the health of capital. A key feature of the state according to Offe 'is the way it is enmeshed in the contradictions of capitalism' (Held, 1996: 224). In doing this Offe rejuvenated the debate in neo-Marxist circles about democracy, class and state power. Offe's first three points have been criticised as merging with those of neo-pluralism on a number of fundamental issues. While Offe placed more emphasis on class than Lindblom or Dahl there was still convergence in so far as the state cannot be understood exclusively in relation to socio-economic factors (Held, 1996: 224).
Corporatism

The corporatist model was adopted and modified by the authoritarian regimes of Mussolini and Salazar and later resurrected by several European democracies under the name of neo-corporatism (Evans, 1995).

Early discussions on corporatism focused on the way in which corporatism distinguished itself from neo-Marxism. Corporatism focused on the centralised power of organised interest groups and the attempts by government to overcome problems by political integration. These arrangements, often called 'tripartite' involved relations between organisations of employers, labour (trade unions) and the state, with the latter steering (Held, 1996: 227). This close relationship between groups and the state is in contrast to pluralism despite it sharing a number of basic assumptions with pluralism (Schmitter, 1979: 15).

Cawson (1986) identified three major approaches to corporatism. Winkler (1976) defined corporatism as an alternative economic system that can be compared to syndicalism, socialism and capitalism. As a result of this the state has considerable independence from economic interests and is able to impose its will on producers (Cawson, 1986). In short, this position contends that 'economic power would be concentrated in its [the states] hands and it would become autonomous in relation to the nation or people it is meant to represent' (Jessop, 1990: 114).

The second major approach, proposed by Jessop (1990), argued that corporatism is a particular form of representation that has developed due to the changing requirements of capital accumulation (Smith, 1993: 29). Within this proposal corporatism is a new form of state where decision making takes place through 'public corporations' not as a consequence of voting, legislative politics and bureaucratic rational legal authority (Parsons, 1995: 258). Under this strand representation and intervention are fused, with corporations representing both the interests of their members and acting as a means of implementing government policies.

The most common application of corporatism is the third approach which focuses on corporatism as a means of understanding the relationships between interest groups and government (Smith, 1993). Schmitter, a key proponent of
this view of corporatism, maintained that changes in the concentration of ownership and competition between national economies triggered the development of corporatism (Ham & Hill, 1993). Key to this approach is the recognition of hierarchical organisations with limited competition that are legitimised by the state. Schmitter's often quoted definition of corporatism reflected these points most aptly:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent elements are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognised or licenced (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports (Schmitter, 1979: 13).

It is this third approach of corporatism, as interest group intermediation, which may hold particular relevance for this study, particularly in relation to Finland. In exchange for offering organisations (this could include sporting organisations), a role in the policy making process, groups are offered state legitimacy, information and assistance with implementation (Smith, 1993) As Cawson suggested:

It is a specific socio-political process in which organisations representing monopolistic functional interests engage with state agencies over public policy outputs which involve those organisations in a role which combines interest representation and policy implementation through delegated enforcement (1986: 38).

In the case of Finland, this may refer to the role of national sporting organisations such as domain organisations and the Finnish Sport Federation (see Chapter 5) in delivering policies and programmes aimed at increasing levels of sport participation in return for resourcing and legitimisation by the state. It is the strength and/or ability of the interest group to deliver particular outcomes which allows them to bargain with the state; a power relationship, which appears evident in Finland and which also indicates the utility of this
theory with regard to Finland. However, this theory would require certain adaptations due to its focus on trade unions and the economy.

What, therefore, makes corporatism distinctive is 'the fusion of representation and intervention in the relationship between groups and the state' (Cawson, 1986: 39). Corporatism is frequently discussed within an elitist framework (cf. Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987; Evans, 1995). As outlined above corporatism is a model of state-group intermediation where the interests of the state and certain private sector groups combine. Similarly, elitism, which is often associated with the work of Pareto, Mosca and Michels, contends that power is concentrated in the hands of a few, this, it is argued is inevitable for all societies (Evans, 1995). Classical elitism runs contrary to most versions of democratic power by challenging western assumptions about politics and the organisation of government, posing that the state is effectively controlled by dominant elites (Birch, 1993; Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987). Elitism contends that there is external control of the state by socially or economically dominant elites who achieve their position in a variety of ways, such as military conquest, control of water or the command of economic resources and are not restricted to those who hold formal political power (Ham & Hill, 1993). However, the concept of elitism has broadened out to include a much wider group than only business elites, maintaining it is not only through business interests that elites achieve their position of power. Moreover, while the existence of the elite class is considered to be a constant, the composition can change, with different elites operating upon different issues or within different policy areas (Ham & Hill, 1993). Elitism is not without its critics, Evans (1995) highlighted that the elitist position appears both theoretically unsophisticated and conceptually underdeveloped while Marsh (1995) noted the lack of agreement amongst elitists as to the basis of structural equality.

**Convergence of theories**

In analysing the relationships between groups and the state, there are a number of distinctions. Pluralism has focused on the role of groups while corporatism has focused on the particular types of arrangements that exist in group/government relations. Pluralists argue that power rests with groups
outside the control of the state, indicating a state theory where the power of the state is somewhat diluted, and where there is an emphasis on the role of civil society on policy making. However, for neo-pluralists it is the recognition of the power and influence of business and a state that is responsive to the needs of business, which distinguishes it from the pluralist view. Within Marxism, it has been the nature of the state and how it is organised in relation to the classes that has been the primary focus. For Marxists, it is the importance of economic factors, which is what ultimately explains the difference between individuals and groups and where power is concentrated while ignoring the significance of other social differences. Corporatism, which is frequently discussed with an elitist framework, asserts that power is concentrated in the hands of a few, demonstrated by formal relationships between government and peak organisations, thereby severely limiting the involvement of ordinary citizens in contributing to the policy making process.

Despite these basic distinctions, as already discussed, there are certain areas of convergence which makes it increasingly difficult to discuss theories of the state in isolation. This convergence is demonstrated through the difficulty that is sometimes apparent in attempting to locate some authors within a particular position (Marsh, 1995). Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987: 323) illustrated the areas of convergence (and cleavage) between various theories of the state and posited that elite theory and pluralism allow for coherence to exist amongst five state theories, Marxism, pluralism, neo-pluralism, elite theory and new right. Overlap between elite theory and neo-pluralism identifies the increasing importance of groups at a sub-national level, highlighting the importance of the meso-level in impacting upon the policy process. Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987: 324-325) also argued that both neo-pluralism and elitism converge in recognising the role that groups play at the meso-level in determining policy. While a number of authors have described pluralism and corporatism in relation to a continuum, Cawson argued that 'pluralism and corporatism are distinctive processes co-existing in any given society' (1986, original emphasis: 39). This co-existence of theories of the state may be a useful view to consider when examining the sport policy sectors in Australia, Finland and New Zealand.
The application of state theory

The previous section reviewed the contribution of Marxism, pluralism and corporatism to the analysis and distribution of power. It is important to note that some policy areas and particular countries may be better explained by one of these macro-theories than others. It is necessary therefore to consider which, if any, of the three main theories of power hold particular utility for the analysis of mass-sport policy development in Australia, Finland and New Zealand.

The utility of Marxism for this study appears limited given the economically deterministic nature of Marxism and the difficulty in explaining why, if the state has no power, the state acts in the interests of capital and, furthermore, how capital actually influences the state (Smith, 1993: 44). While it is claimed that the state is the site of class strategies, it is unclear what this actually means. Further questions are raised as to what the mechanism is which reflects the class struggle in the state and then in policy outcomes. As McEachern argued:

If there are no guarantees, if there are no mechanisms internal to the state to provide that guarantee, then the whole argument about the analysis of the capitalist class needs to be recast so that it does not imply some automatic adjustment of the state action to system and class-serving consequences (1990: 20).

As indicated earlier, the corporatist (interest group mediation) theory of power may hold particular utility through which to consider sport development in Finland. The distinct structural aspects of the sport policy sector and the political and socio-economic history of Finland suggest that corporatism may provide a useful lens through which to consider the development of sport policy development in Finland. The neo-pluralist/elitist approach offers perhaps the greatest potential through which to consider the Australian and New Zealand contexts. The neo-pluralist theory of power argues that power is spread across a range of groups, all of which have some opportunity to involve themselves in the decision making process, albeit to varying degrees. Furthermore, neo-pluralism acknowledges the existence of inequalities, other than those that are based solely on class and wealth, while also recognising that not all groups
have the same access to the decision making process. Finally, neo-pluralism recognises the significant role that can be played by a large number of disparate interest groups.

The previous section has discussed the Marxist, pluralist and corporatist approaches to the distribution of power. As highlighted, criticisms have been levelled at each approach. Providing the broader context of power relationships is an important step before examining the meso-level, which is influenced and impacted upon by the macro-level within which they operate. Whether power is held centrally by the state or is dispersed more widely through different interests groups it is contested; it is state theory, which provides an explanation of the patterns of inclusion or exclusion. What is evident, however, is that the study of public policy is essentially a study of power. What follows is a discussion of three meso-level models of policy analysis and an evaluation as to the contribution each approach can make to this research.

Meso-level Approaches

Introduction

The application of a theoretical framework assists in analysing complex processes by simplification so that key aspects of the policy process are highlighted (Sabatier, 1999). It is not possible within the context of this research to cover the large number of frameworks available. In addition to the three frameworks, multiple streams (MS), policy networks and advocacy coalition framework (ACF), several other frameworks were considered including the punctuated equilibrium frameworks, the stages heuristic and institutional rational choice. To assist in selecting the frameworks to be discussed, several criteria have been applied. The criteria require the framework: to be the subject of considerable conceptual development and empirical testing; to apply a holistic approach, explaining much of the policy process; to be able to address a broad set of factors which are deemed important in the policy making
process; and, to have concepts and propositions that are relatively clear and internally consistent.

The aim of this section is to examine three meso-level frameworks, multiple stream, policy networks and advocacy coalition framework to assist in examining the policy process in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. In exploring these approaches it is necessary to ensure that they complement the macro-theoretical approaches identified in the previous section.

While the stages model has not been included in this section, it does require a brief overview given its impact upon the development of policy analysis. The stages model is based upon the assumption that the policy process is a logical process, and that organisations assess problems in a reasoned and neutral way before proposing solutions and then carrying out the actions required. Peter de Leon, an early proponent of the heuristic, argued that Lasswell's 'seven stages' of the decision process demonstrated a commitment to 'a multidisciplinary approach to the policy science as well as the interactive effects among the different stages' (de Leon, 1999: 22). The seven stages outlined included; intelligence; promotion; prescription; invocation; application; termination; and appraisal. The stages model was also credited with dividing complex policy processes into discrete stages and, thereby, stimulating research within specific stages, in-particular agenda setting and policy implementation, however this did not prevent considerable criticism (John, 1998; Sabatier, 2007). An overriding criticism directed at the rational model is that it creates an artificial world of policy-making and as such creates a false picture of a process which is 'not a conveyor belt in which agenda-setting takes place at one end of the line and implementation and evaluation occurs at the other' (Parsons, 1995: 396). John (1998) argued that the stages model failed to capture the messiness of policy making while Sabatier argued that the stages model: had a top down and legalistic focus, which neglected other forms of policy-making; failed to provide any causal explanation of how policy moves from one stage to another; oversimplified the policy-making process as a sequential and linear process; and was often descriptively inaccurate in the sequencing of stages (1999: 7). As Sabatier posited, the 'stages heuristic
model has outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced with better theoretical frameworks' (Sabatier, 1999: 7). It is in response to the perceived limitations of the stages model that the following models have been developed to provide a more accurate account of policy process. With regard to the criterion that were outlined above, three frameworks have been identified which are considered to have utility for this study: multiple streams; policy networks; and the advocacy coalition framework. The policy network approach is the first framework to be considered.

Policy networks
The policy network framework has received considerable attention over the last two decades, gaining a large number of advocates and receiving considerable academic attention (Peters, 1998). Contribution to the literature on networks has developed principally from Europe however, there have also been important contributions from North America.

The idea of a policy network emerged in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s based on the observation of regular contact between individuals within interest groups, bureaucratic agencies and government, which in effect provided the basis of a sub-government (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992: 5). Furthermore, there was a recognition that there were problems with the pluralist view of the policy process, which led to the development of the policy network approach (Smith, 1993). While the network approach has been defined and used in different ways, Rhodes and Marsh (1992) contended that there is general consensus that it is a meso-level concept. At the macro-level it is able to provide a link between the broader questions concerning the distribution of power while at the micro-level it deals with the role of interests and government in relation to particular decisions (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992).

The American literature has tended to concentrate upon the micro-level, focusing upon personal relations between key actors rather than the structural relations between the institutions (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). The emphasis of the American sub-government literature was focused upon a few privileged groups, with close relationships to the government, which effectively excluded
other interests and made policy (1992: 6). The sub-government model is
classified by clusters of individuals that make most of the decisions in a
particular policy area. Jordan stated that 'A typical sub-government is
composed of members of the House and/or Senate, members of
Congressional staff, a few bureaucrats and representatives of private groups
and Cater (1964) extended this strand, arguing that private interests could
come dominant within the sub-government model. However, Lowi (1969)
apply a more rigid interpretation of these relations, stressing their triangular
nature involving the central government agency, the Congressional Committee
and the interest group, all enjoying an almost symbiotic relationship referred to
as the 'iron triangle'.

This critique of the pluralist approach resulted in Heclo (1978) asserting that
relatively open networks have replaced the closed circles of control while also
admitting that iron triangles do sometimes exist. In defence of pluralism, Heclo
(1978) went further, down playing the restricted nature of access to policy
making and emphasising the importance of issues networks. McFarland
(1987), following Heclo's usage of networks, conceptualized an issue network
as:

a communications network of those interested in policy in some area, including
government authorities, legislators, businessmen, lobbyists, and even academics
and journalists. Obviously as issue network is not the same as an 'iron triangle'.
A lively issue network constantly communicates criticisms of policy and
generates ideas for new policy initiatives (1987: 146).

This conceptualisation contains renewed emphasis on two basic tenets of
pluralism. Namely the potential independence of government from the
pressures of particular interest groups and the existence of actual or potential
countervailing power alliances, which prevent the dominance of economic
interest groups (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). This rediscovered pluralism was
referred to as a theory of triadic power (McFarland, 1987). According to this
view sub-governments may exist, but are rarely exclusive. It is more likely that
sub-governments will be based upon a triad involving government agency, a producer or professional interest group and an opposing public interest group (Rhodes, 1992: 7). Interestingly, this position acknowledges that there is some restriction to the policy making process, but also emphasised a view that economic power no longer dominates, as their interests are countered by opposing forces and an increasingly autonomous state. The applicability of the iron triangle model or the sub-government model to Britain is unclear (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). The minor role that the legislature plays in policy making indicates that the iron triangle and sub-government models are not directly applicable to the British system of government.

While the British literature on policy networks is distinct it is also disparate with a variety of authors taking dissimilar perspectives (Marsh 1998). However, in formulating their own explanation of policy-making in Britain both Richardson and Jordan (1979) and Wilks and Wright (1987) draw strongly upon the work of Heclo and Wildavsky (1974), which focused on British public expenditure decision making within Treasury. Heclo and Wildavsky focus upon ‘the personal relationships between major political and administrative actors – sometimes in conflict often in agreement, but always in touch and operating within a shared framework’ (1974: xv). It is within this community that policy is made by a limited number of actors who interact frequently and share common values.

Richardson and Jordan see policy making in Britain as taking place within sub-systems, where government agencies and pressure groups negotiate. Disaggregation is emphasised, with the existence of many divisions within government. This fragmentation is reflected in the growing number of interest groups that exist in various policy areas (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). For Richardson and Jordan, policy making takes place within a variety of networks, where there are close relations between particular interest groups and different sections of government (Marsh, 1998). It is the interpersonal relationships rather than the structural nature of relationships within policy communities which are stressed.
In contrast to Richardson and Jordan, Rhodes (1981) drew upon the European literature which focused on inter-organisational relations. Rhodes (1981) emphasised the structural relationship between political institutions as the crucial element in a policy network, not the interpersonal relations between individuals within these institutions (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). Rhodes concentrated on the existence of networks at sectoral rather than sub-government level, where one would look and expect to find networks at an aggregate rather than a disaggregated level. Much of the discussion in the British literature has focused upon the difference between policy networks and the more closed policy community (Parsons, 1995). Two contrasting conceptualisations have emerged from the British literature, the first based upon the work of Rhodes and the second based on that of Wilks and Wright.

Rhodes developed a continuum to define and assist in distinguishing between five types of networks ranging from highly integrated policy communities to loosely integrated issues networks. Rhodes and Marsh (1992) developed further the work of Rhodes (1988) treating policy communities, policy networks and issue networks as types of relationships between interest groups and government (Rhodes, 1997). The term policy network is used in this typology as a generic term. Networks vary along the continuum depending upon the closeness of the relationships within them. The continuum ranges from highly integrated policy communities to loosely integrated issue networks (see Table 2.1).

Networks are distinguished by a number of characteristics including: membership; type of interest; integration; resources; and power. Within tight networks (policy communities) there is a shared world view and a common culture, which can act as a constraint on the action of network members. Marsh and Smith (2000) argued that the shape of the network, for example a tight policy community, will affect the range of problems and solutions that will be considered by the network. Tight policy networks continue due to a high degree of consensus, which may not necessarily be upon a specific policy, instead consensus may be on the policy agenda. As a result, the policy network also plays an agenda setting role in the policy making process. Membership of the
policy community is constrained by the often implicit rules within the network, which determines who is included (or excluded) and how participants may act (Marsh & Smith, 2000: 6). In contrast, issue networks are characterised by large numbers of participants, limited consensus and ever present conflict, interaction based on consultation, an unequal power relationship and fluctuating interaction and access (Rhodes, 1997).

Table 2.1 Types of policy networks: 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>No. of participants</td>
<td>Very limited number, some groups consciously excluded</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of interest</td>
<td>Economic and/or professional interests dominate</td>
<td>Encompasses range of affected interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration:</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 policy issues</td>
<td>Contacts fluctuate in frequency and intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Memberships, values and outcomes persistent over time</td>
<td>Access fluctuates significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>All participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of the outcome</td>
<td>A measure of agreement exits, but conflict is ever present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of resources within network</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>Distribution of resources within participating organisations</td>
<td>Hierarchical; leaders can deliver members</td>
<td>Varied and variable distribution and capacity to regulate members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></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>

Adapted from Marsh and Rhodes (1992: 251)
Wilks and Wright (1987) departed from Marsh and Rhodes' conceptual framework, drawing a categorical distinction between community and network. They argued that policy networks are best seen as personal relations of small groups of political actors rather than as wider explanations of the nature of the modern state (Dowding, 1995: 140). Wilks and Wright (1987: 295) argued that policy communities and networks are conceptually different and should be referred to as different phenomena. The use of community as a designation, distinguishing one broad policy sub-system from another, has been useful at a simple level of categorisation; however it is of very little help in the analysis of the policy process (Wilks & Wright, 1987: 296). Wilks and Wright (1987: 301) argued that by using policy community to refer to groups of actors who share a common interest or identity, they are better able to make distinctions, not only between groups of actors whose differences are obvious enough at sectoral level, but also between groups of actors within these broad categories. Network is defined as the linking process that occurs within a policy community or between two communities. For Wilks and Wright, the utility of the concept of policy network is that it helps identify the existence of policy networks and 'to characterise them in terms which will permit a useful and valid comparison between sectors and countries' (1987: 299). In placing considerable emphasis on disaggregation and personal relationships, Wilks and Wright have distinguished their approach from Rhodes. However, it is in the distinction between policy networks and communities that the third major division occurs.

In the Wilks and Wright approach, the term policy community refers to a more disaggregated system involving actors or potential actors drawn from the policy universe whose membership is defined by a common policy focus. The policy universe consists of large populations of actors and potential actors with a direct or indirect interest in a policy area or function (Wilks & Wright, 1987) (For further discussion regarding these distinction see Wilks & Wright, 1987; Rhodes, 1997). Rhodes (1997) asserted that Wilks and Wright idiosyncratic distinctions between policy networks and communities clouds rather than clarifies the issues. Even with this variation in the British literature, the majority of writers have accepted the policy community as a tightly integrated usually personal network.
Despite the debate surrounding the definition of networks and communities, the notion of the policy network has a number of advantages over traditional approaches to the study of pressure groups (Smith, 1993). Policy networks is a flexible concept which can account for variations in group government relations that exist in a range of policy areas. According to Smith (1993), power within the policy network approach is based upon dependence, but is not zero-sum, being used as a mechanism for enhancing mutual power rather than taking power away from one to another.

While the networks approach has attracted considerable support it has not been without its critics (Parsons, 1995). A criticism directed at the networks approach is its failure to examine the impact of broader state institutions on the policy process (Daugbjerg & Marsh, 1998). This is largely because networks evade the more formal aspects of politics, focusing instead on the relationships, as they generate values and norms of behaviour (John, 1998). Dowding argued that the policy network approach fails 'because the driving force of explanation, the independent variables, are not network characteristics per se but rather characteristics of components within the networks. These components explain both the nature of the network and the nature of the policy process' (original emphasis 1995: 137). Therefore decision making is not due to the network itself, but rather due to the characteristics of the actors and interests.

Another area where the policy networks approach has been criticised is its failure to address clearly the issue of policy change. According to Rhodes and Marsh (1992), 'networks foster incremental change, thereby favouring the status quo or the existing balance of interests in the networks' (1992: 261). This implication of stable policies as well as stable relationships and memberships is considered a weakness of the policy network approach (Richardson, 2000: 1007). The importance of exogenous factors in effecting or influencing change cannot be denied, however, it receives little attention within the network approach.
Atkinson and Coleman (1992) highlighted three weaknesses of the policy network concept that have particular relevance for this study. The first criticism highlighted that the policy network concept tended to neglect the impact of macro-political institutions and the power of political discourse. Supporting Atkinson and Coleman’s argument, John (1998: 85) argued that the network concept is difficult to use as the foundation for an explanation unless other factors such as the interests, ideas and institutions which determine how networks function are incorporated. This raises questions as to power resources, the role of state institutions, both administrative and political and the issue of policy change. An empirical question is highlighted regarding the extent of influence (or power) which government institutions in Finland, Australia and New Zealand have with regard to the development and priority of policies aimed at increasing levels of sport participation. As will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the role of governmental institutions has been significant with regard to influencing sport participation as an area of policy priority.

**Multiple streams**

Multiple streams (MS) is an approach developed by Kingdon, which attempts to examine the political system as a whole while embracing the importance of individual agents, ideas, institutions and processes external to the policy making process itself such as elections and the influence of media and other opinion formers. In contrast to more rational models of policy making MS highlights the messiness, ambiguity and complexity of policy making. While MS acknowledges that parts of the policy making process contains certain aspects of the rational decision making model, it is based upon the concept that policy making and policy change is often a random and opportunistic process.

In developing MS, Kingdon adapted the ‘garbage can’ model, developed by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972), in an attempt to understand what they had called ‘organised anarchies’ (Kingdon, 1995: 84). The ‘garbage can’ model remains central to MS, being utilised to assist in explaining the decision making process that occurs in organisations (Zahariadis, 1999). In endeavouring to explain why some agenda items are more important than others, Kingdon (1995) identified three streams that flow through the system: problems, policies
and politics. For the most part, the three streams run independent from each other, with their own dynamics and rules.

The problem stream focuses on why policy makers pay attention to certain problems and not others. Problems have been identified by John (1998) as public matters that require attention and that may be defined either as important or not. However, it is also noted by Kingdon (1995) that problems are not simply conditions or external events, there is a perceptual interpretive element again highlighting the random and at times un-predictable nature of policy making. The perceptual element becomes apparent when people allow beliefs and values to guide their decisions when defining problems (Kingdon, 1995). It is the application of values and beliefs to the way in which problems are defined that can intensify the ad hoc nature of policy making.

Three mechanisms are identified that assist in drawing problems to the attention of policy makers, indicators, focusing events and feedback. Indicators consist of routinely monitored activities, such as the number of road deaths or disease rates, and are used to assess the extent to which the problem has changed over time (Kingdon, 1995: 113). Focusing events include disasters, crisis events or personal experience, while feedback is generated from existing programmes and can bring emerging conditions to the attention of policy makers (1995: 113).

From his study of the health and transport sectors, Kingdon suggested that the more visible the policy domain the less crucial are crises and disasters in effecting policy change. This may have relevance for the sport sector, which may well be considered a low visibility sector when compared to other policy sectors such as education, social welfare or justice. However, health statistics indicating rising levels of, and the consequent escalation of, health care costs may be a ‘crisis’, which the sport policy community can utilise to effect change.

The question of why problems fade is addressed by the MS framework, highlighting that forces can ensure problems or issues fall off the agenda. Several reasons are posited as to why problems fade from the agenda. The
first explanation for problems fading from the agenda is that it is felt that the problem has been adequately addressed. This does not necessarily mean that the problem has been solved, however, some type of action has been taken and attention is now turned elsewhere (Kingdon, 1995: 104). Other reasons for problems falling from prominence include: the rise of other high profile problems; the increasing attention given to a problem, which results in negative feedback; the unviablity of continuing to invest in a problem; and, the failure to solve or address a problem adequately (Kingdon, 1995).

The policy stream constitutes the second stream of the MS approach. It is through the generation of ideas amongst actors who share a common concern, such as elite sport development or the development of grassroots sport, that policies are built in the policy stream. In the policy stream, ideas associated with particular policy communities float around in what Kingdon has referred to as the ‘policy primeval soup’ (Zahariadis, 1999: 76). Policy communities are composed of specialists in a given policy area, scattered both through and outside government. Within this stream, ideas ‘float around’, sometimes confronting one another, with some ideas gaining prominence while others fade away (Kingdon, 1995: 116). While the origin of policies can be seen as a random and unsystematic process, their selection is not. Gaining support or favour for a certain position takes a considerable period of time and is usually assisted by the presence of certain factors. These factors include technical feasibility, compatibility with the values held by those in the policy community and anticipation of future constraints (1995: 131-144). This process of considering proposals is a long, and at times, complex one with policy entrepreneurs attempting to build support in many ways and various forums. It is the long period of building support or ‘softening up’ that is critical to policy change as opportunities must be seized when windows of opportunity arise. It is during this time that the role of the policy entrepreneur is vital (1995: 201) and is of particular interest in the study of sport policy (Houlihan, 2005). Houlihan (2005) suggested that the policy entrepreneur concept may fit well where institutionalisation and influence of the sports lobby is weak or variable.
The third stream in the MS approach is the political stream. In contrast to the policy stream it is the process of bargaining that builds support in the political stream (1995: 159). The political stream consists of three elements: the national mood; pressure group campaigns; and, administrative or legislative turnover (Zahariadis, 1999). The first element relates to changes in the national mood as it is by sensing changes in what the public think (or issues they support) that government and non-government officials determine and influence which items are promoted onto (or excluded from) the agenda. 'National mood' refers to the notion that 'fairly large numbers of individuals in a given country tend to think along common lines and that the mood swings from time to time' (Zahariadis, 1999: 77). Awareness of the national mood is seen as key in furthering or hindering the promotion of items onto the agenda. The second element relates to the role of interest groups in assessing the level of consensus or dissent in the broader political arena. It is the perception by politicians as to whether particular issues have favour or not, which affects the likelihood of its prominence or obscurity. While it is difficult to ascertain how people actually gauge or arrive at the level of support for an idea, it is this perception, which directly affects an idea's level of prominence or obscurity (Kingdon, 1995: 151). The third element relates to the significant impact that turnover in legislature or administrative personnel can have, with new issues and proposals receiving attention while others are marginalised. This occurs either by newly appointed or elected personnel introducing fresh priorities or incumbents changing their priorities and pushing new items onto the agenda. It is this third element along with the national mood, which Zahariadis argued has the most powerful effect on agendas. The national mood refers to the idea that a 'fairly large number of individuals in a given country tend to think along common lines and that the mood swings from time to time' (Zahariadis, 2007: 73).

It is the third element, legislative and administrative change that finds particular resonance with regard to the development of sport policy in all three countries. In Australia, changes in government during the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a corresponding change of focus for sport policy. For example, the change of government, from Labor to a Liberal-led coalition in 1975, resulted in sport
being pushed down the policy agenda (Green & Houlihan, 2005). In contrast with Australia, consensus amongst political parties in Finland regarding the importance of developing SfA (Olin, 1981) suggests that change in government administration may not have as significant an effect on the direction or focus of sport policy. Finally, within the New Zealand sport subsystem, the establishment of the government entity SPARC in 2001 was instrumental in leading to the appointment of key personnel who were to influence the direction of the new government entity (see, Chapter 6).

A key aspect of the MS approach is the concept of 'windows of opportunity'. This is when the three streams are 'coupled' by policy entrepreneurs and a window of opportunity opens, sometimes predictably, sometimes unpredictably, thus creating the possibility of policy change. Policy windows provide an opportunity for policy entrepreneurs, who perform the function of 'coupling' the previously separate streams, to promote their ideas. In doing this, policy entrepreneurs 'hook solutions to problems, proposals to political momentum and political events to policy problems' (Kingdon, 1995: 182). Not only does this increase the chance of policy change occurring in one subject area, it also increases the probability that a 'spill-over' may occur (Kingdon, 1995). When events do spill-over into other policy areas it is frequently due to the potential benefits that politicians recognise of supporting previously successful ideas, thus creating a situation where one can argue from precedent. This is of particular interest to this study given the influence that other policy areas such as education and health have upon sport policy. The growing attention provided by governments to declining health standards, including increasing levels of obesity and decreasing levels of physical activity, and their implications is likely to have a potential 'spill-over effect' for the sports sector. This spill-over effect is evident in all three countries with rising levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity, amongst youth in particular, becoming increasingly important drivers for the establishment of new policies and strategies related to increased levels of sport; evident in the 'Active After-schools' programme in Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 2007b), the 'Health Enhancing Physical Activity' programmes in Finland (Ministry of Social
Affairs and Health, 2002) and the 'Mission On' programme in New Zealand (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2007a).

The MS approach celebrates the importance of ideas, the role of chance and serendipity in the policy process, as well as offering a major step forward in understanding policy formation (John, 1998: 175). The way in which ideas survive and remain on the agenda is complex. At any one time there are a number of ideas floating around, yet only a few are ever seriously considered. It is the unstructured and, at times, unpredictable nature of ideas that distinguishes MS from the more rationally based ACF.

Despite this, MS is not without its critics. The first criticism concerns the failure of MS to provide a convincing argument as to why policy changes (John, 1998). As the MS approach is primarily concerned with the agenda setting stage of the policy process, it does not adequately address how ideas feed into the implementation process and back again (John 1998: 176). A lack of attention to the influence of structural factors or institutionalised power, and a general weakness in the frameworks underlying the theory of power are further criticisms (Houlihan, 2005). Finally, Zahariadis noted that the MS approach is premised upon the 'pre-decision processes in the United States: agenda setting and alternative specification' (1999: 79). This raises the question as to whether the MS model is applicable in other political systems, for example in more statist countries such as the UK. Given its strengths, it may well have value beyond the United States system, particularly in federal systems such as Australia. The ability of the MS to link the macro- and meso-levels of analysis is an interesting aspect for this study; as argued by Zahariadis, the MS integrates 'policy communities with broader events' (1999: 78). While the MS challenges rationalisation and promotes the importance of ideas, it also is of particular value in that it can be integrated within other concepts such as the 'policy community'.
**Advocacy coalition framework**

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) has been described as one of the most developed alternatives to the 'stalist' way of thinking (Parsons, 1995). Development of the ACF emerged from a desire to blend the best features of the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to policy implementation, and a commitment to incorporate technical information into a more central role in terms of understanding the policy process (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

The ACF is associated with the work of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) and while having a number of similarities with the policy network approach, it analyses a broader set of processes than the network approach. The ACF focuses on coalitions that have been described by John as 'an alliance of bodies holding the same ideas and interests for the purpose of arguing against other coalitions within the same policy sector' (1998: 169). The ACF is founded upon five basic premises: the need to address the role of technical information in the policy process; understanding the process of policy change requires a perspective of a decade or more; the most useful unit of analysis for understanding policy change is at the policy subsystem or domain level; the conception of policy subsystems should be broadened; and public policies should incorporate implicit theories about how to achieve their objectives (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 118).

The rational approach of the ACF is evidenced in the decision making process, where technical information plays an important role. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) suggested that the rise in 'think tanks' and policy analysis, both inside and outside government suggest a growing market among legislators for technical information. Technical information can assist coalitions in putting forward their arguments as well as providing an opportunity to test or refute the claims of other coalitions. The introduction of new information also plays a key role in policy orientated learning, as members of various coalitions seek to better understand the world in order to further their policy objectives (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).
The second premise relates directly to the ACF’s utility in explaining change. The reference to a decade or more as the required time span to understand the process of policy change comes from the findings concerning the enlightenment function of policy research (Weiss, 1977), and relates directly to the ACF’s focus on policy learning. Weiss (1977) argued that a focus on short term decision making will under-estimate the influence of policy analysis as such research is used principally to alter the perceptual apparatus of policymakers over time. A consequence of this is that it is the cumulative effect of findings from studies and from every day knowledge, which has the greatest effect on policy (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994: 179). The first and second premises highlight the strong emphasis of rationality that underpins the ACF.

The third premise contends that it is the policy sub-system or domain which is the most useful unit of analysis for understanding policy change. For the purposes of the ACF, a subsystem has been defined as consisting of ‘those actors from a variety of public and private organisation who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issues and who regularly seek to influence public policy in that domain’ (1999: 119). The complexity of policy making in any subsystem is such that actors must specialise if they are to have any influence. Another reason suggested by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) for focusing at the subsystem level is the recurring findings of implementation studies that highlight a lack of a single dominant programme at the local/operational level. Instead there is a multitude of programmes at various levels of government that local actors seek to exploit in pursuit of their goals (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

Fourth, the understanding of policy subsystems should be broadened to include journalists, researchers and policy analysts as well as actors at all levels of government that are active in policy formulation and implementation - not only administrative agencies, legislative committees and interest groups (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 119). Research has indicated that officials at the sub-national level have considerable discretion in deciding how national policy is actually implemented in a range of diverse local situations (Rhodes, 1988).
The fifth premise upon which the ACF is based states that public policies/programmes incorporate implicit theories about how objectives will be achieved and as such can be conceptualised in much the same way as belief systems. Public policies/programmes involve 'value priorities, perceptions of important causal relationships, perceptions of world states (including the magnitude of the problem), and perceptions and assumptions concerning the efficacy of policy instruments' (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 119 - 120). By mapping beliefs and policies, it is possible over time to assess the influence of technical information or beliefs on policy change. Figure 2.1 presents an overview of the ACF. On the left are two sets of exogenous variables, which impact upon the constraints and resources of subsystem actors.

Figure 2.1 Advocacy coalition framework

From Sabatier and Weible (2007: 202)
The 'stable system parameters' are extremely difficult to change and take a very long time to transform, because of this they are seldom the focus of coalition strategies. The parameters include the distribution of natural resources, the basic socio-cultural values and social structure, the basic constitutional structure.

The second set of exogenous variables is more susceptible to change over a period of a decade or more and is considered a principal source of major policy change. These factors include major changes in socio-economic conditions, changes in the systemic governing coalition, and policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). Coalition opportunity structures mediate between stable system parameters and the subsystem. The opportunity structures are relatively enduring features of a polity that affect resources and constraint of subsystem actors (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). The variable, degree of consensus needed for major policy change, signals the variation across countries with regard to consensus. Sabatier and Weible argued that the higher the degree of consensus required, the more 'incentive coalitions have to be inclusive (rather than exclusive) to see compromise and share information with opponents' (2007: 200). The second variable, openness of the political system, relates to the number of decision-making venues that any major policy proposal must go through and the accessibility of each venue. This recent adaptation to the ACF highlights the importance of linking power relations at the macro-level with meso-level theory. Pluralist regimes with numerous decision making venues and high levels of accessibility can be contrasted with corporatist type regimes where decision-making is centralised and access to the decision making process is restricted.

The third set of processes is concerned with the (endogenous) interaction of advocacy coalitions within the policy subsystem. The notion that advocacy coalitions are formed around a core set of beliefs and values, that are very stable and not easily shaken, is at the very core of the ACF. A key feature of the advocacy coalition belief system is the tripartite hierarchy of beliefs. At the most significant level is the deep core shared belief system, which includes
basic ontological and normative beliefs such as relative evaluation of individual freedom versus social equality.

At the next level are the policy core beliefs that represent a coalition's basic normative commitments and causal perceptions across and entire policy subsystem. Finally, secondary aspects comprise a set of narrower beliefs concerning the seriousness of the problem or the relative importance of various causal factors in particular or policy preferences regarding budgetary allocations. It is assumed that there is a decreasing level of resistance to change within these categories of belief systems. Deep core beliefs display the most resistance to change while secondary aspects display the least resistance (Kubler, 2001).

Sabatier and Weible's framework allows for policy actors, individuals and organizations, to alter their stance on policy solutions, the secondary aspects of their belief system. There is, therefore, an inherent conservatism in policy-making in policy communities. While members will not relinquish their core values and beliefs there may be change on items of secondary importance, which could occur as result of careful studies or the presentation of compelling anecdotal evidence.

In every policy community there are two to four advocacy coalitions, with one emerging as a dominant coalition. Conflict between various coalitions may be mediated by policy brokers whose prime concern is to find a compromise that will reduce intense conflict (1999: 122). However, Bulkeley (2000) maintained that the division between advocates of one belief system and another is not as clear cut as the ACF would suggest. In a study of climate change in Australia, it was argued that actors with disparate interest and beliefs adhered to similar storylines (Bulkeley, 2000). Furthermore, Hajer (1995) argued that it is not clear whether the boundaries between advocacy coalitions, or between advocacy coalitions and policy brokers can be maintained according to core beliefs. This, therefore, raises the possibility that actors can advocate different positions, depending upon the particular context in which the argument is situated (Bulkeley, 2000).
An explanation of variation in policy change has seen the ACF distinguish between major and minor policy change. Predictably, major change relates to the policy core aspects of government programmes while minor change is associated with change to the secondary aspects (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 147). To assist in defining the extent of the change, two criteria, topic and scope, are applied. Topic relates to the level at which the change occurs, whether it be at the deep core of the shared belief system, the policy core belief level or the secondary aspects of a coalition beliefs system. The scope of policy change relates to the extent of the change throughout the policy system. Change may be minor in one subsystem, but may be significant for another subsystem, which is nested within it (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

The ACF asserts that policy orientated learning within and between coalitions is an important aspect of policy change. However, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith contend that ‘although policy-orientated learning often alters secondary aspects of a coalition’s behaviour system, changes in the policy core aspects of a governmental programme require a perturbation in non-cognitive factors that are either internal or external to the subsystem’ (2007: 204). The internal and/or external shock, or ‘focusing event’, attracts public attention; highlights vulnerabilities, failures or neglect; and brings new information into the policy process, thereby providing the potential for policy change (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). As a consequence of an internal/external shock, critical political resources can be redistributed as attention is drawn to a problem; this has the potential to draw in new, or redistribute existing critical resources. Alternatively, internal shocks can confirm the core beliefs in minority coalitions and increase doubt within the dominant coalition (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

A criticism of the ACF, highlighted by John (1998), is its failure to explain adequately policy change. For the ACF, the policymaking process is for the most part stable until large socio-economic events change the policy making focus, it is much rarer for cognitive change to affect the policy-making system. As a result the ACF ends up as a descriptive rather than causal theory, making the ACF rather too similar to the networks model (John, 1998). Furthermore, Hajer (1995) argued that the ACF’s approach to policy learning ignores
normative and discursive dimensions. In conceptualising discourse as a means through which learning is communicated, rather than as a medium through which actors create their world, Hajer (1995) argued that the ACF also fails to grasp the interaction between actors within policy coalitions.

Finally, the theorisation of power within the ACF framework has been highlighted as a weakness. It is an area that receives little attention due to the underlying rationalist assumption that, in the medium term, evidence from policy learning will result in policy change even if it challenges core beliefs (Houlihan, 2005). Power, therefore, rather than being the outcome of resource control and pursuits of interests, 'is a property of ideas' (2005: 174).

Discussion of meso-level approaches

The three frameworks discussed above have attempted to explain policy change and stability. As previously noted the policy process is complex, posing considerable challenges for theorists attempting to analyse, explain and understand it. Kingdon has suggested that it is the interaction of three streams, problems, policies and politics that when combined produce policy change. The network approach considers complex interdependent relationships between groups and the state as they shift and change with resource dependency a key aspect. It has been noted that the ACF has certain similarities with the policy network approach, however, it differs in that participants bargain and construct alliances within networks.

A critical question is which approach or synthesis of approaches will provide the apposite lens through which to examine sport policy in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. As previously discussed, each approach focuses upon different aspects of the policy making process, with one element in the explanation appearing to dominate. All three approaches have been applied in empirical studies, however, few have been applied directly to the sports policy environment. The ACF appears to be an approach, which addresses the policy making process in the most complete way. It is concerned explicitly with long term policy change and unlike much of the network analysis is concerned with understanding a dynamic process (Peters, 1998: 29). Given the growing
attention and emphasis being placed on sport by governments, the ability to address and explain change is essential. Furthermore, the concept of 'policy broker' may have particular relevance given the peculiarities of the sport policy area as highlighted by Houlihan (2005). However, as noted earlier, the ACF's weakness in taking account of the normative and discursive dimension is one which needs to be considered.

The MS approach offers an interesting and valuable contrast to the more rational model of ACF. In explaining change, MS recognises the randomness and ambiguity of policy making. As discussed, the 'spill-over' concept has particular relevance for sport policy, given its vulnerability to other policy areas. Its departure from the rational models of policy making may be advantageous to the relatively new policy area of sport where arguably the role of chance and opportunism play as much a part as strategy and planning (Sibeon, 1997). While the role and level of influence that individuals play within the sport policy environment may vary across countries, the concept of the policy entrepreneur may also be of value in analysing the selected countries.

The policy network approach emphasises the structural components of networks while down playing the micro-level of interpersonal behaviour and as such has been considered more useful in explaining policy stability rather than policy change. In contrast to the ACF, the network approach does not require competing coalitions and, by acknowledging that subsystems can have a dominant coalition with no or little opposition, allows for policy subsystems with high levels of agreement and consensus — a framework that may be particularly useful with regard to Finland. The ACF model extends the network model by offering a more comprehensive framework for policy change, an area which Richardson (2000) claimed is not addressed adequately by the network approach. Given the relatively recent emergence of sport policy as an area of government interest in New Zealand the changing sport policy focus of Australia over the last 30 years, it is suggested that the ACF may be a more useful lens through which to consider each of these countries. Finally, it is because of the ACF's greater concern with policy change and the networks contrasting approach to competing coalitions that it is argued that it is
necessary to consider both approaches in reviewing Australia, Finland and New Zealand.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the ontological and epistemological assumptions implicit in this research, combined with the ensuing approach taken in relation to research methodology and methods. Grix (2002) highlighted the importance of the inter-relationship between these core components of research and the need for researchers to articulate clearly the research paradigm in which the research is based.

Before exploring these concepts it is useful to reiterate the aim of this study, which is, to conduct an analysis of national government strategies in Australia, Finland and New Zealand, which contribute to increasing life-long participation in sport. The objectives of the study are to:

- identify the characteristics of the sport systems in the three countries;
- examine the status of increasing adult sport participation as a policy focus and its development in Australia, Finland and New Zealand; and,
- identify characteristics of government policy that impinge on adult life-long participation in sport.

The way in which one attempts to investigate or gain knowledge about the world carries many inbuilt assumptions (Grix, 2002). Understanding and being aware of the assumptions upon which research is based is vital for any study, as is being aware of the strengths and limitations of the research methods adopted. It is the ontological and epistemological assumptions, which will be examined first.

Research Paradigm

Ontology is the starting point for all research as it raises basic questions about the nature of reality. Ontology is the building block or foundation upon which research is based. It is from ontology that various scholarly traditions have
emerged, with diverging views and assumptions that underpin their particular approach or view of social enquiry (Marsh & Smith, 2001). While ontology and epistemology are two closely related concepts, it is necessary to distinguish the two concepts.

Ontology has been defined as the image of social reality upon which theory is based (Grix, 2002). Blaikie has provided a rather more illuminating description, referring to ontology as the ‘claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality - claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other’ (1993: 6). In short ontological assumptions are concerned with what is believed to constitute reality. Ontological assumptions therefore concern the very nature and essence of the phenomena under investigation. Ontological questions ask: whether the reality to be investigated is external to the individual? – imposing itself on individual consciousness; whether reality is of an objective nature, or the product of individual cognition?; and whether reality is a given out there in the world or a product of one’s mind?’ (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Sparkes (1992) outlined three major ontological paradigms, which have impacted upon the world of Physical Education, highlighting key assumptions upon which the paradigms are based (see Table 3.1).

A crucial question to be answered is whether reality is out there in the world or whether it is a product of one’s own mind (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 1). The positivist paradigm adopts a view that the social world external to individual cognition, is a real world ‘made up of hard tangible and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured and known for what they really are’ (Smith, 1984: 20). Popkewitz (1984) outlined a number of assumptions and commitments that act to shape the positivist paradigm including: the belief that facts are free of the values and interests of those who produce them; theory is to be universal, it is not bound to context or actual circumstance; quantification of variables enable researchers to reduce or eliminate contradictions or ambiguities; the social world is constructed of a system of variables that are distinct and can be analytically separable parts of one interacting system; and, a cause is a relationship between empirical variables that can be explained or
manipulated to produce conditionally predictable outcomes. By identifying and inter-relating specific variables it is believed that the cause of behaviour can be known (Sparkes, 1992: 20).

Table 3.1 Assumptions underlying the positivist, interpretative and critical paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivist</th>
<th>Interpretative</th>
<th>Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>External-realist</td>
<td>Internal-idealist relativist</td>
<td>External-realist or Internal-idealist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>Objectivist, Dualist</td>
<td>Subjectivist, Interactive</td>
<td>Subjectivist, Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Nomothetic, experimental, manipulative</td>
<td>Ideographic, hermeneutical, dialectical</td>
<td>Ideographic, participative, transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interests</strong></td>
<td>Prediction and control (Technical)</td>
<td>Understanding and Interpretation (Practical)</td>
<td>Emancipation (Criticism and liberation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sparkes (1992: 21)

Therefore, in the positivist paradigm the world is real, it is hard and concrete as in the natural world. The social world 'is not something which the individual creates – it exists 'out there'; ontologically it is prior to the existence and consciousness of any single human being' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 4). Positivists would, therefore, not accept that change could occur at a deeper structural level or that relationships between these deep structures and political outcomes may not be directly observable. There has been growing criticism of the positivist approach especially in its applicability to social science and it is partly as a result of this criticism that competing paradigms have emerged, one being the interpretative paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm contends that positivism is not appropriate for the study of the social world, as the social world is seen as having very different characteristics to the natural world upon which the positivist approach is based. This external-realist view of the world is in contrast with that of the internal-idealist. At its core, the interpretative paradigm seeks to understand the nature of the social world at the level of the subjective experience (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The researcher is included within the frame of reference, unlike the
positivist paradigm where the researcher is the observer of action. Reality for interpretivists is a product of individual consciousness, it is a product of individual cognition and one’s own mind (Sparkes, 1992: 13). Reality can only exist within the context of a mental framework (construct) for thinking about it, therefore, “reality” can only be seen through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit (Sparkes, 1992: 26).

Interpretivism is built upon an anti-foundational assumption that there is no independent reality and that there are no data that are free from interpretation. Facts can only be seen through a value laden framework and many constructions are, therefore, possible. Truth and validity cannot be a matter of correspondence as in the positivist framework, but rather truth and validity become a matter of coherence. As Smith noted, ‘For interpretative inquiry, the basis of truth or trustworthiness is social agreement; what is judged true or trustworthy is what we can agree, conditioned by time and place, is true or trustworthy’ (1984: 386).

Critical theory is the third ontological paradigm, which Sparkes (1992) reviewed. Due to multiple strands within critical theory, Guba (1994) argued that a more appropriate label might be ‘ideologically orientated enquiry’. Central to critical theory is emancipation or enabling people to take control of their own lives (Sparkes, 1992). Critical theory rejects positivism and the notion of a value free research process. It is also critical of interpretative research and its apparent ignorance of power relationships within which people operate within realities that are constructed. An important distinction between interpretivists and critical theorists has been articulated by Sparkes:

while critical researchers can agree with interpretivists that organisations and institutions are the product of shared meanings that are actively created by people via subjective negotiation, they emphasise that the results of any negotiations over meanings by individuals or groups takes place, and are determined within a social and organisational context that is permeated by unequal power relations that are related to such issues as social class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability etc (1992: 39)
Cruickshank (2003) contended that the most important assumption or concept influencing the compilation of data would be ontological assumptions concerning structure and agency. This is because social scientific research is concerned with exploring how individual agency is influenced by social context. Therefore, there will be assumptions concerning the extent to which individuals have free will, the extent to which individuals are constrained by structures, and how individuals are enabled and constrained by the social context in different ways (Cruickshank, 2003). Hay noted that the 'question of structure and agency is about the explanation of social and political phenomena. It is about what is deemed to constitute a valid or adequate explanation of a political effect or outcome; about what adequate political explanation entails' (2002: 94). However, the relationship between structure and agency is not one that can be judged empirically (Hay, 2002). This debate revolves around human nature, more explicitly the debate surrounding the relationship between human beings and their surroundings.

This is one of the crucial debates within social science, with a tendency for authors to favour either structural or agency-centred explanations. Marsh et al., (1999) noted that much of the positivist literature favours agency in its explanation of outcomes, which is generally considered more directly observable than structure, while other authors favour a more structure centred approach. Hay (2002) suggested that more agency-centred and more structure-centred accounts tend to resolve themselves into differences about where to look for and, indeed what counts as, important causal mechanisms in the first place.

There is a considerable array of opinions regarding the relationship between structure and agency. At the extremes of this debate are structuralism and intentionalism (voluntarism). The former contends that human beings and their experiences are products of the environment. This position, therefore, posits that human beings have no free will as they are conditioned by the external environment. Four criticisms have been articulated in relation to structuralism: a) structuralism incorporates a systematic failure to acknowledge the influence
of actors (individual or collective) upon the course of political events; b) structuralism presents a depressing image of the world, which is populated by mere automatons whose behaviour is entirely predictable; c) it promotes fatalism and passivity; and d) there is a fundamental contradiction - if we are all simply expressions of structure, how could we hope to know? (Hay 2002: 108-109).

Hay (2002) noted two tendencies associated with intentionalism: presentism, where there is a concentration on the present, thereby removing the moment from its historical context and its relation to both past and future; secondly contextual parochialism, which is the tendency to restrict one's analysis to a tightly specified situation, analysing the situation in its own terms and resolutely resisting the attempt to draw general or even transferable conclusions (Hay, 2002: 111-112). Intentionalism contends that agents have a much more creative role in determining their behaviour and experiences; they are in control rather than being controlled. When discussed in this way structure and agency are thought of as oppositional, however, this need not necessarily be the case (Hay, 2002).

While critical realism supports a recursive relationship between structure and agency, other approaches emphasise the role of structure over agency. One such approach, which favours structure over agency, is the relatively new theory of the state neo-institutionalism, an approach which grew partly in response to, and rejection of, society centred or input weighted theories. Institutionalism emphasises the mediating and constraining role of the institutional setting within which outcomes are realised (Hay, 2002). Amongst the four main new institutionalisms (rational choice, historical, sociological and discursive institutionalism) there exist differences in key epistemological and ontological presuppositions, which in turn have significant implications for the study of the State. However, while institutional theorists are united on the importance of institutions and the rejection of behaviourism, there has been division along a range of other dimensions, in particular, the way the State is defined and the logic of political action (Schmidt, 2006). However, despite diversity across the different schools of institutionalism, it is also often difficult
to draw definitive lines between them (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992). Indeed, as Thelen (1999) noted, neo-institutionalists have resisted the tendency to cordon off the different schools from each other preferring at times to borrow liberally from each other where they can, in order to answer empirical questions.

However, two broad orientations have been adopted with regard to defining the concept of institutionalism. One emphasises the significance of institutions as organisational entities (such as agencies, departments and parliaments), while the other, cultural institutionalism, highlights shared values, norms and beliefs (Houlihan, 2007). Hall and Taylor provide a useful definition of institutions by describing them as:

the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structures of the polity or political economy. They can range from the rules of a constitutional order to the conventions governing trade union behaviour or bank-firm relations (1996: 938).

Houlihan (2005) argued that a key strength of institutionalism is the way in which it directs attention to both the behaviour of actors and the structures within which they operate while at the same time providing a powerful corrective to theories, which ignore the significance of institutions within the policy process. However, in critiquing institutionalism, Pontusson (1995) raised concerns regarding the treatment of interests, that is, the tendency to substitute ideas for interests, with the assumption that institutions strongly influence interests. While the deterministic nature of institutionalism has led to much criticism, Marsh argued that 'a path dependent argument is not a deterministic argument; rather it suggests that the past constrains and facilitates, without determining, present outcomes' (2008: 254).

Several authors have highlighted the importance of, and role played, by institutions within the sport policy sector (Houlihan & White, 2002; Pickup, 1996; Roche, 1993). Houlihan noted that the 'allocation of functional responsibility of sport, federalism, the use of 'arms length' agencies and the presence of a Minister for Sport are all seen as having a noticeable impact on
sport policy and its implementation' (2005: 170). Likewise, cultural institutions, including beliefs, values and norms associated with social class, gender, disability and ethnicity, have also been identified as significant. As argued by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), cultural institutions set the limits of the imagination, establishing basic preferences and identity and setting the context within which particular actions (such as policy options) are deemed acceptable according to a ‘logic of appropriateness’. In other words cultural institutionalism shows ‘how collectively held norms define appropriate conduct, shape actors identities, and influence actors interests’ (Katzenstein, 1996: 23). Cultural institutionalism, therefore, resonates with the emergent social structures of critical realism where pre-existing social structures ‘serve both to facilitate and to constrain the exercise of human agency in the present’ (Lewis, 2000: 251). As Marsh argued, ‘structures provide the context within which agents act and, as such, constrain or facilitate actions. However, it is agents who interpret that structure, and this interpretation is affected by the agent’s prior values, experiences and practices’ (Marsh, 2008: 253).

It is with regard to the cultural institutionalism that the work of Esping-Andersen and his analysis of welfare states is useful. Esping-Andersen’s work is based on the hypothesis that the socio-economic and cultural foundations of a country will shape policy and may hold particular relevance in considering the emergence of SfA policy in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. Esping-Andersen (1990) identified three types of welfare regime: liberal, conservative and social democratic, using the private-public mix in welfare provision, the degree of de-commodification and modes of stratification or solidarities as dependent variables. Liberal welfare regimes, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States and the UK ‘reflect a political commitment to minimise the state, to individualise risks, and to promote market solutions’ and adopt a ‘narrow conception of what risks should be considered “social”’ (Esping-Andersen, 1999: 74ff). By contrast the social democratic welfare regime is ‘virtually synonymous with the Nordic countries’ and is ‘committed to comprehensive risk coverage, generous benefit levels, and egalitarianism’, the de-commodification of welfare and the ‘fusion of universalism with generosity’ (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 78ff). Green and
Collins (in press) have argued that in a hard application of path dependency, one might argue that early decisions in a particular area, such as elite sport or SfA, would result in a policy trajectory that was locked on to a particular course. Using Esping-Andersen’s terms, this might be particular to a certain type of regime. For example, a prior commitment to a social democratic model, as in the case of Finland, and/or a commitment to SfA would make the adoption of an elite athlete development policy difficult as it would require a break from established values of universalism and egalitarianism (Green & Collins, in press). Alternatively, a softer application of path dependency may suggest that early decisions constrain subsequent policy options rather than lock policy on a specific trajectory (Kay, 2005; Pierson, 2000). For example, the support of elite athletes might be considered acceptable if it is considered a by-product of a strong commitment to mass participation. In contrast, an elite development policy that was disconnected from SfA, perhaps relying on an elite talent identification programme, would be less acceptable (Green & Collins, in press).

Drawn from the discipline of economics, path dependency focuses upon increasing returns, which can also be described as self-reinforcing or positive feedback processes (Pierson, 2000). Two key elements are central to the notion of increasing returns. First, increasing returns pinpoint the costs of switching from one alternative to another and how in certain social contexts, they will increase over time and second, attention is drawn to issues of timing and sequence, distinguishing formative moments or conjectures from the periods that reinforce divergent paths (Pierson, 2000: 251). Furthermore, political development in institutionalism is characterised as involving ‘critical junctures and developmental pathways’ (Ikenberry, 1994: 16ff). Critical junctures involve founding moments of institutional formation that send countries along different development paths. An example of this may be the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport in 1981, which may be considered a ‘critical juncture’ for the emergence of a policy framework for developing medal-wining elites (see Green & Collins, in print). Critical junctures can, therefore, provide insights into the ways in which ‘international events or trends translate into different challenges in different countries as a result of their inter-sections and inter-actions with ongoing domestic processes (Collier & Collier, 1991). Connected to critical junctures are claims that institutions
continue to evolve in response to changing environmental conditions and ongoing political manoeuvring but in ways that are constrained by past trajectories (Thelen, 1999). This provides insights into the persistence of particular patterns of politics over time, although, this is, therefore, less helpful in trying to understand change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). It is the existence of exogenous shocks, which Pierson (2000) argued, can lead to paths being disrupted and change, therefore, occurring.

In criticising path dependency, Kay (2005) argued that it is neither a framework, theory or model and fails to provide a list of variables that can be used to organize diagnostic and prescriptive inquiry, rather path dependency is an organizing concept, which can be used to label a certain type of temporal process. Furthermore, given its focus upon past events, path dependency cannot be used for current or future phenomenon and, perhaps more importantly, fails to provide any fine-grained mechanisms that might provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the process observed (Kay, 2005: 561).

Despite the challenge of adapting such explanatory mechanisms, it is argued that the application of path dependency stretches the temporal horizon of sport policy analysis and, thereby, provides a valuable lens through which to analyse developments in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. Indeed, Pierson (2000: 252) claims that arguments regarding increasing returns can redirect the questions, which political scientists ask, thereby ‘contributing to a richer appreciation of historical processes in generating variation in political analysis’. In addition, there is also the potential for path dependency to explain ‘not only why policies may be difficult to reform but also why they become more complex overtime’ (Kay, 2005: 554-555). Finally, by exploring the concept of increasing returns, attention is drawn to particular variables, which may in turn highlight sources of both political change and stability in certain common political settings. In relation to this, a case in point is the contention that it is the particular sequencing of events, or processes, which may provide a key part of the explanation for divergent outcomes (Pierson, 2000).
Beyond structure versus agency

Since the late 1970s, there has been a proliferation of positions, which have allowed the structure/agency debate to move beyond structuralism and intentionalism, where structure and agency influence each other, and are inherently and inexorably related and intertwined (Hay, 2002). The structure/agency debate has been extended to include the nature of the relationship between conduct and context, agency and structure. This development contends that 'agents are situated within a structured context, which presents them with an uneven distribution of opportunities and constraints. Actors influence the development of that context over time through the consequence of their actions. Yet at any given time, the ability of actors to realise their intentions is set by the context itself' (Hay, 2002: 116-117). This view adopts a dialectical relationship between structure and agency, 'Agents are in a sense 'bearers' of structural positions but they also interpret those structures. At the same time, structures are not unchanging; they change in part because of the strategic decisions of the agents operating within the structure' (Marsh et al., 1999: 15). Outcomes cannot be explained solely by reference to structure, they are the result of actions of strategically calculating agents. These agents are located within a political and broader social-structural context, but significantly agents do not control that structural context. This is because actors interpret the context and it is the actors' interpretation of the structural context that in turn affects the strategic calculation of the actors (Marsh, 1999).

The extreme view of structuralism, which regards the agent and their activities as being completely determined by the situation or environment in which they are located, is rejected. The other extreme view of determinism, which contends that the agent is completely autonomous and free willed, is also rejected. The position adopted in this research is one that allows for the influence of both situational and voluntary factors accounting for the activities of human beings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It is acknowledged that between these two extreme positions there are a number of possible relationships. However, as Hay observed, the relationship between structure and agency is not one that
can be determined empirically and 'if the relative significance of structural and agential factors cannot be established empirically, then we must seek to avoid all claims, which suggest they might' (Hay, 2002: 91). As the issues associated with power are perhaps the most universal and fundamental concept of political analysis, it is important to clarify how power has been conceptualised, and more specifically, how power has been conceptualised for this study.

**Power relations**

While the concept of power lies at the centre of political theory, there is limited consensus as to the nature and definition of power (Connelly, 1993; Hay, 2002; Nash, 2000). The essential contestedness has focused upon how far to extend the conceptualisations of power and its accessibility to empirical research (Lukes, 2005). It is not the intention to cover all theories regarding power but there is a need to provide a concept of power relations as it relates to decision making, the setting of policy agendas influencing policy outcomes and the initiation of policy. It is, therefore, necessary to clarify the way in which power has been conceptualised for this study.

Central to this study are questions relating to how power relations affect the initiation of policy, policy outcomes and the setting of policy agendas. Questions are therefore raised as to why some people are in a privileged position of policy making, why particular policy discourses may dominate, in whose interests the powerful rule and how does their rule result in their interests being served (Marsh, 1995: 293). In the previous discussion of epistemological and methodological assumptions, a dialectic relationship was proposed between structure and agency with the caveat that an 'approach which stresses exclusively either structure or agency has severe limitations' (Marsh & Smith, 2000: 5). The concept of power, therefore needs to involve a relational concept of both structure and agency. In regard to the analysis of policy networks, Marsh and Smith noted that 'networks define roles and responses. In doing so they are not neutral, but, like other political institutions and processes, they reflect past power distributions and conflicts and shape
present political outcomes' (2000: 6). Furthermore, in considering policy change the ACF considers the ability of actors to influence decisions. In order for an advocacy coalition to attempt to alter the behaviour of other coalitions, the coalition uses a number of strategies in an attempt to alter the behaviour of other institutions or coalitions and achieve policy outcomes that are consistent with their own values or beliefs. While the influence of shared values, beliefs and ideology in privileging certain policy outcomes is of particular interest and relevance for this study, it also draws attention to the structural aspects of power. At an individual level the concept of policy entrepreneurs within multiple streams raises issues of power at an individual level through agenda control and manipulation (Zahariadis, 1999). It is the concepts of power based upon the work of Lukes (1974, 2005) and Foucault, are explored in this section.

Lukes (1974, 2005) proposed a three-dimensional view of power. In part, this was in response to previous concepts of power proposed by Dahl (1961) and Bacharach and Baratz (1970). Dahl's pluralist based concept of power, sometimes referred to as the 'one-dimensional' view of power, offered an agency centred approach, which focused upon the exercise of power during the decision making stage of the policy process. Dahl argued that the best way to determine who had power was to examine who prevailed in decision making and that this can be analysed only after 'careful examination of a series of concrete decisions' (Dahl, 1958: 466, in Lukes, 2005: 17).

The first dimension of power was an empirically demonstrable concept based upon a behavioural view of power and as such was criticised for focusing only on observable conflict. Crenson (1971) argued that Dahl's concept of power extended beyond the decision making process and that the one dimensional view prevented situations where a polity was unified in its non-decision making, or in other words, where groups or individuals were able to prevent issues or proposals from being considered or placed on the agenda. In response to the criticism directed at Dahl's concept of power, Bachrach and Baratz (1970) argued that the concept of power needed also to include 'non-decisions', where a person or group consciously or unconsciously created or reinforced barriers to the airing of policy conflict, such as in agenda setting or non-decision
making. Central to the second dimension of power is the 'extent that a person or group – consciously or unconsciously – creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power' (Lukes, 2005: 20). Power is, therefore, considered to be a 'mobilization of bias' where 'some issues are organised into politics while others are organised out (Schattsneider, 1960: 71). However, this concept of power retained residual behaviouralism as it assumed that power relations existed only where there was observable conflict between those exercising power and those over whom it is exercised (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 49). It follows, therefore, if the researcher uncovers no grievances then it must be assumed there is a genuine consensus of the prevailing allocation of values (Lukes, 1974). Not only were situations excluded where conflict was unobserved but also excluded were situations where the subordinated was unaware that that their interests were being shaped or influenced. The possibility of power being exercised in situations where the subordinated did not identify themselves as the subjects of subordination – in which they do not perceive themselves as possessing an interest, which they are prevented from realising (either in the decision making process itself or in the process of agenda setting, was, therefore, excluded (Hay, 1997: 47). Bachrach and Baratz failed to give consideration to the 'less visible (and arguably more significant) process by which preferences (and by their own definition interests) are shaped' (Hay 1997: 47, original emphasis).

Lukes argued that the concept of power needed to be extended to include latent conflict, where power is used to shape people's preferences so that neither overt nor covert conflict existed (Ham & Hill, 1993: 70). This non-behavioural third dimension of power is succinctly argued by Lukes:

> Is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because the value is as divinely ordained or beneficial (Lukes, 2005: 28).
This extension of the concept of power, to create consensus, allows political institutions, groups or individuals to dominate or exercise control over what people decide to do and care about or how forcefully they articulate their cares (Crenson, 1971). However, Lukes third dimension of power has not been without its critics. Empirical questions are raised regarding how to establish whether the interests or preferences differ from those expressed and if so what are they? This raised the problematic issues of people’s ‘real interests’, a criticism directed at Lukes, which relates to the way in which ‘real interests’ are identified and the challenging empirical and ethical issues of identifying perceived and actual, or real interests, and the conflation of analysis with critique (see Hay, 1997 and Heywood, 2007, for further discussion). However, while this criticism is acknowledged by Lukes, indeed power is at its most effective when least accessible to observation, and while it may be difficult to identify it in empirically falsifiable terms, this does not mean that the phenomenon does not exist, only that we lack the tools and skills for uncovering its application (Lukes, 2005). The idea that power is mediated by social structure and, therefore, can be exercised in various ways, including unintentionally and passively has been accentuated in Lukes’ later work when he argued that:

social life can only properly be understood as an interplay of power and structure, a web of possibilities for agents, whose nature is both active and structured, to make choices and pursue strategies within given limits, which in consequences expand and contract over time (Lukes, 2005: 68-69).

In recent discussion, Lukes also acknowledged that the ‘issue of framing’ is a key issue particularly in relation to the way people are subject to the powerful (Kearns, 2007). Lukes, therefore, introduced the idea of preference shaping or the securing of consent to domination of willing subjects. By introducing subtle and complex ways in which the inactivity of agents or institutions can prevent issues being raised offered a sociological perspective, not a merely personalised explanation, of how political systems prevent demands from becoming political issues or even from being made (Lukes, 2005). According to Lukes, the importance of language and framing are considered ‘terribly
important parts of the third face of power' in particular the way in which 'framing reflects the way people are subject to the powerful' and the way in which this 'limits the public conception of what alternatives might be available' (Kearns, 2007: 275). Framing and the notion of interests raise questions with regard to this study, such as, do actors within the sport sectors of Finland, Australia and New Zealand have different interests to those openly articulated or expressed? Moreover, it poses questions as to whether common beliefs and/or values are indeed mutual or if they are merely the result of a dominant group or individual who has shaped the groups interests?

While Foucault's work has been described at times as disparate and disjointed, the influence of his work on political sociology cannot be underestimated (Lukes, 2005; Nash, 2000). Foucault provides an alternative insight into the nature of modern power by questioning the often state orientated theories of power. Furthermore, Foucault's concept of power is useful in sensitising the researcher to consider power beyond that controlled or exercised by institutions and individuals and draws attention to the way in which power may operate outside the traditional state centred approaches.

Foucault challenged the traditional concept of power, that power is securing compliance even willing compliance, by extending the concept to consider that power is everywhere and, therefore, there is 'no freedom from it or reasoning independent of it' (Lukes, 2005: 12). As part of the critique, Foucault argued that traditional state centred theories of power hindered the ability to recognise discursive based expert powers dispersed through the social system. Unlike sovereign power, where power was exercised top-down, centralized, intermittent, highly visible, extravagant and stable, Foucault argued that post-modern power is bottom-up, diffuse, continuous, invisible, operating in the micro-practices and constantly on the move colonizing new domains (Foucault, 1995). It is here that Foucault's decentralised and dispersed concept of power provides an alternative view to Lukes where power is considered to be held or controlled by an individual or group.
At the centre of his work, Foucault considered that the question of 'who exercises power?' cannot be resolved until the question of 'how does it happen?' is resolved (Kritzman, 1988: 103). For Foucault power is not a fixed entity or institution, but is incarnated in historical social practices, 'power has no essence ... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society' (Foucault, 1990: 93).

Power, therefore, does not work directly upon an individual but rather it works more subtly through social relations as a structure of actions that aim to affect a field of possible actions (Burkitt, 2005). Power from a Foucauldian perspective refers to relationships between people where a relationship of power was an action by one person to help guide another's conduct or direct 'the possible field of action of others' (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Because of this, power touches people's lives more fundamentally through their social practices than through their beliefs. As such, power was omnipresent as it was produced from one moment to the next and at every point and in every relation from one point to another, in this manner power was conceptualised as a capillary like network. Despite this conceptualisation of power, Foucault did not deny that global forms of domination might exist. However, to examine these forms of power, such as racism or sexism, it is necessary to begin the analysis at the micro-level of society (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Critics have argued, however, that if all social relations and identities are the product of power then this critical perspective is actually redundant. As noted by Nash (2000), if all human capacities are produced in power, why call it power at all? Rather Foucault could have said that everything is socially constructed rather than that everything is produced in relations of power without losing sense of his analysis. A second criticism aimed at Foucault's concept of power relates to the contention that the concept makes people nothing more than 'place fillers' without resources to resist or, in other words, people have no capacity for autonomous self-creation or the generation of meanings and values, which they could use against the effects of power (McNay, 1994, in Nash, 2000).
Central to Foucault's discussions on power was the role, and at times tactical usage, of discourse. The word 'discourse' was used in three prime ways by Foucault; first 'treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements' (Foucault, 1972, in Markula and Pringle, 2006: 29). Foucault contended that it is discursive formations that in many ways order our thinking, thus challenging the concept of the autonomous individual (Bevir, 1999). Indeed, Foucault noted that it is in 'discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (Foucault, 1978: 100, in Markula, 2006). Given the focus of this research on the meso-level of policy, it is the third meaning of discourse which is most relevant to this study. Foucault saw this use of discourse as unwritten rules that guide social practices and help regulate the production of statements that, correspondingly, control what can be understood and perceived but at the same time act to obscure particular discourses. An example of this, which may be relevant to this study, is how a particular discourse shapes the way in which beliefs and actions are formed and SfA is supported. For example, the discourse surrounding the impact of elite level sport on participation at grassroots level may not only shape beliefs but may also influence the level of investment in SfA.

Furthermore, Foucault highlighted that power has multiple cases and can be exercised using many different techniques. In his early discussion of the penal system and mental health, Foucault argued that there are 'manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operate through and on the basis of this association' (Foucault, 1980: 93). As sport in many countries is characterised by a long tradition of self-regulation, many of the rules are self-imposed, with little or no state involvement in the way in which the rules or acceptable behaviour of sport are developed or enforced. In turn this has enabled sport to develop its own internal discourse. An example of this may include the way in
which certain sports had been restricted to men, for example, pole vault and boxing. Given the focus of the study, in-particular the role of sporting organisations, such as national governing bodies, in increasing levels of sport participation, Foucault's concept of power may provide useful. However, the need to consider the role of government and a more centralised concept of power may also be apposite given the focus on sport development. Therefore, while Foucault and Lukes offer contrasting views of power, it is argued that both offer useful lenses through which to consider the development of SfA in Australia, Finland and New Zealand.

**Epistemology**

Epistemology has been defined by Blaikie as 'the theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge' (1993: 6). Blaikie expanded this definition by asserting that epistemology refers to the claims or assumptions made about the ways in which it is possible to gain knowledge of this reality, whatever it is understood to be and claims about how what exists may be known. While epistemology and ontology are closely related, there are subtle but crucial differences. Epistemology is about the grounds of knowledge, in other words how might one begin to understand the world and communicate this as knowledge to others. These assumptions require answers to questions such as: what forms of knowledge can be obtained?, and how can one sort out what is to be regarded as true from what is to be regarded as false? (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). While there are some overlaps between each of the three epistemological positions there are also crucial areas of divergence between positivism, realism and relativism.

In positivism and realism, the world exists independent of our knowledge of it, which is in contrast to relativism where it is contended that the world does not exist independent of our knowledge of it. Relativism denies the possibility of a 'real' world beyond discourse or the possibility of objective social science or historical analysis and is a position that is diametrically opposed to positivism (Marsh, 1999).
**Why Reject Positivism**

Positivism argues that there are no deep structures that cannot be observed, a position which is in conflict with realism. It is, therefore, necessary to study what people do and/or what people say as there is often a division between reality and appearance. This assumes that the world is to a certain extent socially constructed, a position in contrast to that held by positivists. Furthermore, positivism assumes an ontology of closed systems along with an assumption that social reality is a closed system. That social reality exists within a closed system, that is, one that is one not open to the external environment, is not a view held by this researcher.

Table 3.2 Assumptions and differences between positivism, relativism and realism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Relativism</th>
<th>Realism</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The world exists independent of our knowledge of it.</td>
<td>The world does not exist independent of our knowledge of it.</td>
<td>The world exists independent of our knowledge of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no deep structures which cannot be observed.</td>
<td>The world is socially or discursively constructed.</td>
<td>In contrast with the positivist, there are deep structures which cannot be directly observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is possible for the social scientist to establish regular relationships between social phenomena, using theory to generate hypotheses which can be tested, and falsified by direct observation.</td>
<td>There is no extra-discursive social sphere, no real world beyond discourse.</td>
<td>Objects/structures do have causal powers and therefore can make causal statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no dichotomy between appearance and reality: the world is real and not mediated by our senses or socially constructed.</td>
<td>Social phenomena do not exist independent of our interpretation of it and it is this understanding or interpretation which affects outcomes. For this reason it is our interpretation of social phenomenon which is crucial</td>
<td>While social phenomena exist independent of our interpretation, nevertheless, discursive construction affects outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanings can only be established and understood within discourse.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Structures do not determine outcomes rather they constrain and facilitate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective analysis is impossible – knowledge is discursively laden.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Marsh et al (1999: 11-14)
Critical realists contend that there is a real material world, which is independent of our knowledge of it and which is mediated by our discursive construction of it and those discursive constructions have real material effect (Marsh, 1999). The world is, therefore, structured in such a way that it exhibits a separation of appearance and reality (Hay, 2002). Critical realism defines our ability to understand reality in a number of ways. First, it is possible to indirectly observe structures using empirical observation and to understand the unobservable structures and mechanisms that cause the observable structures to occur. This can occur through theory generation, not through direct empirical observation. Critical realism contends that social structures are real existing structures with causal powers and although social structures are unobservable they can be known to be real because of the difference they make to observable human behaviour. These powers and entities are held to be real even when they may not be causally effective, but they are not necessarily held to be empirically accessible (Groff, 2004). Causal powers exist regardless of whether they are perceived or not, the perception of the causal power is therefore not a criterion of their existence. 'In making this argument critical realists invoke the so called causal criterion for existence, according to which unobservable entities can be known to exist through their impact on observable events' (Lewis, 2000: 249).

In the critical realist paradigm, reality is considered to be open and stratified in the sense that events are seen as being the effects of underlying causal mechanisms. Underlying causal mechanisms are entities that have the power to effect change as well as simply being such powers (Groff, 2004). Reality is considered to be stratified into three domains, the real, the actual and the empirical (see Table 3.3).

The debate about structure and agency is central to critical realism. Bhaskar's notion of critical realism purports a dialectical relationship between structure and agency, where social phenomena are produced but real mechanisms are only discernable by their effects and not by direct observation:

We do not create society – the error of voluntarism. But these structures which pre-exist us are only reproduced or transformed in our everyday activities; this
society does not exist independent of human agency – the error of reification.
The social world is reproduced or transformed daily' (1989: 4).

Table 3.3 Domains of reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real Domain Mechanisms</th>
<th>Actual Domain Events</th>
<th>Empirical Domain Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consists of processes that produce events, in which generative mechanisms or causal powers exist independently with a tendency to produce patterns of observable events under contingent conditions.</td>
<td>Patterns of events occur, whether they are observed or not.</td>
<td>Where experience can be obtained by direct observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Cruickshank (2003: 8)

It is, therefore, argued that structure and agency need to be linked via the notion of emergent properties. By viewing social structures as emergent properties means that structures were created by the actions of individuals in the past, and now have causal properties in their own right (Cruickshank, 2003). As Lewis has articulated 'At any given moment of time people confront social structures which are preformed in the sense that they are the product, not of people's actions in the present but of actions undertaken in the past' (2000: 250). Therefore, it is important not only to consider what is occurring today but also to look at the past and see how this has impacted on today. Cruickshank argued that critical realists,

must avoid putting all explanatory weight on structures and individuals, as this will result in determinism and an inability to explain individuals social relations, respectively; and that the notion of emergent properties provides the best definition of structures which allows us to avoid the view that structure determines agents' (2003: 3).

It is within the epistemological context of critical realism which provides a contrast to the often dominant positivist paradigm, that the methodology and methods for this study need to be considered. The first methodological issue
that is reviewed relates to the debate surrounding qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Methodological Considerations**

The above ontological and epistemological assumptions raise questions regarding the methodological implications of particular techniques of data collection and the interpretation of findings. Blaikie helpfully explained that 'methodology is the analysis of how research should or does proceed' (1993: 7). It is the assumptions incorporated within the ontology and epistemology that have a bearing on how data will be gathered and interpreted. The positivist paradigm adopts nomothetic approaches to social science, emphasising the importance of basing research upon systematic protocols and techniques (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Focus is placed upon the process of testing hypotheses in accordance with the principle of scientific rigour. In contrast to the nomothetic approach, this research adopts an ideographic approach, which reflects the assumptions of the interpretative paradigm and realist assumptions. Ideographic theory emphasises the importance of getting to know one's subject and exploring in detail its background. The 'ideographic method stresses the importance of letting one's subject unfold its nature and character during the process of investigation' (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 6). This can be achieved through 'getting inside' situations, detailed analysis of the insights generated by encounters with the subjects, and insights provided by impressionistic accounts of a documentary nature (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

**Qualitative or quantitative methods**

There is a continuing debate in research methodology revolving around the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative research, which claims that the differences between qualitative and quantitative research have less to do with the methods used but are more concerned with questions of an ontological and epistemological nature (Bryman, 2001). At its most basic level, quantitative methods can be construed as a research strategy that: emphasises
quantification in the collection of data; entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the focus is placed on testing theories; incorporates the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism; and, embodies the view that social reality is an objective external reality (Bryman, 2001).

In contrast to this approach, qualitative research usually emphasises words in the collection and analysis of data and predominantly adopts an inductive approach where importance is placed on the generation of theories. Qualitative research rejects the norms and practices of the natural scientific model and positivism in preference for an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world and embodies a view of social reality as a constantly moving constantly shifting emergent property of individual's creation. Creswell (2003) noted that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative. In conducting qualitative research, the researcher uses complex reasoning that is multifaceted, iterative and simultaneous. The iterative process involves moving back and forth from data collection and analysis to problem reformulation with simultaneous activities of collecting, analysing and writing up data also combined within this iterative process (Creswell, 2003).

While quantitative research is typically associated with experimental investigation and qualitative with participant observation and semi or unstructured interviews, these two methods should not necessarily be considered an either/or option. As Richardson highlighted 'qualitative research need not exclude quantitative research'. (1996: 9, original emphasis). While Yin (1994) and Richardson (1996) both highlighted the debates surrounding the merits and limitations of qualitative and quantitative data, this should not prevent the two approaches being combined. A key issue is whether natural science is an appropriate model for research in the social sciences. It is important, therefore, to note the strengths of qualitative methods and highlight their suitability for this study.

Devine (1995) highlighted that qualitative methods are most appropriately employed when the aim of the research is to explore people's subjective
experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences. Interviewing allows people to talk freely and offer their interpretation of events, telling the story in their own language. When the discussion flows naturally it is possible to understand the logic of the interviewee’s argument and the associative thinking that led them to particular conclusions. Secondly, qualitative methods draw attention to contextual issues, placing an interviewee’s attitudes and behaviour in the context of his/her individual biography and wider social setting, ‘Qualitative methods, therefore, capture meaning, process and context’ (Bryman, 1988: 62).

A feature of cross-national research is that it typically tries to improve research design by integrating different methods (Mangen, 1992). The dilemma for the researcher is, therefore, not simply a contrast between the two methods but the range of positions that exist both within and between the two methods. It is because of this that many combinations are reasonable and ‘the distinction between qualitative and quantitative method tends to obscure the complexity of the problems that face us and threaten to render our decisions less effective than they might otherwise be’ (Mangen, 1992: 172). The use of the systematic review in this study demonstrates this issue.

**Systematic Review**

While undertaking a literature review is an important part of any research project, traditional narrative reviews have frequently been criticised for a lack of thoroughness. A key aim of the literature review is to traverse the existing literature and documentation pertinent to the research topic with an aim of clarifying the research question and developing the existing body of knowledge (Cook, Greengold, Ellrodt, & Weingarten, 1997).

Criticism has been directed at the comparative lack of rigour in secondary research and the contention that the preparation of reviews of secondary sources was dependent on implicit, idiosyncratic methods of data collection and interpretation. In addition to this, practice based on poor quality evaluations of the literature has sometimes led to inappropriate
recommendations (Cook et al., 1997). Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, (2003) argued that applying the specific principles of the systematic review methodology will help in counteracting the biases by making explicit the values and assumptions underpinning the review. The systematic review will minimise the criticism of bias and error by synthesising research in a systematic, transparent and reproducible manner. By the adoption of a replicable scientific and transparent process, the systematic review aims to minimise bias through exhaustive literature searches of published and unpublished studies as well as providing an audit trail of the reviewer’s decisions, procedures and conclusions (Cook et al., 1997). This process will also make clear the values and assumption upon which decisions were made.

However, the systematic review has not been without critics, especially in its application to the social sciences. First, it has been posited that search strategies are far more difficult in the social sciences due to the more fluid and diffuse social science terminology and the variability of data indexing policies. This results in electronic data bases producing high levels of unrelated material (Young, Ashby, Boaz, & Grayson, 2002). Secondly, it is argued that the social sciences lack the large scale high quality databases that are characteristic of medicine. This point may hinder the transferability of the systematic review process to fields of study other than medicine or the natural sciences where a relatively limited number of high quality bibliographic databases operate (Young et al., 2002).

As mentioned above, this research rests within the interpretivist and critical realist paradigm. Tranfield et al. (2003), highlighted that ‘researchers from an interpretivist or phenomenological position may suggest that systematic reviews, with their positivistic leanings should not be adopted in the social sciences paradigm’ (214). However, despite a positivist approach, it must be acknowledged that subjectivity is inherent in the interpretation of the inclusion and quality criteria (Wallace, Croucher, Quilgars, & Baldwin, 2004). Systematic reviews are, therefore, not without a subjective or qualitative component. Wallace et al (2004) highlighted that methods that can synthesise quantitative
and qualitative methods and different study designs are vital if reviews are to provide meaningful accounts of the evidence available.

**Use of the systematic review in this research**

As part of conducting the systematic review three phases were undertaken into the investigation of adult lifelong participation in sport in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. The first stage involved the establishment of a panel of experts in this field who were chosen for their relevance to the subject area being investigated. Professor Barrie Houlihan was chosen as supervisor of this study and for his authority and expertise in the area of sport policy. Dr Mick Green was selected on the basis of his expertise in the area of sport policy. Louise Fletcher, the university librarian with a specialist area in sport and exercise science was also consulted with regard to the choice of databases.

The second stage involved the definition, clarification and refinement of research aims and objectives. Due to the different political and historical contexts of Australia, Finland and New Zealand, a separate list of key words were identified. Due to the similar cultural and sporting histories of New Zealand and Australia the same keywords were used, which were: **club sport, sport, sport for all, sport policy, sport strategy, sport politics, sport development, physical education, school sport, Olympic sport, winter sport, sport history, sport finance, sport funding, sport culture, volunt*, sport doping, multi-sport clubs, sport governance, sport government, sport participation.**

The keywords selected for Finland were: **club sport, sport, sport for all, sport policy, sport strategy, sport politics, sport development, physical education, school sport, workers sport, union sport, Finnish Sport Federation, sport history, workers sport federation, sport finance, sport funding, sport culture, volunt*, sport doping, multi-sport clubs, sport governance, sport government, sport participation. Olympic sport, winter sport, winter Olympics**

The search was performed using the above keywords (each used separately) with the core words of Australia, Finland and New Zealand. Due to the expected scarcity of articles a further three core words were used, Nordic, Scandinavia and Australasia. Databases were chosen for their relevance to the
field of study (sport, social science and politics and policy). A total of nine databases were selected to conduct the search: ASSIA, Article First, SportDiscus, IBSS (BIDS), Zetoc, SOSIG, Worldwide Political Science, Social Services Abstracts (CSA) and Sociological Abstracts (CSA). Included in the search were journal articles, conference papers, books and government documents. If search results of key words returned an unreasonably high number of documents, it was decided by the panel that the search criteria would be narrowed. All key words were searched using All Fields. If an acceptable level of documents was returned by each database the search criteria were narrowed to Subject and then Title. After consultation with the panel, it was decided that the acceptable level of documents returned by each database and set of keywords was set at 500 (see Appendix 3.1).

When keyword searches achieved their target of 500 or below an assessment of the relevance of the documents took place based upon the title. At this point, data extraction tables were created to record a summary of articles that had been selected (see Appendix 3.2). The forms provide a historical record of the articles that were excluded and included, serving as a data-repository (see Clarke & Oxmon, 2001, in Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2005: 217). If the document was irrelevant to the topic area or met any of the exclusionary criteria it was excluded from the study. There were also a number of documents requested that were not available via inter-library loan. The exclusion and inclusion criteria previously decided upon by the panel was applied in the selection of documents. The exclusion criteria used were:

- relevance – academic relevance to area of study
- language – article/document must be in English
- time frame – article/document to be written post 1960
- thesis - as often difficult to obtain
- context – to be country specific

Consistent with Young's criticisms of the systematic review in the social sciences, a significant number of documents were returned that were unrelated to the topic area (see Table 3.4). Searching under Australasia, Nordic and Scandinavia returned a number of documents; however, all were either not
relevant or were duplicate documents, that is, they had already been identified under another search. After documents had been excluded by title, or when available abstracts, a total of 28 documents for Australia, 18 documents for New Zealand and 18 documents for Finland were classified as relevant and included in the systematic review.

Table 3.4 Keyword search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of articles returned</th>
<th>First Inclusion (on title)</th>
<th>Second Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the systematic review identified a number of relevant documents for this study what was highlighted was the high number of non-relevant documents that were returned, supporting the concerns raised by Young et al., (2002). As a result further documents were located after discussion with subject experts. The relative scarcity of article/documents located using a systematic review methodology would appear to indicate that the systematic review has not transferred easily to a multi-disciplinary field such as sport policy.

Comparative case design

This section provides an overview of the value of comparative research method, with an assessment of the relative strengths and limitations. The comparative method has been defined by Lijphart (1971) as one of the most basic scientific methods, using either qualitative or quantitative method. The comparative method, Lijphart (1971) argued, is a broad general method rather than a narrow specialised technique. Rose defines comparative research as the presentation of ‘empirical evidence of some kind in an attempt to compare systematically and explicitly political phenomena’ (1991: 439). Two major reasons have been posited by Mackie and Marsh (1995) why comparative
research is essential, first, to avoid ethnocentrism in research analysis and second, to generate, test and reformulate theories. The comparative method is regarded as a 'method of discovering empirical relationships among variables, not as a method of measurement' (original emphasis, Lijphart 1971: 683).

Bryman highlighted that the key to comparative design is its ability to allow distinguishing characteristics of two or more cases to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting findings (2001: 54).

The case study remains one of the most common methods of research in political science in general, and more particularly in comparative politics (Peters, 1998: 137). This study is adopting the case study approach, which is a method often adopted when the phenomenon under study cannot be readily distinguished from its context (Yin, 1994). Case study research strategy is designed to investigate the rich complexities of social phenomenon and the social environments in which they are situated (McPherson & Raab, 1988).

One of the unique aspects of the case study approach is its ability to provide detailed analysis of the cases being studied or what has been referred to as a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). What is described in the thick description will depend upon the focus of the inquiry, it must specify everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the findings (Silverman, 2000).

Bryman (2001) contended that by comparing two or more cases, the researcher is in a better position to establish the circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold.

In multiple case research, each case must be carefully considered so that it either predicts similar results (a literal replication) or predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication) (Yin, 2003). An important step in either theoretical replication or literal replication is the development of a rich theoretical framework. The application of the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), multiple streams (MS) and policy network frameworks at the meso-level will allow conclusions to be drawn in relation to theoretical replication, or as Yin (2003) suggested it may highlight areas for further research. These frameworks will need to state the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found (literal replication) as well as state the conditions when it is not
likely to be found (theoretical replication) (Yin, 2003). It is this theoretical framework that later becomes the vehicle for generalising to new cases. In selecting cases, Yin (2003) recommended that two or three cases should be selected for literal replications while four to six cases should be selected in theoretical replications.

A key question in conducting comparative analysis is whether to conduct analysis of similar or dissimilar cases. This question dominates much of the literature on comparative research design. In its simplistic form, the most similar cases approach relates to an underlying logic or reasoning of identifying methods of difference, while the most different approach relates to identifying methods of agreement (Peters, 1998). Research upon dissimilar cases is based upon the premise that it is 'possible to identify more confidently the significance of issues/policy problems within political systems if the emphasis is placed on subsystem characteristics' (Houlihan, 1997: 8).

The aim of this approach is to identify those variables that are common across the case studies and which offer some explanatory ability. Dogan and Pelassy advocated the most similar approach and contend that 'a comparison between 'relatively similar' countries sets out to neutralise certain differences in order to permit a better analysis of others' (1990: 133). Peters (1998) contended that the most similar design is the usual method that researchers in comparative politics undertake. Lijphart (1971), in addressing the problem of too many variables, also suggested that comparative research should focus on similar cases. Lijphart (1971) contended that the selected countries should have a large number of similar variables, which are treated as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables concerned that one wants to relate to each other. The adoption of the similar case method should offer particularly good opportunities for the application of the comparative method as they allow the establishment of relationships among a few variables while many other variables are controlled (Lijphart, 1971). Despite its appeal, Houlihan (1997) argued that the similar case approach requires two areas of caution.
First, there may be an undue degree of confidence that the key variables have been identified and secondly there is the danger that correlation will be interpreted as causality. Peters (1998) noted that although the most similar design may eliminate a number of possible explanations, a key limitation is that it may not be possible to identify all the relevant factors that can produce difference between systems. Despite the acknowledged limitations of the similar case method, it is this approach that will be used in this study. The countries adopted for this research, Australia, New Zealand and Finland share a number of similar characteristics: sport is a significant cultural element; Sport for All (SFA) has been a stated sport policy in all three countries; democracy is well established and stable; and economies are relatively mature (Houlihan, 1997: 9). Despite these similarities each country does have its own distinctive characteristics, however, these are outweighed by the level of overall similarity. Finally, it is also important to note that this is a study of countries that are ‘relatively’ similar and neither similarities (or differences) are absolute (Dogan & Pelassy, 1990).

**Issue and limitations**

The first limitation associated with the case study approach relates to the claim that case study research provides little basis for generalisation beyond the immediate case study. This limitation concerns the ability of a case or several cases, to be representative of the whole population and, therefore, limits the ability of the research to make generalisations (Bryman, 2001; Hague & Harrop, 2004). This limitation relates directly to the issue of external validity. External validity relates to the extent to which the methods will allow for the findings to be generalised across the wider population. There are several options, which can be considered when attempting to alleviate this limitation. First, by increasing the number of cases involved the researcher will increase the likelihood that the sample will be representative (Bryman, 1988). By extending the number of cases, the researcher is more likely to be able to obtain a representative sample of a population and, therefore draw generalisations. In addressing this limitation, Yin (2003) proposed that case studies do not aim to make generalisations, instead the goal is to expand and generalise theories, not to enumerate frequencies (Yin 2003). Peters noted that
Case studies have the capacity to be comparative and theoretical if 'the analysis is made within a comparative perspective [which] mandates that description of the particular be cast in terms of broadly analytic constructs' (1998: 150). The ACF, MS and policy network approaches (or analytic constructs) have been developed outside the case study, and the case study will be an attempt to illustrate that the theory does indeed work in this particular setting of the sport policy environment of Australia New Zealand and Finland.

Of note is the attempt by some theorists to reframe or reconsider the question of generalisability by casting it in a new light. Guba and Lincoln (1981) argued that the traditional notions of generalisability, which rely on context stripping techniques, are not applicable to qualitative methods and that the concept of 'fittingness' is a more appropriate concept. 'Fittingness' is the degree to which the situation studied matches other situations in which one is interested, and provides a more realistic and workable way of thinking about the generalisability of research results than do the more classical approaches (Schofield, 2000). Schofield (2000) noted three areas of consensus shared by many qualitative researchers in relation to generalisability. First, generalisability in the sense of producing laws that apply universally is not a useful standard or goal for qualitative research. Second that the rejection of generalisability in qualitative research is not a rejection of the idea that studies in one situation can be used to speak to, or help form judgements about, other situations. Finally, it is clear that current thinking on generalisability reinforces the contention that thick descriptions are vital.

The second limitation relates to bias as a key problem of comparative research. Peters highlighted that the role of the researcher is even more of an issue in case study research, in that the researcher is a 'product of a particular political and intellectual culture, and inevitably brings that set of values to bear on the research' (1998: 154). While some of the researcher's values and beliefs will be explicit, other values will be less explicit, and therefore, more difficult to identify or assess their impact. In case study research, there is little or no check on the findings of the researcher, except where several scholars are working on the same case (Peters, 1998).
The third limitation of case study research relates to potential lack of rigour or research bias and relates to reliability. The goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and bias in research. The objective of the reliability test is to ensure that if a later researcher should follow the same procedures and conduct the same case study all over again, the later researcher should be able to arrive at the same findings and conclusions. It is important to note that the emphasis is on doing the same case over again, not on replicating the results of one case by doing another case study (Yin, 2003).

Yin (2003) provided guidance on how to mitigate this potential weakness. The first requirement is to document the research procedure so that other researchers are able to follow the same process. A specific tactic for this is the use of a case study protocol and the development of a case study database. A second guideline is to make as many steps as transparent as possible and to conduct the research as if someone is constantly observing your actions. This will allow an auditable trail that will allow a reliability check, which must be able to produce the same results if the same procedure were followed (Yin, 2003).

Research Design

Yin (2004) has described research design as 'a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and there is the set of conclusions (answers) about these questions' (original emphasis; 1994: 20). The research design provides the overall structure and orientation with the structure providing the framework within which data are collected and analysed. This study will be conducted in three separate phases with each phase impacting upon the subsequent phase.

While the previous section has reviewed case study and comparative methodology, this section will consider the more detailed research methods and techniques of document analysis and semi-structured interviews. As discussed previously the choice of methods should be based upon whether the
method is suitable to address the research questions (Grix, 2002; Bryman, 1988). Document analysis and unstructured or semi-structured interviews are two of the main sources of data with which qualitative research is associated (Bryman, 1988).

**Document analysis**

Documentary or archival research normally consists of the examination of a range of documents such as policies, reports, administrative documents and formal studies and is frequently used in conjunction with other research methods such as interviews and questionnaires (Bryman, 1989). A principle strength is its ability to corroborate evidence from other methods (Yin, 1994). The collection and examination of documents is an integral element in qualitative research and can provide information on issues that cannot be readily addressed through other methods (Bryman, 1988; Yin, 1994).

Document analysis can contribute to a different level of analysis from other methods including the gap between official policy and practice or between rhetoric and reality. While document analysis can be considered a qualitative research method May, highlighted that it can involve quantitative methods where 'the frequency with which certain words or particular phrases occur in the text as a means of identifying its characteristics' (May, 1997: 171). May goes on to caution that 'the frequency with which words or phrases occur in a text (a quantitative emphasis) may, therefore, say nothing about its 'significance within the documents' (a qualitative emphasis)' (1997: 172) The quantification of themes in order to establish frequency and how variation is related to other variables is another way in which quantitative analysis is applied to documents analysis (Bryman, 1989). In contrast, qualitative analysis involves 'searching out underlying themes in the materials being analysed' (Bryman, 2001: 381)

Documents can be a very rich source of information and can take many forms. There is a wide range of documentary sources available for social research and it is not the intention to provide an in-depth review of these sources in this section. The aim of this section is to review the salience of document analysis for this study highlighting its strengths and limitations as a research method.
The collection of documentary evidence should be the object of specific data collection plans with systematic searches for relevant documents in identified areas. To assist in this aspect a systematic review will be conducted as part of this research that will ensure a planned, structured and auditable search for documents is performed. In conducting an analysis of various case study methods, Yin (1994) identified that the analysis of documents has a number of strengths. He suggests that documents: are stable and can, therefore, be reviewed repeatedly; unobtrusive, as they are not created for the study; are exact, because they contain exact names, references, and details of an event; and can provide a broad coverage as they can cover a long span of time, many events and many settings. Yin noted that for ‘case studies the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources’ (1994: 81)

May also highlighted that documents are also interesting for what they leave out as well as for what they contain. They do not ‘simply reflect, but also construct social reality and versions of events’ (1997: 164). Documents provide insights into the aspirations and intentions of the period to which they refer and describe places and social relationships at a particular time. Documents have the potential to inform and structure the decisions that people make on a daily and longer term basis (May, 1997). This insight provides a useful way for conceptualising documents. It is because of this that it is necessary to search for meaning within documents and to exercise suspicion and caution when interpreting documents. It is because of this that documents cannot be viewed as neutral objects which report social reality.

As indicated above, accessing documentary material for Finland was restricted due to language barriers. Documents that were translated into English were frequently summarised and, therefore, often provided only limited information regarding strategic policy decisions. The researcher was, therefore, more heavily reliant on information gathered in interviews with regard to Finland than with Australia and New Zealand. Several documents were identified by interviewees that would provide useful information and these were translated into English. Access to documents in the case of Australia and New Zealand...
was primarily gained through searching organisational web-sites and again through speaking to subject experts. However, a small number of documents that were not available on public web-sites were provided by interviewees. It is worth noting that accessing documents in this way may often exclude draft documents or documents that may contain potentially sensitive information. Access was gained to a range of reports including annual reports, strategy documents, organisational minutes, position statements and Statements of Intent as well as a range of unpublished reports.

Limitations and potential problems
Four criteria have been identified for assessing the quality of the evidence available from the documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. (May, 1997). These criteria highlight potential problems when using document analysis. The authenticity of a document is crucial in research involving the examination of documents. Authenticity of a document relates to its genuineness and whether it is what it actually purports to be (Scott, 1990). A useful set of guidelines to assist in judging a document's authenticity has been developed by Platt (1981). This involves considering several factors, including whether the document: contains obvious errors or is inconsistent in its representations; there are different versions of the same document; internal consistencies in terms of style, content or handwriting; the document has passed through several copyists; the document has been in the hands of a person or persons with a vested interest in a particular reading of its contents; the version derives from a suspect secondary sources; it is inconsistent in relation to other similar documents; it is too neat in terms of being representative of a certain group of documents. These guidelines provide a helpful framework upon which to review the authenticity of a document.

The second criterion relates to the credibility of a document. Credibility refers to 'the extent to which the evidence is undistorted and sincere, free from error and evasion' (Scott, 1990: 7). In assessing the credibility of a document May suggested the following questions, 'are the people who record the information reliable in their translations of the information they receive? How accurate were their observations and records?' (1997: 170). To assist further in ascertaining
the credibility of the document, May (1997) suggested reviewing the life and political sympathies of the author to assist in establishing the social and political context in which the document was produced.

Representativeness has been referred to as a question of typicality (May, 1997). This criterion considers whether the documents available can be said to constitute a representative sample of documents (Taraborrelli, 1993). This criterion is an important consideration if the research intends to draw conclusions which argue that there is a 'typical' document or a typical method for representing a topic in which there is interest and is of particular relevance where some documents have been deliberately destroyed or where there has been 'systematic bias' (May, 1997). If it is established that there is something missing, the question is what is missing, how much and why it is missing becomes important (Taraborrelli, 1993). Combined with this is the problem of the representativeness of the documents. Documents do not always survive over time, they maybe destroyed or there may be limited access. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the representativeness of the documents.

The fourth and final criterion raises the question of the document's meaning. The meaning of a document relates to the extent to which the document is clear and comprehensible to the researcher. Two key questions are 'what is it and what does it tell us?' (Scott, 1990: 8) The issue of meaning, is seen to exist at two levels: the surface or literal meaning, and the deeper meaning which is arrived at by some form of interpretative understanding or structural analysis (Taraborrelli, 1993). Understanding the deeper meaning of documents may well prove more troublesome than trying to understand the surface meaning. Scott noted that the 'Interpretative understanding is the end-product of a hermeneutic process in which the researcher relates the literal meaning to the contexts in which they were produced in order to assess the meaning of the text as a whole' (Scott, 1990: 30). The examination of documents should not be taken in isolation from their social context. As Scott noted, it is necessary to 'place the document in the context of its condition of production before an appraisal of its message could be made' (1990: 11). By using semi-structured interviews the examination of government and national governing bodies
documents combined with academic commentary on participation, it should be possible to triangulate the data gathered.

**Semi-structured interviews**

Mason (1996) has described the semi-structured interview as a conversation with a purpose. The semi-structured interview utilises techniques from both structured and unstructured interviews to maximise the strengths and mitigate the limitations of these two methods. The semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to probe more deeply beyond the answers given seeking both clarification, elaboration and expansion on issues raised (May, 1997). The purpose of the semi-structured interview is to attempt to elicit the respondent's ways of thinking about issues and to gain insight into their interpretation of events and/or situations. Central to this study is the importance of gathering data relating to the respondents beliefs, perceptions and experiences. In taking individual agency seriously in explaining policy it is necessary to know and try to understand the assumptive world of policy makers or those involved in the policy community (McPherson & Raab, 1988).

The semi-structured interview provides an opportunity to challenge the preconceptions of the researcher and enables the interviewee to answer questions within his/her own frame of reference (May, 1997). While other sources such as documents may inform about what has been done they are not able to inform about what was not done, and even further as to how or why actions were not done (Devine, 1995; Richards, 1996). Richards (1996) highlighted that interviews not only provide assistance in interpreting documents, but also assist in interpreting the personalities involved in the decision making. Finally, they can also provide information not recorded elsewhere or which may not be available for public release. The semi-structured interview is a method that enables the researcher to gain an insight into specific areas (Bryman, 1989), and provides a greater opportunity to expand or explore issues than a structured interview. The semi-structured interview is based upon a guide that will provide a reminder of the topics to be covered with open ended questions asked in an attempt to probe into areas and promote discussion on issues relevant to the research topic. This approach
allows the respondents to speak freely and explores the respondent's way of thinking, gaining a richer insight into the field of study.

The rationale for adopting semi-structured interviews is based on the assumption that they will enable a more agent-informed understanding of the processes in the development of SfA policy. It will provide an insight into the rhetoric that is provided in documents and the reality or insight that is able to be provided by agents into their area of policy development. Devine (1995) suggested that qualitative methods such as interviews draw attention to contextual issues, placing an interviewee's attitudes and behaviour in the contact of his/her individual biography and wider social setting. Qualitative methods, therefore, capture meaning, process and context (Bryman, 1988: 62). However, in conducting interviews there are also a number of limitations which must be acknowledged.

In order to gather information on the development of SfA policies, interviewees were selected on the basis that they were, or had been, involved at a strategic level of decision making, and where possible had been involved over a number of years. It was hoped that this would allow the interviewee to discuss the development of SfA policies over a number of years and, therefore, map changes in the policy environment and prioritisation of SfA policy. Contributions were sought from actors within both national and local government (and federal government in the case of Australia) responsible for, or involved in, the delivery of sport policy, NGBs and key national sporting organisations, for example the Confederation of Australian Sport (see Appendix 3.3 for a list of interviewees).

Interviewees were contacted and provided with an outline of the purpose and intent of the interview along with a summary of the research aims and objectives. An interview schedule was developed for each interviewee which focused upon four main themes: a) the emphasis placed upon achieving adult life-long participation by their organisation, b) the degree to which, and the ways in which, government/government agencies played a role in these activities, c) the relative stability of sport development priorities, and d) the identification of potential drivers for these priorities. Interview questions were
developed for each interviewee around each of the main themes, however, where appropriate the interviewer was also able to probe areas that emerged during the interview that were relevant to the study but had not been included in the interview schedule. As many of the interviewees had held a range of positions within sporting organisations the ability to explore their attitudes and experiences within a wider contextual setting was valuable in capturing meaning, process and context.

**Limitations**

A number of criticisms have been levelled at qualitative methods. Three major criticisms that have been levelled at qualitative research are that it is unreliable, the interpretation of the findings is difficult to evaluate and that is not easily generalisable (Bryman, 1988; Devine, 1995). The question of designing and generating a sample of respondents is a key issue of reliability. The way in which the group of interviewees is selected is, therefore, an important part of the process. In quantitative research the sample is normally designed to be representative of the sample population. In contrast qualitative methods are often not representative. Qualitative researchers often identify a group of potential interviewees according to social characteristics, patterns of behaviour and association with a particular locale. Qualitative samples in contrast to quantitative are, therefore, often loosely defined. Therefore unrepresentative sampling may occur. Issues of access to individuals may also impact upon the representatives of the sample group (Bryman, 1989; Richards, 1996). The interviewees targeted for this research were individuals, who are or have been, involved in the SfA policy process at a senior policy level. Given the seniority of the interviewees it was possible that there would be difficulties in accessing these individuals. This also raises a question relating to reliability, in regard to designing and generating a sample of respondents (Devine, 1995). Given the aim of qualitative research, it is neither desirable nor feasible to interview large numbers of respondents in a representative sample. Rather than generate a tightly defined sample according to a range of criteria, qualitative researchers usually identify a group of respondents according to social characteristics, patterns of behaviour and close association with a particular aspects of the research topic (Devine, 1995). It is because of this that qualitative methods
cannot be representative, however, it is possible to seek diversity. This research will select potential respondents on the basis that they have been or are involved in SfA policy making. While not exclusive, potential respondents could come from a number of areas including elected officials, civil servants, policy entrepreneurs or interest groups.

In attempting to identify potential respondents, the 'snowballing' technique was used to both confirm identified respondents and to identify respondents that have not been identified but who should be included. While this technique is useful for gaining access to individuals, it may also lead to the omission of the voices and opinion of others who are not part of the network of friends and acquaintances. This also provides problems of reliability that need to be recognised. Devine (1995) noted that there are problems with generating a sample from one network as the sample can be restricted to an interconnected network and does not allow for sampling of those from outside the network that may have different views, perceptions beliefs.

Another criticism of qualitative research concerns the collection of data. In contrast to quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews are based on interview guides, open-ended questions and probing to facilitate a discussion of issues. The researcher is wanting to illicit rich detailed answers, which is in contrast to quantitative research, which focuses on generating answers that can be coded and processed quickly (Bryman, 2001). The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee cannot be so distant as with quantitative methods, as there is a need to try and often ascertain sensitive information or confidential information and, therefore, there is a greater need for trust to be developed between the interviewer and the interviewee (Devine, 1995). This relationship can be problematic as it calls into question the objectivity of the interviewer as well as the validity of the interpretation of the findings. This relationship requires a careful balance to ensure that the interviewer does not appear too distant while also ensuring that he/she does not appear too familiar.

Problems of interpretation
Devine highlighted that 'All data are subject to different interpretations and there is no definitive interpretation of the 'truth'' (1995: 145). The question
which Bryman raised was whether ‘researchers really can provide accounts from the perspective of those whom they study and how we can evaluate the validity of their interpretation of those perspectives’ (1988: 74). After conducting the interviews, the transcripts were subjected to numerous readings until themes emerged. In presenting the information the researcher selects extracts from the transcripts, which support particular points or arguments. Devine (1995) highlighted that this method, which will be used in this study, makes it difficult to place such fragments and see how representative they are in relation to the other material that has been collected. Understanding how the researcher arrived at the interpretation of the interview material is, therefore, extremely difficult. Sparkes noted that within an interpretivists and non-foundational framework, there is no independent reality or data that is free from interpretation on which to found knowledge, truth and validity cannot be a matter of correspondence as it is in positivism, ‘For interpretivists it becomes a matter of coherence’ (Sparkes, 1992). Sparkes contended that ‘within a coherence theory of truth a proposition is judged to be true if it coheres (is connected and consistent) with other propositions in a scheme or network that is in operation at a particular time, thus making coherence a matter of internal relations as opposed to the degree of correspondence with some external reality’ (1992: 31). Truth is, therefore, based upon shared visions and common understanding that are socially constructed (Sparkes, 1992: 31). It is necessary, however, to try and establish the validity of the interpretation and to demonstrate the plausibility of the interpretation. Techniques can be used to try and enhance the validity of the interpretations. This includes discussing the interpretation of the interview material with other researchers to obtain consensus on the interpretation and develop coherence.

**Problems of generalisability**

Qualitative analysis is also confronted with the problem of generalisability. As already mentioned frequently the sample group comprises a small number of individuals. As noted by Devine (1995), it is not possible to make generalisations about behaviour from in-depth interviews. Therefore, while researchers need to be tentative in making generalisations from a small number of cases to a larger population, researchers can design research,
which facilitates an understanding of other situations. To assist in this the findings of one in-depth study could be corroborated with the findings of other research to establish regularities and variations (Devine, 1995). This would allow for a limited test of confirmation (or non-confirmation) of the findings. Devine (1995) notes that it is rarely the case that a sample of interviewees is so unrepresentative or the interpretations so misleading, that any generalisations would be wholly baseless. Finally, qualitative findings can have a wider significance beyond the time and place in which they were conducted as they are often the basis upon which subsequent quantitative research is conducted.

In summary, the aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the theoretical assumptions, methodology and research methods that are to be used in this study. Grix (2002) and Hay (2002) proposed that there is a directional relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. This relationship is not intended to be mechanistic or prescriptive but it does draw to the researcher’s attention that the relationships are directional in that ‘ontology logically precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology’ (Hay 1992: 63). The inter-relationships between these building blocks of research do not, however, negate that research is often a complex, chaotic and messy process and there are a number of different routes that the social scientist can take when conducting research.

In discussing the ontological and epistemological considerations, I have set out the assumptions upon which this study is based. They are summarised as follows:

- That knowledge is socially constructed resulting in multiple realities, and, therefore, recognising that our knowledge of the world is imperfect.
- While social and political phenomena exist independent of our knowledge of them, it is our interpretation and understanding of them that shapes outcomes.
- The researcher is not an objective bystander but is part of the research situation and, therefore, is affected by, and affects, the research itself.
In adopting a critical realist epistemology it is accepted that structures do not determine outcomes but rather they facilitate and constrain agents.

A comparative approach has been adopted with a similar case study method approach. The value of the case study method lies in its potential to deal with complex social phenomena and an ability to produce rich conceptual description and insights. The case study method also allows for a blending of both qualitative and quantitative methods while also encompassing more than one method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews combined with qualitative document analysis are the two methods employed. It is upon these assumptions, beliefs and methodological approaches that this study is based.
Chapter 4

Australia

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of Australian sports policy in relation to promoting adult life-long participation in sport. The chapter has been divided into three main section sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the socio-political context as well as a review of the early years of Australian sport. This is followed by a discussion of the current levels of sport participation amongst Australian adults. The second section provides an outline of the contemporary structure of the Australian sport policy environment, it is here that the tension of operating within a federal structure is highlighted. The final section considers the development of sport policy over four periods the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and post 2000 until June 2007.

The 1970s was a period when sport first emerged as an area of federal government intervention on a scale not previously experienced. This was in stark contrast with the preceding years when sport and politics were considered to be two domains that should not mix. The 1980s were characterised by the emergence of elite sport policy as the key focus of Australian federal government intervention. Catalysts for this shift were two exogenous events, the poor performance by Australian athletes at the 1976 Olympic Games followed by the political controversy prompted by the boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games. It was during the 1980s that a more structured and coordinated approach to the development and implementation of sport policy in Australia developed, primarily through the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in 1981 and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in 1985. The penultimate period reflected the continued marginalisation of grassroots sport as an area of government focus, affected by the awarding the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney in 1993 and the established dominant ideology of elite sport development. Despite the rhetoric found in a
range of policy documents, increased funding was funnelled into the development of elite sport while calls for the federal government to increase resourcing to community sport were largely ignored. Finally, the period from 2000 to June 2007 reviews the development of sport policy after the most successful Olympics Games ever for Australian athletes. It is somewhat significant that the major events that have contributed to the selection of these periods have centred upon elite sporting events and/or occurrences while the development of sport policy directed at developing increased levels of sport participation remained sporadic, incoherent and largely ineffectual.

Three themes have emerged from the review of Australian sport policy landscape. First, is the challenge of implementing national programmes within a federated structure. This is, in part, driven by contrasting approaches to sport policy across the three levels of government, the relative autonomy of state and local government from federal government and the effect of local political processes upon sub-national government policy making. Ambiguity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of local, state and federal government with regard to addressing increased levels of sport participation adds a further dimension of complexity as will be discussed in relation to the provision of facilities. The second theme, which is linked to the first, relates to what can be described as the policy muddle of sport participation policy. Conflicting priorities at the various levels of government, the range of organisations involved in achieving increased levels of sport and physical activity and the varying goals and motivations behind addressing participation levels has contributed to what Bulkeley (1999) called a 'policy mess'. The final theme to emerge relates to the very narrow focus of the federal government with regard to increasing levels of sport participation, that is the focus upon youth. While this final theme is one that has been consistent across all three countries, the extent to which addressing youth sport participation levels has been the focus of resourcing in comparison with other community groups is quite remarkable in Australia. While Australia's elite sporting success is widely acknowledged, the ability of the federal government not only to address but also to succeed in increasing the levels of sport participation among all
Australian’s (one of two keys goals of the Australian Sports Commission) has yet to be demonstrated.

**Background**

Located in the southern hemisphere, Australia has varied terrain ranging from desert to tropical rain forest and mountains to plains. With a large landmass of 7.7 million sq km and a population of about 20.5 million in 2006 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007) Australia has extensive areas of open space with large urban areas, scattered primarily around the coast. The majority of the population is located in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Australia operates a federal system of government, with six states and two mainland territories. The two territories, Australia Capital Territory and Northern Territory operate similarly to the six states, however, the Commonwealth Parliament can override any legislation of their parliament. By contrast, federal legislation overrides state legislation only with respect to certain areas as set out in the Australian Constitution. Australia’s federal system of government means that power is shared between individual states and the federal government, which is based in Canberra.

The federal parliament is bicameral with a Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate consists of 76 senators, twelve from each of the six states and two from each of the mainland territories. There are three major political parties in Australia, the Labor Party (centre-left), the Liberal Party (centre-right) and the National Party which traditionally represents rural voters. With a few exceptions, the Australian Labor Party competes nationwide with the Liberal and National parties in coalition. There are also a number of minor parties and independents who also have representation within the Australian Parliament (Warhurst, 2004). From 1996 to December 1997, the Liberal/National Coalition, led by the Prime Minister John Howard, was in power at the federal level while the Labor Party held power in every state and
territory. However, this division of political control is not seen as politically problematic as the major parties have never been perceived as being far apart on the ideological continuum (Warhurst, 2004). Furthermore, since the 1980s, the sport policy of Australia’s two dominant political parties has converged, focusing upon the prioritisation of international sporting success (Green & Houlihan, 2005). It is within this context that this study examines the emphasis placed upon sport participation, one of the two policy foci of the Australian Sports Commission.

**Early Years of Australian Sport**

British heritage influenced and to a great extent determined the types of sports and pastimes that were pursued in Australia with the establishment of certain aristocratic sports considered one way in which a civilised society could be developed in the antipodes (Cashman, 1995; Howell & Howell, 1987). With Australia’s colonisation in 1788, sport quickly established itself as a leisure pastime. As the colonies united into one country, sport was used as a tool to unite Australians while also being used as a sign of a successful nation, especially when victories were achieved over England (Howell & Howell, 1987). While the notion that sport and politics should not mix was strongly embedded in Australian society, this did not prevent the early use of sport to help achieve certain government goals. As early as 1810, Governor Macquarie considered that the race carnival was a social diversion as well as a form of social control. Concern at the large numbers unfit for military service during the Second World War resulted in the National Fitness Act in 1941. As a result of this, universities, state education departments and fitness councils developed and implemented programmes to improve the physical condition of Australia youth (Booth, 1995).

Before 1825 there were few sporting clubs in existence in Australia. Many of those that were in existence were established with the aim of maintaining social standing and pretensions of respectability. During the late 19th century and early 20th century sporting activities and clubs continued to flourish and grow. The early 1900s were marked by increasing participation in sporting activities as facilities were developed and opportunities arose for the public to take part
(Howell & Howell, 1987). The club system began to develop in the early part of the twentieth century and by 1910 there were national governing bodies in Australian football, cricket, cycling, golf, lawn bowls and rifle shooting (Stewart et al., 2004).

Early federal government intervention was restricted primarily to the passing of legislation for professional sport where gambling existed and which provided an opportunity for expanding state revenues (Cashman, 1995). Direct federal government intervention occurred with the awarding of the 1956 Olympic Games to Melbourne and the recognition of an enhanced infrastructure to cope with hosting the event. This resulted in the cost of the Melbourne Olympic Games being shared between the federal and state government, and the Melbourne City Council. Throughout the 1960s, the involvement of federal government in sport was limited to sporadic and rather limited financial involvement at the national level, with infrastructure support provided by local government primarily through the provision of facilities.

The importance of local government in supporting sporting activities was evident from an early stage when local or municipal government provided assistance for the development of sports grounds as well as the building of facilities such as tennis courts and swimming pools (Cashman, 1995). Cashman (1995) noted that a relationship of mutual interest developed between communities, politicians and sporting clubs with close relationships developing between sports administrators and politicians; this resulted in sporting clubs being supported through the provision of facilities. Despite this close relationship the federal government continued to remain distant from sport, refusing to contribute money to the holding of the 1938 British Empire Games (now called the Commonwealth Games). With the noticeable exception of the 1956 Olympic Games, the federal government adopted a hands-off approach during the 1950s, despite being called to assist with the holding of the 1954 Commonwealth Games. The provision of infrastructure, such as sporting facilities remained a matter for local and state governments, with the federal government generally playing no role. After the 1956 Olympic Games, the status quo remained, with sport seen by the federal government as an area
of 'free choice' for the individual (Vamplew, Moore, O'Hara, Cashman, & Jobling, 1994).

Federal government involvement in sport began to develop during the 1970s. The increasing interest at federal level was influenced by, and reflected in, the more structured approach to sport at state level with all states and territories having established departments of sport and recreation (with the exception of Tasmania) by 1975. It is around this time that increasing levels of sport participation began to emerge as an area of policy focus. As will be discussed, a number of programmes were implemented with the aim of addressing the perceived problem of low sport participation. A review of the levels of sport participation is, therefore, necessary before analysing the development and success of policies aimed at increasing levels of sport participation within Australia.

**Australian participation levels**

The lack of comparable and consistent data has been labelled as a key reason why determining levels of sport participation in Australia has been elusive. While there have been many surveys aimed at measuring levels of sport participation inconsistent survey design has resulted in a lack of robust data on trends in participation, levels (Oakley, 1999; Veal, 2003). This has also made it difficult to draw international comparisons in regard to the level of sport participation with regard to Australia, New Zealand and Finland.

In 2001, the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) replaced the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey as the collection tool for the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in relation to participation statistics. To date the ERASS has been conducted annually over a five year period from 2001 to 2005. However, it is noteworthy that to identify trends in participation it is necessary to gather data over a longer period (Veal, 2003). Despite these shortcomings, data from the ERASS do provide an insight into the participation levels of Australians. The ERASS includes males and females 15 years of age.
and over who have participated in organised and unorganised exercise, recreation and sport in the 12 months prior to the survey. Organised activity is defined as sport and physical activities organised in full, or in part, by a club, association or other type of organisation. Data have been presented according to: frequency of participation in organised and unorganised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport; duration of participation in organised and unorganised physical activity (only since 2005); type of participation; and, trends in participation over time.

**Overall participation**

The data relating to levels of overall participation include Australians who have participated in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport (organised and non-organised) at least once in the previous 12 months. Between 2001 and 2005, participation has decreased from 77.8 per cent to 69.5 percent, however, the levels of participation have fluctuated considerably with participation levels reaching 82.5 per cent in 2004 (see Table 4.1). While these data indicate relatively high levels of participation, when frequency levels are considered, participation rates drop considerably. The levels of Australians who participate three times a week or more in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport increased from 38.8 per cent in 2002 to 44.2 per cent in 2005 (see Table 4.1). Interestingly, between 2001 and 2005, participation by females in overall levels of participation (three times per week or more) remained consistently higher than males (Australian Sports Commission, 2005c). Consistent with a number of European countries however, overall participation levels in Australia decreased with age. Perhaps of more concern is the lack of progress in reducing the number of Australians who have not participated in any activity, or participated less than once per week in the previous 12 months. While the number of Australians that did not take part in any activity or participated less than once per week remained relatively static between 2003 and 2005, there was significant increase from 18.2 per cent in 2000 to 30.8 per cent in 2005 (see Table 4.1).
Table 4.1 Percentage of Australians participating in overall physical activity, recreation and sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Participation at least once in previous 12 months</th>
<th>Participation 3 x week or more</th>
<th>Participation less than once per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Organised participation

Between 2001 and 2005 participation in organised physical activity only for exercise, recreation and sport has remained relatively stable in Australia. The number of Australians participating in organised physical activity (in a fitness leisure or indoor sports centre, sport or recreation club or association, work school or other organisation) at least once in the previous 12 months decreased slightly from 14.4 per cent in 2003 to 14.0 per cent in 2005 (see Table 4.2).

This is somewhat surprising given the claim by the federal government that there is 'some evidence that Australians are moving away from organised sport' (Australian Sports Commission, 2002a: 5). This again raises issues regarding the accuracy and availability of reliable data with regard to levels of participation in sport and physical activity. While it may be claimed that the participation figures for organised activity appear relatively healthy, in many respects this may be an illusion created by the fact that a person need only participate once in a sporting activity in the previous twelve months.

Consistent with 'western countries' there was a noticeable decrease in levels of participation in organised sport and physical activities by age until the 45-54 year old cohort, when there was a slight increase in levels of participation (see Table 4.2). Furthermore, men also consistently participated at a higher rate than women. However, in non-organised sport and physical activity, women
tended to participate at a higher level than men (Australian Sports Commission, 2003b; Australian Sports Commission, 2004c; Australian Sports Commission, 2005c). These data suggest that Australia has had limited success in achieving life-long participation in organised sport as the maintenance of sporting activity across age groups, and irrespective of gender, has not been able to be maintained.

**Non-organised participation**

In contrast with organised sport and physical activity, in 2003 and 2004 non-organised activity participation increased with age until the 45-54 year old age group, before slightly decreasing (Australian Sports Commission, 2003b; Australian Sports Commission, 2004c; Australian Sports Commission, 2005c). However, in 2005 participation in non-organised activity continued to increase until the 55-64 year old cohort. In 2003, 2004 and 2005 Australians participated in non-organised activities at a higher level in all but the 15-24 year old cohort (in 2003 and 2005 only). Non-organised sport or physical activity is characterised by the fact that it is not organised by a club, association, fitness centre or other type of organisation and shows considerably higher rates of participation than that for organised physical activity or sport (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 Percentage of Australians participating in organised and non-organised levels of participation, 2003-2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Non-organised</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Non-organised</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Non-organised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 + over</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to organised sport and physical activity, females participate at higher rates in non-organised sport and physical activities consistently across all age groups (Australian Sports Commission, 2003b; Australian Sports Commission, 2004c; Australian Sports Commission, 2005c).

In summary, the ERASS indicated that there are higher levels of participation in sport and physical activity in non-organised settings than organised settings across all age groups in Australia. Furthermore, women participate at higher levels in non-organised sport and physical activity settings than men (Australian Sports Commission, 2005c). While it is difficult to draw conclusions or identify trends from the ERASS findings due to the limited period over which data has been collected, nevertheless, it would appear consistent with other western countries.

**Contemporary Structure**

Unlike Finland and New Zealand, Australia operates a federal system of government. It is therefore, unsurprising that the sporting structure of Australian sport comprises of federal, state and local level sporting organisations and other non-governmental sporting organisation (see Figure 4.1). The Australian Constitution defines the power of the Commonwealth (federal government) with a dominant feature being the high degree of complexity and ambiguity in the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth government, which is compounded by a deliberate equivalence of powers in many areas where powers are held concurrently (Houlihan, 1997). A criticism directed at the Australian constitution has been the lack of reference to local government despite the key role it plays in delivering services; for example, state parliaments can establish and dismiss local government councils quite arbitrarily despite the latter being elected (Department of Parliamentary Services, 2006).
While states and territories are constitutionally responsible for the provision of sport and recreation services, in reality these responsibilities are also shared with local government (Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories, 1992). The layered federal system of Commonwealth, state and local government has clear implications for both the development and implementation of sport policy within the Australian context. Not only is it necessary for national sport policies to operate laterally across large (and diverse) geographic areas, but there is also a requirement to operate vertically through the local, state and federal levels. Given the complexity of the federal system a key issue is the separation of responsibility for achieving participation in sport and the relationships that exits between the different organisations involved. The challenges of operating within a federal state system have also been exacerbated within the sporting context by a sport delivery structure that has been the result of unplanned, rather than systematic and deliberate growth (Oakley, 1999).
Governmental Organisations

Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is the key state organisation responsible for the delivery of Australian national sport policy. Within the structure of the ASC the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) is responsible for developing elite sport on a national basis with a particular focus upon success at Olympic Games and World Championships (Australian Sports Commission, 2007f). When the ASC was first established in 1985, the AIS remained a separate entity but in 1989 the two organisations amalgamated, with the ASC becoming the coordinator of all AIS programmes. Underlying the ASC’s mission to ‘enrich the lives of all Australians through sport’ are two key objectives, ‘to secure an effective national sporting system that offers improved participation in quality sports activities by Australians’, and, ‘to secure excellence in sports performance by Australians’ (Australian Sports Commission, 2006c: 1).

With four main divisions, the two delivery arms with regard to sport policy for the ASC are the AIS and the Sports Performance and Development Group (SPDG). The SPDG is responsible for developing a sporting system, which supports sport at the community level although it also supports programmes to the elite level. In particular the SPDG provides national sporting organisations with access to advice and resources along with policy development and management advice (Australian Sports Commission, 2007f). With regard to the area of encouraging participation in sport, the SPDG has identified its main foci as:

- increasing participation in grassroots sport by developing partnerships; and,
- providing resources and support for initiatives aimed at targeted groups such as Indigenous peoples, women and people with a disability (Australian Sports Commission, 2007e).

Given the dual objectives, it is surprising that the ASC has no dedicated division/group that is solely responsible for addressing sport participation, a key
objective of the ASC. In contrast, elite sport objectives are delivered through the AIS in conjunction with, and assistance from, the SPDG. While it appears that the SPDG has a dual focus on creating a sporting system that encourages both excellence and participation in sport, the emphasis, as explained by a senior SPDG official, is clearly upon achieving excellence in elite performance, 'we [SPDG] are unashamedly about high performance' (Interview: 25 September 2006).

Since its establishment the ASC has emerged as the dominant organisation in the Australian sport sector (Hogan & Norton, 2000). This has been facilitated by a rapid increase in funding and the ability to determine and decide which sporting organisations are eligible to receive federal government funding. Between 2001-2006 federal government funding to achieve sporting excellence and increased participation for sport rose considerably, increasing from about $AU140 million in 2001 to just over $AU190 million in 2006 (see Table 4.3). Funding from the federal government is allocated to organisations, which will assist the ASC in achieving its objectives; however, the primary deliverers in relation to achieving the objectives of excellence in elite sport and increased levels of participation are the NGBs (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). The emphasis placed upon supporting elite sport development within NGBs, in comparison with the area of sport participation/grassroots sport, is visibly demonstrated by the considerable variance in the allocation of resources (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 ASC funding allocations to outcomes, 2001-2006 (AUD$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Participation¹</th>
<th>Excellence²</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>65,903,000</td>
<td>124,623,000</td>
<td>190,526,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>50,259,000</td>
<td>120,349,000</td>
<td>170,608,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>34,586,000</td>
<td>113,363,000</td>
<td>147,949,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>34,500,000</td>
<td>112,500,000</td>
<td>147,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>31,491,000</td>
<td>108,007,000</td>
<td>139,498,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


¹ Outcome One is securing an effective national sports system that offers improved participation in quality sports activities by Australians
² Outcome Two, to secure excellence in sports performance by Australians
However, it is interesting to note that funding for increasing levels of participation has increased at a far greater rate than resourcing for elite sport development; funding for participation has increased by just over 109 per cent over the last 5 years while funding allocated towards achieving excellence in sport has increased by just over 15 per cent. However, increased levels of funding for participation may not necessarily reflect a greater commitment to the overall goal of increasing levels of sport participation as overall funding allocation still remains at about half that allocated for excellence in sport. Furthermore, while NGBs are allocated specific targets for excellence, targets for participation are based around activities rather than outcomes. As discussed by a senior SPDG official, NGBs:

... have targets for high performance, but targets [for participation] are more activities based and more against what they have actually done ... so we say [to the NGBs] that they will run coaching accreditation workshops for 10 courses for five pupils and they have to say they have done that (Interview: 25 September 2006).

Given the multifaceted aspect of Outcome One, (securing an effective sports system that offers improved participation in quality sports activities) it is necessary to note the difficulty in determining the percentage of funding which has been allocated specifically to programmes aimed at increasing levels of participation. With regard to funding for NGBs, however, the importance of resourcing in determining the priorities and focus of programmes was made clear by a senior NGB official:

we could develop programmes that would keep people in the sport ... if the resources were available then I think a lot of sports would come up with programmes and I think we could come up with some really good ones (Interview 27 September 2006).

Not only did NGBs express a desire to increase participation but a recognition and a desire to address health related issues was also expressed, 'we would love to do health issues and participation but give us the resources to do it' (Interview: A senior NGB official, 28 September 2006). The allocation of
resources would indicate however that investment in sport development is not a priority for the ASC as between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006 funding for sport development actually decreased from 19 per cent to 7 per cent as part of the total operational budget. While funding allocated to sport development increased at a higher rate than that for high performance funding continued to remain significantly less (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 ASC funding to NGBs (AUD$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sport Development (Outcome One)</th>
<th>High Performance Outcome Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>5,802,800</td>
<td>65,508,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>5,346,000</td>
<td>61,224,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>4,830,001</td>
<td>59,614,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>4,777,500</td>
<td>57,700,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>4,730,000</td>
<td>54,930,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>4,520,410</td>
<td>54,480,689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A key point to highlight is the way in which ‘sport’ has been defined in Australia, more specifically, how sport has been defined by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). There are a number of detailed criteria\(^5\) that must be fulfilled prior to an organisation receiving funding from the ASC for sport development or elite purposes. By using these criterion the ASC has been able to ‘exclude’ certain sporting activities from receiving support and resourcing, potentially impacting upon the extent to which organisations are able to increase levels of participation and elite success. How sport is defined by the ASC, therefore, directly impacts upon a sporting organisation’s ability to receive funding and support from the ASC. The ASC has defined sport for the purpose of its support as, ‘A human activity capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and/or physical skill which, by its nature and organisation, is competitive and is generally accepted as being a sport’ (Australian Sports Commission, 2004b: 5). However, the definition of sport appears to fluctuate

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3 Sport development includes funding for increasing participation levels (Personal Communication (BE))
4 This includes funding directed to the AIS and to NGBs.
5 The criteria required for national sporting organisations for recognition cover two main areas, administrative processes and the scope (international and/or national) of the sport.
from less to more restrictive, especially in relation to specific projects (Stewart et al., 2004). While the ‘Active Australia Programme’ attempted to increase participation in a broad range of activities including sport, community recreation, fitness, outdoor recreation and other physical activities, subsequent programmes such as ‘Aussport’ and the ‘Targeted Sport Participation Growth Programme’ focused more narrowly upon increasing participation in sport rather than physical activity. Before an organisation is eligible to receive services or funding from the ASC, and state/territory Departments of Sport and Recreation, a number of criteria must be satisfied (Australian Sports Commission, 2007c). The ASC is, therefore, able to determine what activities are supported by the federal government and consequently what activities are supported with regard to increasing levels of participation. As discussed by a senior ASC official:

we have a definition of sport and you have to be recognised as a sport [to get government funding]. A new sport on the horizon is dragon boat racing, it’s not an Australian sport as such but they want to be recognised by us so they went through all the hoops, [once they are] recognised by us then a number of the States will then provide them with money’ (Interview: 26 September 2006)

State government
Six states and two territories comprise the Commonwealth of Australia: Victoria (Vic); New South Wales (NSW); Western Australia (WA); Tasmania (TAS); Queensland (Q), South Australia (SA); Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and; Northern Territory (NT). Each Australian state government has its own constitution, which sets out its powers and responsibilities. State governments typically look after services such as policing, public schools, roads and traffic, public hospitals, public housing, and business regulation. With regard to providing resourcing for sport, the state governments play an important role. In 2000/01 states and territories contributed a total of $875.2 million to sport and recreation activities compared with the Commonwealth Government contribution of $198.9 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). However, between the states, there is considerable variation in the level of funding allocated to sporting activities. ACT’s expenditure was the highest with $185.70
per person, however, as there is no local government operating within the ACT. This figure may be misleading as the state government assumes the sporting functions normally carried out by local governments (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Other states with relatively high levels of expenditure were Northern Territories ($121.92 per person) and New South Wales ($73.28 per person). Western Australia ($38.38 per person), Queensland ($30.11 per person) were closer to the national average of $45.51 per person. South Australia (27.04 per person) Tasmania ($21.10 per person) and Victoria (17.73) had the lowest levels of funding (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

Constitutionally, the state/territories are responsible for the provision of sport and recreation services, however, in reality this is shared with local government.

The blurring of responsibility between the three tiers of government has resulted in state programmes dealing with both community development and international competition (Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories, 1992). The disparity in funding levels between the federal and state government has also impacted the extent to which the federal government influences state sport policy. The influence of the federal government on the actions of the state in connection with sport policy has, according to a senior Victorian state official, been ‘minimal if any influence at all’ (Interview: 28 September, 2006). This is in part due to the low levels of funding as ‘we get $200,000 a year from them [federal government] to our budget of many, many millions. So it’s [federal funding] nothing in the scheme of things’ (Interview: A senior state government official, 28 September 2006). Another explanation for the weak influence of the federal government on the direction of state sport policy concerned the occasional conflict over the role of sport. A senior state official explained that the ASC:

have very little to do with community sport, it's all elite level, high profile issues rather than all grassroots issues around sport and recreation. And they tend to be sport first, second and third, whereas we're sport, recreation and physical activity and across all groups (Interview: 28 September 2006).
Not only does this indicate a difference in sport policy focus but it also indicates a variation in the values and beliefs with regard to how sport can contribute to the wider Australian community.

Local government

Within each state, local governments, which are democratically elected bodies, provide a range of services to a specific geographic area. It is the elected council which sets the overall direction for the municipality. An Act of each state parliament sets out the powers, duties and functions of local government, which has resulted in considerable diversity in the range and type of services delivered across Australian local government. Local government work with a range of organisations to deliver services to the community, including community groups, private business and federal government departments.

Council funding is received through a variety of avenues, with rates typically generating about half of council income; other revenue is also received from state and federal government (Department for Victorian Communities, 2005). The influence of local government on grassroots sport is considerable in Australia, with local government contributing the largest amount of funding to sport and recreation of any government sector. In 2000/2001 local government contributed $1,050.1 million (49 per cent of the total government contribution to sport and recreation funding) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It is through the provision of sporting facilities and programmes that local government has contributed most significantly to the ASC goal of increasing levels of participation. However the ‘abject failure of the states and territories to provide the necessary infrastructure’ (Liberal Party & The Nationals, 2004: 6) has, according to the Liberal/National coalition government, resulted in unmet demand for sport and recreation facilities in urban, rural and remote areas across Australia. Despite this acknowledgement, there has been criticism directed at the Howard government by CAS and NGBs at the lack of federal funding for the development of community facilities (Lundy, 2007). While this criticism indicates growing concern regarding the provision of community facilities, it also signals a lack of clarity as to where responsibility for the allocation of recreational sporting facilities lies across government.
Because of the electoral process and the funding structure of local government, the impact and influence of both federal and state government on the policies and programmes of local government with regard to sport and recreation is diverse and at times unclear. This raises issues relating to the ways in which the different levels of government operate and the varying influences that affect the direction and focus of sport and recreation policies. As noted by one local government official when explaining the influence of the state government on local government:

there will be a lot of things from the state government that influences how councils operate, from planning schemes, from Department of Human Services and through to handling those sorts of elements, including how sport operates, and for funding opportunities (Interview: A senior local government official, 29 September 2006).

While local government provides recreation (and cultural) services, the type and extent of the services provided varies considerably across each council. Despite this, local government involvement in sport has been significant for a number of years, primarily through the provision of sporting facilities such as parks, recreation centres and swimming pools (Westerbeek, Shilbury, & Deane, 1995). How funds are allocated is dependent upon the particular government council, the way in which decisions are made, the level of funding and the pressure from a variety of community and interest groups (Westerbeek et al., 1995). The increasing need to listen to the voice of the community in directing and informing policy was also evident in both Boroondara and Whitehorse local government councils. However, a tension has emerged with regard to whose needs should be met at local government level, as explained by a senior local government official:

there is real confusion around who is the end user, or who is the client. And there seems to be a fairly philosophical position that the end user is the council, not the community (Interview: 29 September 2006).

Disagreement as to whether the needs of council or those of the community should be met has prompted the demand for better planning with regard to
sport policy. As explained by an official at the Boroondara City Council the lack of a sport strategy rendered consistent and transparent decision-making difficult. Without a sport and recreation strategy to support decision-making, the tension has created an:

incredibly difficult situation and the need for a solution and a peaceful way of reaching a decision. This is where [when we are trying to make decisions] all hell breaks loose and you actually have to create a strategy... this is how the Sport Strategy came around and now there's a Soccer Strategy that's been done (Interview: 29 September 2006).

While playing a role in all areas of sport participation including grassroots, competitive and elite, the key focus for many local governments is on accessibility, equity and participation (City of Boroondara, 2006). The impact of state government upon local government is at times intermittent. However, under state legislation, all local governments are required to develop a Municipal Health Plan and for some local governments it is this which has been the catalyst for the development of sport and recreation plans (City of Boroondara, 2006; City of Whitehorse, 2004). This highlights the growing relevance of health as a motivator for sport development at the local government level in Australia. However, the relative recency of sport and recreation departments has also meant that for some local government authorities there is a lack of clarity with regard to the direction and focus of their sport and recreation policy:

even the concept of the recreation department within council, to manage and facilitate that component is probably really only 20 years young. I mean the concept of recreation officers within council probably started in the mid-80s. I suppose 20 years is a long time but it's also a short time in trying to get policy knowing where it's going and ensuring that it's integrating with other departments as well (Interview: A senior local government official, 29 September 2006).
Non-governmental organisations

Confederation of Sport (CAS)

Until recently the Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS) was known as Sport Industry Australia. CAS operates as an umbrella organisation, which aims to provide the sports sector, in particular its member organisations, a united voice in dealing with government's and key stakeholders. In the 2006/2007 year, there were 25 national governing bodies, which were member associations of CAS. The vision of CAS is focused upon four areas, which include the promotion of opportunities for all Australians in elite and mass-sport, the promotion of the benefits of sport (social, economic and health) and increased recognition by government of the need to provide assistance to the Australian sports system. In promoting participation in sport and physical activity CAS aims to:

- improve the health and well-being of individual Australians; and,
- maximise the sport and leisure industry's contribution to the Australian economy (Confederation of Australian Sport, 2007a).

The primary role of CAS is to: lobby government community decision makers and the public on issues relating to sport; promote the importance of sport within the community; and, give the industry a united voice in discussions and negotiations with government and key stakeholders (Confederation of Australian Sport, 2007b). The initial CAS plan, A Master Plan for Australian Sport, proposed that Australian sport policy should enhance and support both elite and community participation, at the same time it also advocated for increased resources for the improvement of management of NGBs, identifying talented athletes, improving the quality of sport venues and making school sport a serious part of the school curriculum (Stewart et al., 2004). In 1983, the CAS allegedly opposed the passing of the Australian Sports Commission Bill, which led to criticism of CAS from both inside and outside parliament and, as articulated by Bloomfield (2003), may have contributed to the decline in influence of the Confederation. While purporting to be a voice for grassroots sport, CAS has struggled to gain support from sporting organisations and in turn has struggled to be an effective voice challenging the focus upon elite sport. As explained by a senior ASC official the role of CAS:
... hasn't been that relevant over the last 10 years as it [sport policy] has been quite non-partisan, in other words the policies of both sides have been pretty much the same mainly around resourcing, but that's because of the booming economy. But if things start to turn down we might be seen as a bit of a larder to raid as well as other sectors' (Interview: A senior ASC official, 25 September 2006).

Funding for CAS is received from a variety of sources; however, it receives no federal government funding for capacity building or for its role as the peak body for sport. In 2006/2007 CAS lobbied on a range of issues relating to the sport sector at both federal and state level including the review of the government policy Game Plan 2006 and the Women in Sport Senate Enquiry. It would appear that CAS is currently re-establishing itself as a lobby group for sport however their level of influence in impacting upon government policy is unclear. As discussed by a senior ASC official, to gain power and attract further members CAS must continue to build its membership, particularly amongst influential NGBs:

we had a meeting with CAS just recently and they have got themselves in a position where they will be in the black later this year and they are starting to woo back the sports. They have already done some but there are a couple of key ones they need to woo back [if they are to be influential] (Interview: 25 September 2006).

National governing bodies
Within Australia there are about 120 national sporting and recreation bodies which are recognised by the ASC. It is NGBs, the key link between the ASC and sport itself, which are responsible for the development of their particular sport within Australia (Sotiriadou, Quick, & Shilbury, 2006). Amongst the NGBs there is variance with regard to structure, with some sports such as basketball having separate organisations for professional and amateur leagues while other sports such as cricket, rugby and tennis retain professional and amateur arms within a single organisation (Westerbeek et al., 1995). Other sports such
as athletics, are represented by an NGB with great organisational complexity, which has in turn led to a number of inquiries in an effort to determine the best way to take the sport forward (Green & Houlihan, 2005). The impact of a federated structure, along with a range of separate organisation, on the effective running of Athletics was explained by a senior NGB official:

...in this country everything is operated as a silo [especially] track and field. There's the coach's association for coaching, there's us, then there's all the state associations that branch off us, Little Athletics and all its associations and there's just been this divide that has never come together (Interview: 28 September 2006)

Because of the federal system, NGBs have a network of regions and clubs that are coordinated within each state or territory by the state sports organisation. At times this has caused problems in implementing national programmes due to the diversity amongst the states/territories, differing priorities and the lack of connection and understanding of the regional and clubs. As the funding has increased so too has the dependence of NGBs upon the ASC with a consequent reduction in their autonomy. Increasingly, however, ASC funding to NGBs has concentrated on a relatively small number of (Olympic) sports, which are funded disproportionate (Collins & Green, 2007). As a result, a number of sports with high levels of grassroots participation (such as touch rugby and netball) are funded at much lower levels than sports with relatively low levels of participation (such as athletics and rowing) despite the obvious role they might play in increasing levels of sport participation along with the associated health benefits that the government's rhetoric suggests is so important.

The difficulty of operating within a federated structure was further illustrated with regard to the relationship between NGBs and local government. Given the role that local government plays in providing facilities and support for grassroots sport, it is surprising that the relationship between NGBs and local government has remained rather under-developed. Nevertheless, the need to develop relationships at different levels has been recognised, as explained by a senior NGB official:
[the relationship between Swimming Australia and local government] is as poor as ever, think it is a Swimming Australia issue, we have to develop a relationship. We can't develop a relationship with every local government authority but we can develop a relationship with the overarching groups like the Australian local government association (Interview: 27 September, 2006).

Australian sport policy

Australian Sport Policy: The 1970s

Prior to 1970, there had been general agreement that sport in Australia should remain separate from government and politics (Cashman 1995; Stewart et al., 2004). This was to change rapidly in 1972 with the election of the Whitlam Labor Government, which identified that sport was part of a 'good' Australian life, and included it in the Government's social engineering programme to ensure greater community access to leisure and sporting activities (Embrey, 1998). Sport was seen as underdeveloped and in need of government assistance; Whitlam believed that 'there was no greater social problem facing Australia than the good use of leisure' (Hamilton-Smith & Robertson, 1977, in Stewart et al., 2004). The federal government now recognised that sport could be used as a tool not only to assist in developing the social conditions of outer-urban and regional Australia but also to improve the health and fitness of Australians (Cashman, 1995; Stewart et al., 2004).

In 1972 the newly elected Labor Party confirmed the increased salience of sport to the federal government by creating a Department of Tourism and Recreation and instigating an inquiry to examine the role of sport in Australia. The enquiry, 'The role and scope and development of recreation in Australia', was to be known as the Bloomfield Report. The Bloomfield Report provided a blueprint for future sport policy and raised a number of concerns regarding: falling fitness levels; declining interest in physical education in schools, and; increasing levels of heart disease and stress. Perhaps more importantly for grassroots sport, the Bloomfield Report noted the growing divide between those who could afford sport and those who could not. A strong focus of the
federal government investment in sport was on grassroots sport, as captured by the then Minister for Tourism and Recreation, Australia has:

no intention of imitating some countries which regard success in sport as some sort of proof of the superiority of their way of life, ideology and race. Our task lies clearly elsewhere, in meeting more basic needs, in catering for masses, not just a small elite' (Semotiuk, 1986: 154).

Interestingly, the Bloomfield Report highlighted the link between grassroots and elite sport when it was argued that success at the elite level was promoted by higher levels of participation at the grassroots level and that elite sport was considered a by-product of grassroots participation. As a result the federal government's focus was on promoting mass participation, with support for elite sport a secondary consideration.

As noted by Houlihan (1997), a number of States introduced similar changes to their machinery of government during this time and the increased activity at the federal level resulted in parallel developments being stimulated at state level. The salience of sport policy emerged at varying times across Australia, Western Australia acted upon the recommendation of the Bloomfield Report in 1979, establishing a Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation (Bloomfield, 2003). However, a number of other States were slower in developing dedicated sport divisions within the structure of the state government. The Victorian government, which established a Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation in 1973, began to examine the role of sport in state government, which resulted in a White Paper, New directions in sport – A structure and context for the development of Sport in Victoria. In 1982, the then Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, Brian Dixon, launched the Report. This wide-ranging document provided the framework for a state sport programme, which covered both elite and grassroots sport. The state governments that began to develop their sport systems towards the end of the 1980s, promoted the model for other states (Bloomfield, 2003). State governments began to establish departments of sport and recreation as they recognised the need to assist in the development of sport. The challenges of working with a federated system and
integrating the different tiers of government were recognised and the federal
government established the Recreation Ministers Council (RMC) to provide
state governments' links with programmes that had been established at federal
level (Stewart et al., 2004).

Another inquiry which produced The Coles Report was instigated in 1975, also
by the Labor government. The purpose of the Coles Report was to explore the
feasibility of an elite sports institute (Green & Houlihan, 2005). Perhaps more
insightfully, the Report raised the issue of balancing elite sport and grassroots
sport (Stewart et al., 2004). During this period, the government introduced
programmes, which reflected the government's focus upon mass-participation.
Two new forms of assistance were established for sport, the Capital Assistance
Programme, which provided grants to state governments for the construction of
community facilities and the Sports Assistance Programme, which was aimed
at supporting national governing bodies with administration, coaching and
tavel and Fitness Australia which was aimed at increasing mass participation
(Houlihan, 1997; Stewart et al., 2004). The increase in the salience of sport
was reflected in growing levels of funding to sport, most noticeably, during
Labor's term in office from 1972 to 1975 (see Table 4.5).

The election of the Liberal Fraser government in 1975 resulted in a significant
change of direction for Australian sport policy. The Liberal-Country Coalition
(later called the Liberal-National coalition) government quickly demonstrated it
was uninterested in large scale sport funding, primarily because this was
inconsistent with its small government policy (Armstrong, 1988, in Stewart et
al., 2004). The Sports Assistance Programme was reshaped and the Capital
Assistance Programme was only continued for those projects where
commitments had already been entered into by the Labor Government
(Semotiuk, 1986).
Changes to the *Capital Assistance Programme* meant that only commitments already made were honoured while the *Sports Assistance Programme* was discontinued. As a result, overall funding for sport dropped considerably under the Liberal government; a decrease of more than 50 per cent occurred between 1976/1977 and 1977/1978 (see table 4.5). The Department of Tourism and Recreation was abolished, which resulted in sport being accorded a much lower status, reflected in the transfer of administrative responsibility for sport three times in eight years (Houlihan, 1997). The general election of 1975 not only signalled a shift in federal government investment in sport but illustrated a ‘difference in philosophical approach between the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal-Country coalition government (Semotiuk, 1987). As noted by Green and Houlihan, the different philosophical approaches towards the role of sport is instructive given the ACF’s premise that values and belief systems, together with non cognitive events such as ‘changes in the systemic governing coalition’ are central to stimulating policy change (2004: 32).

Pressure was brought to bear on the government by the sporting community however, which resulted in the *Sport Assistance Programme* being re-introduced in 1977. Raised expectations amongst NGBs by the previous Labor
government resulted in strong lobbying, led by the Confederation of Australian Sports (CAS), against the funding cuts. While CAS argued for government policies that would address both elite and grassroots sport, a number of other events influenced a move by the federal government towards increased support of elite sport. Australia's poor performance at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games was met with 'expressions of dissatisfaction' and a crisis of confidence in Australia's sporting community (Stoddart, 1986: 69). The poor performance at the 1976 Olympic Games by the Australian athletes 'helped to transform federal and state government attitudes towards the promotion of sport' (Cashman, 1995: 120). A government discussion paper argued for increased funding of sport and concluded that a national sports institute was critical to Australia's success at the elite level (Stewart et al., 2004). While a number of factors influenced the federal government to support elite sport, the need or desire to address increasing levels of participation, as argued by the earlier Labor government, slipped off the political radar.

Houlihan (1997) noted four reasons why a more severe downgrading of sport did not occur. First, the establishment of the Confederation of Australian Sport was determined to see the recent gains maintained; second was a recognition that sport and recreation were popular with the electorate; third, the commitment of Bob Ellicot, Minister responsible for sport from 1978-1981; and fourth, the poor performance of the Australian team at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. Interestingly, at this time the NGBs were able to provide a voice in sport policy debates and influence government sport policy through the newly formed Confederation of Australian Sports (CAS). However, as identified by Houlihan (1997), this situation was to become progressively weaker due to the increasing role of government in sport and the increasing reliance on government funding. Also of note was the realisation by politicians that the link between electoral popularity and sport could be exploited.

Despite the identification of sport as an area of reduced federal government investment, there was growing awareness, both amongst the public and within government, of the increasing incidence of preventable diseases such as coronary heart disease and diabetes (Stewart et al., 2004). Health was
beginning to emerge as catalyst for increased federal government funding for sport related programmes; the link between increased levels of sporting activity and improved standards of health was a key driver for a new promotion programme, ‘Life. Be in it’, which was established by the federal government in 1977. The aims of the programme focused upon increasing awareness of the benefits of physical activity, showing how to use local facilities in a variety of low cost activities and introducing people to sport as a way of becoming active (Stewart et al., 2004). However, the programme only marginally increased levels of participation and, as a result of an expenditure committee review in 1980 and the cuts of the Fraser government in 1981, the ‘Life. Be in it’ programme was stopped.

As a result of external pressure from CAS, the Coles Report, the poor performance by Australian athletes at the 1976 Olympics and the divisiveness of the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, the Liberal Coalition government reconsidered its (elite) sport policies towards the end of the 1970s. At the same time the Fraser government also began to realise how sport could be used both as a symbol of national development and also as a way to win electoral votes (Stewart et al., 2004). Along with increased government involvement with regard to sport in Australia, the 1970s also witnessed greater politicisation of sport on the international stage. Sporting links with South Africa were debated and the use of sporting boycotts to ‘punish’ South Africa’s apartheid regimes became part of foreign policy in Australia. During the mid-1970s sport was used as a tool of foreign policy with the Gough government ordering Australian sport federations to boycott sporting links with South Africa. Australia, through the then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, was at the forefront of drafting the Gleneagles Agreement which committed Commonwealth countries to withdraw support for NGBs, which sent sporting teams to South Africa. At the 1980 US led boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, however, the Australian government, deferred the decision on whether athletes should attend to the Australian Olympic Committee. Despite this apparent hands-off approach to whether Australian athletes should attend the Olympic Games, the government’s position was made clear by its actions to
compensate athletes who chose not to go, a decision, which was labelled by some as bribery (Stewart et al., 2004).

In summary, the 1970s were characterised by a move away for the 'voluntarist' approach to sport and towards a sector with increasing demands for professionalisation and growing reliance on government funding for sport. Growing recognition of the salience of sport was also evident as government recognised ways in which sport could be utilised to achieve both governmental (e.g. declining health standards) and political (e.g. ability of sporting connections to win votes) outcomes. For much of the 1970s, federal government intervention was directed towards increasing levels of participation, which resulted in a number of programmes aimed at the development of community facilities and support for national governing bodies. Towards the end of the 1970s a shift in the aims of federal government intervention occurred, largely due to several external events, which resulted in the promotion of elite sport as an area of federal government interest. Coinciding with this was the steady convergence between the key political parties of Labor and the Liberal with regard to the prioritisation of elite sport.

**Australian sport policy: The 1980s**

By the end of the 1970s the federal government had been forced to re-focus its sport policy on the elite end of the sport continuum (Stewart et al., 2004). The AIS opened in 1981 with the aim of restoring pride in Australia through elite sporting success but was criticised for ignoring the community sport model that underpinned the Bloomfield report (Houlihan, 1997). Initially providing facilities and training for nine sports, the aim of the AIS was to support 'athletes with world-class facilities and, sports science and medicine back up and provide top level, specialist coaching and training for athletes who have shown great promise, at the same time offering complimentary and attractive education and career training opportunities' (Semotiuk, 1987: 159).

Despite the establishment of the AIS and a significant increase in funding to elite sport, there remained continued interest in the support of grassroots sport, albeit sporadic, at the federal government level. The election of the 1983
Labour government, and their subsequent re-election in 1985, resulted in initiatives identified by the previous Labor government being reinstated (Semotiuk, 1987). The establishment of a separate Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism reinforced the elevation of the sport and recreation portfolio and signalled the growing legitimacy of sport as part of federal government policy, a stark contrast to the actions of the Liberal government of 1975. The dual goal of addressing both elite sport and grassroots sport appeared evident with the department's first major decision, which was to consolidate the previous government's elite sports programmes and broaden its community sport policy (Stewart et al., 2004). A commitment to grassroots sport was noticeable in the Labor Party's position paper on sport and recreation, which stated that the 'Federal Government had a responsibility to provide national leadership in making sport and recreation available to everyone who wishes to participate' (Semotiuk, 1987: 156). The need for the federal government to support sport was also highlighted in a report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on expenditure entitled The way we play, which recommended increased spending by the government on sport. However, despite funding doubling to $50 million, the 1983 election promise of seventy-five community leisure centres was quietly abandoned (Vamplew et al., 1994: 161).

Development of sporting facilities became an area of focus for the federal government, reflected in the 1985 National Sports Facility Programme in which the federal government provided assistance to States and Territories for the development of international standard sporting facilities. Federal investment in local or community sports facilities was addressed by the Hawke government with the Community Recreation and Sport Facility Programme which allocated grants to local community leisure centres and sport arenas across Australia. This Programme attempted to support both grassroots and elite sport through the provision of sporting facilities. The aim of the Programme was three fold: first, to reduce disadvantage to low income communities; second, to encourage people to participate in sport and physical activity programmes; and finally, to expand the pool of athletes with potential to achieve elite success (Stewart et al., 2004: 61). It is the last aim, which reinforced the focus of government on
elite sport, as a key objective behind increasing levels of participation was to provide a pool of athletes from which Australia's elite athletes could be drawn from.

1985 saw a significant change in the Australian sport policy landscape with the establishment of the Australian Sport Commission. The portfolio of sport and recreation was to share ministerial status with tourism but perhaps more importantly there was to be an increased budget allocation to sport and recreation (Semotiuk, 1987). The growing importance of NGBs with regard to achieving the dual goals of the ASC was reflected in the rapid increase in funding during the 1980s; with NGBs allocated $3 million for sport development in 1980, this grew to $32 million by 1990 (including AIS scholarships). Operating under the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989, the ASC, funded by the federal government and managed by a board appointed by the Minister, was established with the intention that political interference in sport should be eliminated. The establishment of the Australian Sports Commission signalled a further step in the commitment of the federal government to Australian sport. However, unfortunately for grassroots sport, the ASC was seen as crucial in enhancing the prospect of success in international competition rather than mass-sport (Houlihan, 1997).

The objectives of the ASC were twofold, to provide leadership in the development of elite sport and increase participation levels in sport, along with maximising funding for sport from the private sector, (Vamplew et al., 1994). The Australian Sports Commission Act reinforced the twin-pronged approach of supporting both elite and mass-sport, outlining the functions of the ASC to develop and implement programmes that promote equality of access to, and participation in, sport by all Australians. The increase in sport funding, allocated by the ASC also contributed to the ASC becoming the most powerful and influential sporting body in Australia (Semotiuk, 1987). More significantly, as highlighted by Hogan and Norton (2000), there was a change in the general approach of the Australian government towards elite and grassroots sport. Investment in elite sport was now considered by government as not only beneficial for Australia but also for grassroots sport as articulated by the then
Minister for Sport Bob Ellicot, 'the establishment of the AIS will not only affect the athletes at the top level, but it will also filter through to the grassroots' (Daly, 1991: 17).

The launch of the *Aussie Sports* programme in 1986 reflected the community sport philosophy, which was articulated by the Hawke Government. It also signalled growing concern for the falling level of sports participation amongst children (Oakley, 1999). A number of programmes were established under the *Aussie Sport* banner, which primarily focused upon adapted sport activities which emphasised the development of sporting and motor skills rather than competition. While initially the *Aussie Sports* programme focused upon primary schools, it was later expanded in 1986 to include secondary school children and also sought to foster links between schools and clubs. However, no programmes were developed which focused upon maintaining or developing further levels of participation post-school. The emphasis on non-competitive sport and physical activity during the 1980s indicated that the ASC was adopting an approach to participation, which incorporated not only sport, but physical activity and recreational activities.

Given the two key objectives of increased participation and excellence in elite sports performance, two potential approaches were possible in relation to funding and policies. Both revolve around the pyramid model which was presented in the Bloomfield Report (see Figure 4.2). On the one hand the 'bottom-up' approach argues that the development or creation of a base of participants will in turn 'push' talented athletes to the top, conversely the 'trickle down' approach argues that the success of elite athletes will draw or pull potentially talented athletes to the apex of the pyramid. The discourse of the 1972 Labor government supported the former approach, where increasing participation at grassroots level would push talented athletes top the top. However, during the 1980s the emerging discourse surrounding participation in sport, and more importantly funding, supported the philosophy that successful elite athletes will pull further talented athletes to the top of their sport and more into the grassroots level.
As a result of this shift, funding became increasingly directed at elite sports people or those already identified as being talented, rather than at grassroots sport where funding would be directed at facilities and sporting opportunities for a wide cross-section of the community. The ‘trickle down’ approach is often used to support the continued funding of elite sport despite little evidence to support such claims (Coalter, 2004; Hindson, Gidlow, & Peebles, 1994; Hogan & Norton, 2000; Veal, 2003). The change in how funding would be directed and targeted was clearly articulated by the then Sports Minister, John Brown:

> Our basic philosophy is to get more people competing... If you give your elites sufficient support to reach their potential, then they have an enormous effect on getting other people to compete... it's marvellous how it engenders in other kids an ambition to get out and do likewise (Armstrong, 1988: 317, in Hogan and Norton, 2000)

In summary, the policies that emerged during the 1980s, which were directed towards increasing participation, remained fragmented and targeted at specific groups rather than at developing life-long participation. The ASC developed participation programmes directed at specific target groups such as youth, women, the disabled and the aborigines. Increasing participation amongst the general public was addressed through the advertising campaigns of the *Life*.
Be In It campaign, which was later incorporated into the Active Australia programme (Oakley, 1999). Youth sport was addressed through the Aussie Sports programme which offered modified sports to children rather than the more traditional competitive sports games (Stewart et al., 2004).

By the 1980s the debate as to whether sport and politics should mix was one which had lost much of its impetus. This was not only reflected in the structural change to the sport policy landscape but also through the use of sport as a tool in foreign policy. The establishment of the ASC and AIS led not only to the consolidation and integration of sport policy at a federal level, but also signalled the growing importance and influence of the ASC. Support for the development of elite sporting success steadily grew during the 1980s as an area of policy focus and the proclaimed key objectives of developing elite sporting success and increasing levels of participation appeared to be one of rhetoric rather than reality, most clearly demonstrated through the imbalanced allocation of resources (Stewart et al., 2004). While NGBs were identified as key organisations with regard to the implementation of the dual goals of the ASC, the increased reliance on funding from the ASC also led to a gradual decline in autonomy due to the caveats associated with ASC funding. Significantly for grassroots sport, the 1980s witnessed a sea change in the philosophical approach adopted with regard to elite and grassroots sport. In contrast to the 1970s, elite sport was to become an end in itself and the diversion of focusing to elite sport was rationalised through the 'trickle down' concept. As a result, funding was directed at elite sports people as it was argued that their performance would increase levels of participation. Where issues of participation were addressed more directly, the approach was fragmented with programmes primarily directed at target groups rather than at achieving participation throughout ones life-span.

Australian sport policy: The 1990s
The Australian Labor Party was returned to power again in 1990 resulting in an increased emphasis on elite sport development. The political status that could be gained by international sporting success, particularly at the Olympic Games, was increasingly recognised by politicians. The rhetoric rather than
commitment, to community and grassroots sport continued and in 1990 community sport was only able to secure 12 per cent (or AU$7 million) of government sports funding (Stewart et al., 2004). Notwithstanding an increasing emphasis upon the development of elite sport, a number of policy changes were introduced during the 1990s aimed at increasing sporting and physical activity participation levels.

The government strategy the Next Step, covered the period 1989 to 1992 and while it provided a boost to the levels of funding with regard to increasing participation, most of the funds were directed towards elite sport (Stewart et al., 2004). In 1989/1990 the Community Recreation and Sport Facility Programme (CRSFP) was extended and a further AU$6 million was allocated by the federal government. Further developments under the CRSFP included the introduction of a programme aimed at youth, a campaign aimed at increasing participation levels amongst adolescent girls and the formation of the ASC's Women's Sport Unit. The targeting of minority groups, rather than a holistic approach directed towards maintaining participation across all age groups was becoming more evident with the adoption of Aussie Able, a programme directed at supporting disabled athletes to participate in sport. While this programme and the subsequent CONNECT (Creating Opportunities Nationally through Networks in Education, Classification and Training) programme were aimed at increasing participation levels amongst disabled persons, it is of note that no participation targets were set. Action was limited to the provision of information and the creation of action plans that met with national disability legislation (Australian Sports Commission, 2006a).

In 1992 the federal government introduced a new four year programme which was to follow on from Next Step. Maintaining the Momentum was to capitalise on the achievements of Next Step and to bring the funding cycle into line with the four yearly Olympic Games cycle (Australian Government, 1992). Under this strategy, seven priorities were announced: participation and volunteers; national elite programs; national sporting organisations; sports science; coaches and administration; sporting education; and drugs in sport. It was through programmes directed at youth that this strategy expressed the implicit,
rather than explicit, goal of life-long participation in sporting activity. *Maintaining the Momentum* aimed to, a) maintain children's interests in sport beyond the school years, b) encourage adults into sport and, c) to deal fully with those who have least access to sport (Australian Government, 1992: 5). While the strategy indicated that it needed to address access to sport in a complete way, it was not clear how this would be achieved or indeed which groups had least access to sporting opportunities. Along with youth, there was an emphasis on increasing participation amongst indigenous people and women. However, the rationale for targeting aborigines appears based upon social issues rather than recognition that they were a group with limited access to sporting facilities or programmes. As explained by a senior ASC official:

> our indigenous sport programme had its genesis out of the Royal Commission into deaths of aborigines in custody and was put there to stop kids getting into jail and then committing suicide (Interview: 25 September 2006).

Other initiatives included in *Maintain the Momentum* were aimed towards increasing the professionalism of clubs, providing support to masters sport, encouraging employers to provide sporting opportunities and addressing concerns regarding volunteers. The lack of clarity regarding what was meant by 'participation' was highlighted with the programmes relating to females, which were primarily aimed at youth and women in roles such as volunteering, administration and management, not in increasing the actual participation of women in sporting activities (Australian Government, 1992). Furthermore, it was not made clear how the increased levels of participation through youth programmes would translate into increased levels of adult sport participation.

The awarding of the rights to host the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney in 1993 was arguably the defining catalyst for Australian sport in the 1990s (Green & Houlihan, 2005). This was to have an immediate effect upon both the pace and direction of federal sporting policy as support for the elite sport lobby strengthened. While the twin objectives of the ASC remained, the funding and focus of the ASC shifted unquestionably towards ensuring Australia's performance at the 2000 Olympic Games would be the most successful ever
for Australia (Booth, 1995; Embrey, 1998). The establishment of the National Elite Sports Council, aimed at increasing coordination across elite focused programmes, and the apparent reluctance to demonstrate the same commitment to fostering mass participation, clearly illustrated the focus of the federal government. Increased funding was allocated through the *Olympic Athlete Programme* (OAP) to Olympic sports resulting in non-Olympic sports, often those with high participation rates being disadvantaged:

> We have a bit of a paradox in Australia as the very high participation sports are not the Olympic Games sports which is where we tend to be judged. So rowing, swimming, cycling, athletics are not the high participation sports...our strong service and support go to those Olympic sports where there is not a huge participation base, so it is an irony (Interview: A senior ASC official 26 September 2006).

Furthermore, the increased investment in elite sport by the federal government also impacted upon the extent to which NGBs were able to maintain their autonomy. The significant increase in resourcing meant that NGBs were now required to achieve the (elite) sporting goals of the ASC; through the control of resources the ASC was able to shape more directly the actions of NGBs. As a senior ASC official explained, 'whilst sport runs sport for that level of investment it's got to be run entirely to our satisfaction' (Interview: 25 September 2006). For non-Olympic, smaller or less successful Olympic sports, the ability to influence or challenge the ASC appears to have become more difficult with the awarding of the 2000 Sydney Olympics Games. The extent of the ASC's influence was captured by a senior NGB official who explained that:

> You've got more bargaining power if you achieve, if you are not achieving you don't have a lot of say. I do know some small sports get very, very intimidated by people at the Commission and they feel like they are being taken over (Interview: 27 September 2006).

Another blow for grassroots sport was the decision to discontinue the funding for the Community, Recreation and Sport Facility Programme beyond 1995 (Stewart et al., 2004). This 'squeezing out' of funding for community sports
signalled the commitment to increasing levels of sport participation, as set out in recent policy documents, was not supported by the allocation of resources. ASC annual reports show that in 1996/97 and 1997/98 the proportion of the budgets directed towards participation were 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. Supporting the now constant inequality in funding by the federal government was the Commonwealth Review of Sport and Recreation in Australia which indicated that in 1999/2000 78 per cent of the operational budget was allocated to excellence in sport while 10 per cent was allocated to improving participation levels (Oakley, 1999).

During the 1990s, the federal government's approach towards the funding of recreational sporting facilities indicated the desire to adopt a hands-off approach. In 1997 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts completed an inquiry into the funding of community sporting and recreational facilities, Re-thinking the funding of sporting and recreational facilities: A sporting chance. The Inquiry found that there was universal support for the Commonwealth to re-enter the field of funding for sporting and recreational facilities and that there was large unmet demand for these facilities (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts, 1997). While it was argued that government funding of sporting facilities contributed to the improvement of sport performance, enabled greater participation in competitive sport and fostered community bonds, the federal government argued that facilities were not 'a prerequisite for mass participation in physical activity' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts, 1997:28 in Stewart et al, 2004: 79). Furthermore, the federal government argued that the funding of sporting and recreational facilities is a state, territory and local government responsibility and while the government committed funds to increase efficient use of present facilities, it would not commit to fund facilities in any community (John, 2006). By adopting an approach where the provision of sporting facilities was not considered a pre-requisite for increasing participation levels, the Australian government provided a stark contrast to Finnish sport policy where the provision of community facilities was considered a key factor for increasing participation. In response to the demand for
increased involvement in the provision of sporting and recreational facilities, the federal government of Australia responded by stating that:

"even in cases where there may be difficulties...the funding of sporting and recreational facilities is at base a state, territory and local government responsibility (Government of the Commonwealth of Australia., 1997: 5)."

Clarity over who should provide community sporting facilities remains unclear, however. As recently as September 2007, criticism was directed at the federal government for its negligence with regard to investment in the sport infrastructure. The criticism, directed at the government by eleven NGBs, the Australian Local Government Association and CAS, claimed that the Howard government had ‘failed to provide sporting clubs with any criteria, process or program to apply for this type of funding’ (Lundy, 2007). This signals not only diverging views as to where responsibility for the provision of sporting facilities should lie within the Australian sporting context but also highlights the ambiguity as to the role of facilities in providing opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.

The increasing emphasis upon youth (defined as youth aged 5 to 19 years) with regard to increasing sport participation levels was strengthened with the development of the National Junior Sport Policy in 1994. In part, the strategy was a reaction to increasing concerns regarding the dramatic reduction of physical education throughout schools in Australia; it also sought to address an apparent lack of political commitment to problems associated with the provision of quality physical education (Anonymous, 1994). While it emphasised the customisation of sporting activities for youth, the National Junior Sport Policy also explicitly stated the goal of achieving lifelong participation in sport when it stated that providing ‘the best possible sporting experiences for all young Australians so as to encourage lifelong participation in sport’ (Australian Sports Commission, 1994: 5) was a key objective. However, consistent with previous years what was unclear was how this would be measured or evaluated and no post-school or adult focused programmes were developed, which would encourage and maintain sport participation.
Having developed a range of programmes aimed at increasing participation, primarily amongst targeted groups, a review conducted in 1995 by the ASC recommended that participation programmes and initiatives should be integrated into a single participation strategy. As part of the Review it was recommended that the ASC should adopt a more consultancy/service based approach rather than a programme focus, towards increasing participation. This amalgamation bought together a range of programmes including *Aussie Sport*, *Women and Sport*, the *Volunteer Involvement Programme*, *Mature Aged Sport*, *Sport for People with Disabilities*, *National Safety Strategy* and the *ISP* (Australian Sports Commission, 1996). Responsibility for the participation came under the newly formed Sport Development and Policy Group, which was entrusted with developing sport programmes, policies and resources aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activities (Sotiriadou et al., 2006). This structural change provided the opportunity for the ASC to adopt a coordinated approach with regard to achieving increased levels of participation beyond school and into adulthood, however, as will be discussed in the following section, this was not to occur.

In 1996 the newly elected Liberal/National coalition government under the leadership of John Howard again reinforced its support with regard to increasing levels of sport participation, this time with a cross-sectoral approach. In the coalition’s election policy, *A Winning Advantage*, it was explained that ‘by working with the Health and Education portfolios to develop the *Active Australia* programme, the Howard Government has vigorously encouraged participation in sport for all’ (Liberal/National Coalition, 1998: 10). In particular the election policy also targeted older Australians, arguing that participation in sport and recreation should not be limited by age; women in sport particularly girls in their mid-to-late teens and Aboriginal and Torres Islanders. However, as noted above, the allocation of funding did not mirror the commitment found in policy documents with only 10 per cent of the ASC’s 1999/2000 operational budget spent on outcomes related to improving participation levels in sport, compared with 78 per cent on outcomes relating to excellence in sports performance (Oakley, 1999).
As part of the new cross-sectoral approach to increasing participation, in late 1996, Active Australia: A National Participation Framework was launched; it was under the Active Australia banner that community and participation programmes were to be corralled. The vision of the Active Australia programme was to have all Australians ‘actively involved in sport, community recreation and fitness, outdoor recreation and other physical activities’ (Australian Sports Commission, 1997: 5, in Stewart et al., 2004: 77). Critical to the realisation of this programme were three goals, to:

- increase and enhance life-long participation;
- realise the social health and economic benefits of participation, and;
- develop quality infrastructure, opportunities, and services to support participation (Stewart et al., 2004).

However, Active Australia suffered from several public relation problems mainly emanating from the varying interpretations and views as to whether recreational activities should be included as part of the programme. One criticism aimed at Active Australia revolved around what was the most appropriate delivery system; should NGBs or other organisations be the key deliverers. The lack of clarity, and at times confusion, over who should deliver these programmes was reflected in the diverse views regarding the way in which participation programmes should be both developed and implemented (Oakley, 1999). This appears in stark contrast to the policies and implementation structures that have been established around elite sport where the AIS is the central deliverer of support services and programmes and NGBs are directly responsible for the success of elite athletes within their sport.

Despite the continuation of a number of programmes designed to deliver increased participation, by 1999 the ASC had formed the view that ‘Australia is facing a situation of crisis in community participation in sport and physical (Australian Sports Commission, 1999). A key focus of Active Australia included the targeting of disadvantaged groups. In 1999 the aim of Active Australia was to have 500 clubs, 100 local governments and 1000 schools accredited as Active Australia providers by June 2000, with an overall aim of increasing the rate of adult participation community sport by 10 per cent by 2004 (Australian
Sports Commission, 1999). However, while the goal of achieving accredited providers for the *Active Australia Programme* was achieved (see, Australian Sports Commission, 2002a), the goal of increasing adult participation by 10 per cent by 2004 was not referred to again by policy documents, making it difficult to ascertain the level of success. Yet again, however, the ASC reiterated that the policy objective to improve participation in sport was ‘in no way subservient to the Commission’s other major objective, to develop elite sport,’ however, in conflict with this was recognition that ‘the Commission’s own financial contribution has left its participation programs and strategies relatively under-funded’ (Australian Sports Commission, 1999).

Not only did *Active Australia* include a range of different government departments in achieving its goals but at the core was an acknowledgement that participation included some form of physical activity, not only sport, and would make Australians both healthier and happier (Stewart et al., 2004). It was through a three tiered network of schools, local government and approved providers that *Active Australia* aimed to maximise both access to and equity of sporting opportunities. The importance of local government in delivering this programme was considered key in facilitating the link between schools, clubs and organisations. This extended the responsibility for increasing participation outside the ASC to a wider group of agencies and organisations and signalled a change in emphasis in regard to addressing participation levels. However, this tentative move by the ASC into the wider area of physical activity and health was short-lived as the decision to restructure the ASC in 2002 resulted in the *Active Australia* programme being replaced by Aussport. The introduction of *Backing Australians Sporting Ability* (BASA) in 2001 signalled a shift away from physical, social and health outcomes towards organised sport participation. As stated by the Prime Minister, John Howard and the Minister for Sport and Tourism, Jackie Kelly, by backing Australia’s sporting ability, ‘the federal government is determined to maintain our level of sporting success’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001: 1). The shift towards organised sport participation was in part a response to the difficulties of measuring outcomes and justifying budget expenditure. The BASA policy and the TSPG programme reflected a ‘strategic move towards the implementation of activities and
programmes that can be evaluated more easily and effectively' (Stewart et al., 2004: 111).

In 1999 a review of Australian sport policy entitled *Shaping Up: A review of Commonwealth involvement in sport* was produced by the Sport 2000 Task Force. The Task Force report recommended major changes to government’s sporting priorities with more resources allocated to grassroots sport and achieving increased levels of participation (Oakley, 1999). Despite calls for increased investment in grassroots sport and greater national leadership in this area BASA appears to have largely ignored the Task Force 2000 recommendations. More importantly the Task Force identified that strategies over the last 25 years had failed to increase participation in organised sport (1999: 73), signalling that the programmes of the ASC had failed to address one of its key objectives. The importance of NGBs in achieving the goal of increased participation remained and was reinforced in *The Australian Sports Commission - Beyond 2000* report, where NGBs were identified as the ‘centrepiece’ of both growth in participation and the elite sport delivery system. A strong focus upon the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games by the government, and subsequently NGBs, led to any activity directed towards increasing participation or sport development being marginalised.

In summary, the awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney reinforced and gave further impetus to elite sport as an area of policy focus while the domination of the ASC in determining the direction of (elite sport) and the increasing reliance by NGBs upon ASC funding continued. The rationale that success at the elite level will attract young people to sport remains the cornerstone of current policy. However, it appears that a ‘far more subtle and methodical approach to increase grassroots participation organised sport’ is still required (Stewart et al., 2004: 191). Calls for community sport and declining levels of sport participation to be allocated increased resourcing, have remained largely ignored, however, the establishment of the AAAs programme may signal a shift in levels of resourcing, largely on the back of health concerns. A shift towards providing a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach was evident with the implementation of the *Active Australia*
programme, however, this was relatively short-lived. While life-long participation was often cited as a key goal of youth programmes this appeared as more of an aspiration than an explicit outcome of federal government policy, as no long-term strategy was developed to ensure that the sporting or physical activity habits developed by youth participation programmes were continued and developed post-school.

The ASC’s institutional inability to deal with participation issues and objectives emerged during the 1990s. There was a shift in emphasis from achieving increased participation in sport, physical activity and recreation to achieving increased participation in organised sport. Uncertainty surrounding the objective of increasing participation was also reflected in the ambiguity surrounding: which were the most appropriate organisations for delivering participation programmes; varying interpretations of what activities should be included; and, how programmes should be implemented and developed. The absence of a strong advocate for mass-sport is also evident with calls for increased focus and resourcing being largely ignored by the federal government and the increasing strength of elite sport becoming more apparent thorough both the accepted rhetoric of trickle down and the increasing disparity in funding. It is here that the ACF provides useful commentary as to the existence of a SfA coalition. While there appears some agreement as to the ‘deep core’ beliefs, i.e. that participation in sport is beneficial at the ‘policy core’ level, there appears little agreement regarding the ‘normative commitment and causal perception’ in the policy domain (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994). In other words the lack of agreement ‘concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the sub-system’ (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 133), would indicate that the SfA coalition is relatively weak.

Finally, the ASC participation programmes became increasingly directed towards specific groups, in-particular youth, women, Indigenous Australians and the disabled. However, the focus upon these groups was at times characterised by concern over social policy outcomes rather than the need to address low levels of participation, supporting the above contention that there
was a lack of consensus with regard to policy core policy preferences within the SfA coalition (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

Australian sport policy: 2000 to 2007 (June)

Australia entered the new millennium with the prospect of hosting a home Olympics but also amidst calls for the Australian government to commit more fully to its stated goal of increasing levels of sport participation. However, the somewhat critical recommendations of the 2000 Taskforce Report were partially diluted by the success of the Sydney Olympic Games; with Australia achieving its highest ever medal count at an Olympic Games it was demonstrated that increased funding could impact upon elite performance and, in turn, returning Australia to its rightful place on the international sporting stage.

The Commonwealth government introduced a new ten year vision for sport in 2001 with the purpose of maintaining Australia’s level of sporting success (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). Published following the recent completion of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, the strategy was timed so that consideration could be taken of the ‘strengths at the Sydney Games’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). Entitled Backing Australia’s Sporting Ability: A More Active Australia (BASA), the new strategy yet again articulated the federal government’s intention to increase the number of Australians participating at grassroots level, as stated in BASA ‘the Government believes that we should convert Australians’ passion for sport into greater numbers of people participating at the grassroots level’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001: 6). The concept of all Australians having access to, and being more active, was evident as the government wanted to ‘ensure that all Australians regardless of culture, gender, race, capability, or age have an opportunity to be part of a More Active Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001: 7, original emphasis added). However, while it was stated that the new centre piece of BASA was ‘a new strategy to increase community participation’, levels of resourcing indicated that the commitment was more rhetorical than actual. Federal government funding for the four year period from 2001/02 consisted of
approximately $82 million for the *More Active Australia* programme while for the same period elite sport was allocated approximately $408 million (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). What is unclear is why the federal government continued to espouse increased levels of community participation as a key focus. The domination of the ‘trickle down effect’ remained a strong rationale for increasing participation levels in sporting activities, as argued in BASA, ‘It is true that more players means more winners but there are also other benefits of being involved in sport’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). It, therefore, appeared that while the motivation for increased participation was briefly articulated as health and social cohesion the more dominant motivation remained the production of elite athletes.

Four goals were identified in BASA, a) continued achievement in high performance sport, b) greater grassroots participation in sport for all ages, c); excellence in sport management, and d) continuing to step up the fight against drugs in sport. BASA refocused the *Active Australia* programme towards participation in organised sport, rather than participation in unstructured physical activity. It was expected that the *Active Australia* programme would achieve:

- a significant increase in the number of people participating in sport;
- a marked increase in youth participation in organised sport, and
- boosted active membership of sporting organisations and local sporting clubs (Commonwealth Government, 2001).

BASA outlined ten actions, which it identified would help achieve increased participation. While three focused upon increasing youth participation, the remaining seven were focused upon: increased resources for indigenous programmes; a requirement for NGBs to achieve greater rates of participation as a condition of funding; incentives for sporting organisations to create links with schools clubs, business community and community groups; the creation of more effective pathways from participation in sport into high performance; the monitoring of participation trends; access to the benefits of a *More Active Australia* for Australians in rural and regional cities; the building of partnerships between government, local and national sporting organisations, business,
schools and local government to create and expand sporting competitions and opportunities for grassroots sport; and ensuring all Australians have an opportunity to be part of a More Active Australia. BASA continued to focus on target groups with regard to increasing participation while also working towards the building of relationships and partnerships between different sectors in the community and the different tiers of government. However, not all ten actions set out in BASA have met with success.

Consistent with previous years, the level of resourcing directed at increasing sport participation levels indicated that commitment was more rhetorical than actual. While the lack of resourcing allocated to increasing levels of participation indicated a lack of commitment, so did the realignment of the ASC’s key goals. In 2000/2001 the decision was made to streamline the ASC’s outcomes from three to two. While the outcome of ‘achieving sport excellence’ remained, the objective of ‘an effective national sports infrastructure’ and ‘improved participation in sports activities by Australians’ were combined. This change appears to have again weakened the position or perception of increasing sport participation levels in two ways. Firstly, it diluted the focus on sport participation as a discrete area of the ASC, and secondly it became increasingly difficult to ascertain the exact funding levels relating to increasing participation as they are intertwined with developing an effective sports infrastructure. Furthermore, the renaming of the Sport Policy Group in 2003 to the Sport Performance and Development Group was designed to ‘better reflect its contribution to the ASC’s two key outcomes and to more accurately describe its role’ (Australian Sports Commission, 2003a: 11). Given the growing emphasis upon supporting elite sport, this latter change perhaps also indicated the continual degradation of sport participation as a serious area of sport policy. This is further supported by a senior SPDG official who explained:

we are unashamedly about high performance because in terms of supporting a lot of our national teams there is no-one else who can provide that support with the quality of the service of the level of the funding (Interview: 25 September 2006).
As highlighted earlier, the vision of *Active Australia* provided a broader, more holistic and coordinated approach to increasing participation levels with the aim of integrating, sport recreation, fitness and health strategies across different sectors of the Commonwealth government. However, this approach was relatively brief as the *Active Australia Programme* was stopped in 2002. Seen as a further retrenching of the federal government towards their commitment to grassroots sport, the then shadow Minster of *Sport* argued, ‘the government is replacing Active Australia with a new broader division called *Aussport* reflecting their all consuming interest in elite sport – at the expense of encouraging all Australians to be physically active’ (Lundy, 2002).

The focus on youth participation was reinforced by the Commonwealth government, which claimed that *BASA* would ensure that greater numbers of Australians, particularly young people, would be participating in sport (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001: 12). The importance of youth was reiterated in the 2004 Howard Government election policy, *Building Australian Communities through Sport*, where a greater number of Australians would be ‘encouraged to participate in sport, particularly young people’ (Liberal Party & The Nationals, 2004).

In 2002, the *Targeted Sports Participation Growth Programme* (TSPG) was established with the intention of increasing sport participation (various sports were entered into the programmes on a staggered basis over three years), primarily amongst youth although adults were also included. The Programme was delivered through NGBs (by 2006 a total of 23 sports had been involved in the TSPG programme) and was to have four key features. First, it would establish relationships between government, business and sport. Second, only sports that were established and already had an extensive club infrastructure were to take part, with the aim of expanding active membership of clubs and associations. Third, clubs were expected to establish a sound business plan which would set out and support their TSPG initiative, which included support at national, regional and local level. Finally, and perhaps most importantly with regard to achieving increased levels of sport participation, the ASC was to work in partnership with the NGBs to establish sustainable growth (Australian Sports
While it was reported that the TSPG achieved its goal of increasing membership (Australian Sports Commission, 2006a) the Programme highlighted the challenges of adopting such a programme. Difficulties in implementing a national programme within a federated structure emerged particularly in relation to NGBs as for the first time they [NGBs] started to think about what actually happens down there at the clubs. And that is the difficulty we have, to try and do it top down through the states [and while] some sports may have got all the states to go really well some sports might not get any and it would be a dismal failure' (Interview: A senior ASC official, 25 September 2006).

The impact of the federated structure and the impact on delivering consistent programmes was further highlighted by a senior NGB official:

sport is being delivered in a very fragmented way. We don't have national programmes so Victoria might run their Tennis in schools programme and so will NSW and all these programmes could be completely different with a different focus (Interview: 28 September 2006).

Along with difficulties in implementing a national programme, the tension between achieving elite performance targets and increased levels of participation surfaced. In discussion with a senior NGB official it was explained that:

there was quite a bit of money on offer to take it [TSPG] on and a lot of [sporting] organisations said yeah we will do this. But it gets away from our core business. Our core business is high performance athletics' (Interview: 28 September 2006).

Furthermore, questions were raised as to the motivation behind the establishment of the TSPG. Given the goal of achieving a sustainable approach to participation the relativity short duration of the programme limited the ability to bed-in behaviour change; by 2006 only six sports remained in the
TSPG programme (Australian Sports Commission, 2006a). Difficulties in implementing the TSGP were discussed by a senior NGB official:

_I really need to be careful here as I actually think it [TSPG] was a disaster. But it can be a well-meaning disaster and I think this was very well meaning and probably again I need to be reasonably careful but I think it was driven by the need for politicians to get a result rather than for a long term sustainable programme to be developed. Having said that this sport got a lot of money from the Sports Commission to run a programme and it, the programme failed_ (Interview: 27 September 2006).

Despite the focus on elite sport, the opportunity to address participation levels was highlighted by NGBs as an area which they would like to tackle. However, the impact of meeting elite sport development targets appears to have been detrimental to grassroots sport, creating a tension between what NGBs ‘have to do’ and what at times they would ‘like to do’ in regard to participation. Given the significant level of funding to NGBs to achieve elite sport objectives it is perhaps not surprising that little attention or resourcing is allocated to grassroots sport:

_so I mean we are so focused on doing the things we have to do [elite sport] so doing the things we would like to do becomes very very difficult_ (Interview: A senior NGB official 27 September 2007).

This raises questions as to the policy core beliefs of NGBs. As argued by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) there is a need to consider the relative influence of material self-interest with regard to policy core beliefs. While it may appear through the actions of NGBs that there is a dominant policy core belief to support elite sport development ahead of grassroots sport, the above quotation may indicate otherwise. NGBs that are heavily reliant upon ASC funding may actually wish to prioritise grassroots sport, but for the sake of material self interest and continued funding (and often financial survival), they agree to focus on elite sport development, regardless of whether they agree with this or not. This somewhat pragmatic approach to managing sporting
objectives may also reflect the wider neo-liberal ideology prevalent in Australia, (see Lavelle, 2005) and the focus upon economic efficiency and survival.

The need to focus upon elite rather than grassroots sport is also evident through the setting of targets. While there were clear targets set by the ASC with regard to elite sport, the same cannot be said for the goal of increasing participation levels. As a senior ASC official explained when asked if there were performance targets for NGBs to meet with regard to increasing participation:

not really, they are not so much targets its more what they will be required [to do], they have targets for high performance, but targets [for participation] are more activities based and more against what they have actually done (Interview: 25 September 2006).

The goal of increasing grassroots participation remained within federal government policy documents, where the links between the elite and grassroots sport continued to be proclaimed as ‘success in high performance sport must be underpinned by a strong community sport participation base’ (Australian Sports Commission, 2006c) However, the links between these two areas appears more conceptual than actual as a senior ASC official explained:

I do not think there is a very clear link in terms of policy from our perspective between grassroots [and elite sport], they co-exist and there is an assumption they both need each other but I think we would be struggling to formalise or articulate that in a sort of policy framework (Interview: 26 September 2006).

While both policy documents and the actions of the ASC focused upon youth with regard to participation, the neo-liberal context of Australia appears to have impacted upon the way in which adult sport participation is viewed. In response to growing concerns with regard to increasing obesity levels and declining standards of fitness amongst children, the majority of programmes have been directed at youth. However, responsibility for health and fitness amongst adults (with the exception of the target groups) remains the responsibility of the individual.
There is a perception that says that grassroots sports should be largely self-funded or user pays because they can. And whether you philosophically agree with it or not that’s the choice people make, but the reality is we cannot achieve high performance outcomes without significant financial resources (Interview: A senior NGB official 26 September 2006).

This is despite the recognition that Australians are moving away from organised activities as noted in the 2002-2005 Strategic Plan.

In 2005 the ASC continued to promulgate the aim of working with sporting organisations to promote participation for all Australians. A key role was to ‘provide the opportunity for people of all ages and skills to participants in sport, and that athletes, coaches, officials and administrators are given the chance to progress from the grassroots through to the elite level’ (Australian Sports Commission, 2005b: 5). In developing sport for the whole community the ASC continued to focus on the four target groups, which had previously been identified, youth, women, Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities. However, rather than addressing active participation the focus with regard to women was directed towards getting more women back into administrative or coaching roles:

women are needed by sport, sport needs more women. You have over 50 per cent of the population yet they are grossly under-represented in a number of key areas, not in participation, but where are the female coaches? Where are the females on boards? Where are the women officials? (Interview: A senior ASC official, 25 September 2006).

The programme targeted at disabled athletes, Creating Opportunities Nationally through Networks in Education, Classification and Training (CONNECT) provides funds and resources to NGBs to assist them in creating opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport. However, the funding allocated to Project CONNECT and to the Women in Sport programme indicates that the priority given to these projects is relatively low. The funding allocated to NGBs by the federal government to increase participation generally
and for targeted groups, in particular (e.g. women, indigenous people and people with disabilities), made up a very small part of recent overall budget allocations. Furthermore, overall funding to NGBs for these groups decreased between 2005/2006 and 2007/2008 (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 NGB grants and AIS allocations ($AUD)

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Sport</td>
<td>1,165,000</td>
<td>355,000</td>
<td>205,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONNECT</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women and Sport Better Management Framework</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Leadership Grants for Women</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total - sport participation</td>
<td>2,325,000</td>
<td>1,274,925</td>
<td>1,300,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS Allocation</td>
<td>17,808,000</td>
<td>20,386,283</td>
<td>21,216,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Performance</td>
<td>48,303,000</td>
<td>45,122,400</td>
<td>52,361,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Talent Identification</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>2,850,000</td>
<td>3,095,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total - elite sport funding</td>
<td>66,111,000</td>
<td>68,358,483</td>
<td>76,672,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total NGB funding to AIS and NGBs</td>
<td>69,468,500</td>
<td>79,932,660</td>
<td>81,952,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In 2005/2006, the overall funding allocated to NGBs to increase participation was approximately 3 per cent of the overall NGB allocation and, in 2007-2008, this decreased to 1.6 per cent. In the corresponding period, funding allocated for elite sport was approximately 95 per cent and 93 per cent respectively of the total NGB grant allocation. The relatively low levels of resourcing would indicate that despite the government claiming to support these targeted groups (Australian Sports Commission, 2002a; Liberal Party & The Nationals, 2004) that the attention given to addressing both participation and in turn the targeted groups of women and indigenous people was at best, negligible.
With the establishment of the *Active After-schools Communities* (AAsC) programme in 2005 the focus on addressing youth participation continued, however, no programme was developed that directly targeted post-school adults outside the targeted groups. Again the concept of creating opportunities for ongoing participation was a key aspect of the programme (Australian Sports Commission, 2007b). The increasing significance of the programme is evident with the rapid increase in funding. In 2004/2005 the AAsC programme was allocated 8 per cent of the ASC, by 2005/2006 this had increased to 16 per cent. In 2006/2007, AU$67 million was allocated to programmes that offered improved participation in sport, significantly AUD$34.2 million was allocated to the *Active After-schools Programme*, reinforcing the growing commitment to addressing increased participation levels through youth (Kemp, 2006). At the same time, however, the federal government also announced a funding boost to elite sport of AU$136.1 million.

What has also emerged from the establishment of the AAsC Programme is the heightened concern regarding increasing levels of obesity and declining standard of fitness amongst youth – these health concerns have now become key motivators for participation programmes. This perhaps signals a shift away from the 'trickle down' philosophy towards an increasing desire to increase participation levels to achieve health related goals, in particular, high levels of obesity and declining motor skill development (Australian Sports Commission, 2006c). Growing concern with regard to levels of inactivity in children was expressed in the ASC 2006-2009 Strategic Plan where 'of particular concern are the relatively low levels of physical activity among children and the resultant health and physical development issues such as increasing childhood obesity and declining motor skill development' (Australian Sports Commission, 2006c: 3). With an estimated 22 per cent of Australian children between the ages of 2 and 17 years being classified as obese or overweight a key aim of the AAsC Programme is directed towards addressing this issue (Liberal Party & The Nationals, 2004). No reference was made, however, as to how levels of obesity in the post-school or adult group would be addressed. In 2001, 58 per cent of the male adult population and 42 per cent of the female adult population were overweight or obese. Furthermore, in 2000 over half (54 per cent) of
Australians were insufficiently active to achieve any health benefits (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). While NGBs and staff at the ASC continue to express the view that increasing participation will assist in providing pathways to the podium, recognition of the impact of declining health standards upon the rationale for increasing sport participation emerged as an increasingly important catalyst for participation programmes:

We have been able to generate more funding for grassroots [sport] but largely on the back of issues such as obesity and physical activity not on the basis that it will support pathways for a better high performance (Interview: A senior ASC official, 26 September 2006).

Despite this, the focus of federal government involvement in sport remains at the elite level. At the state level however, there is a much stronger focus upon providing support for community and grassroots sport (Oakley, 1999; Stewart et al., 2004). In the state of Victoria this is demonstrated through the role of sport in building state and community pride where ‘participation in sport and recreations is seen as an important indicator of peoples involvement in their community’ (Department for Victorian Communities, 2005: 6). In part, this is reflected by the placement of Sport and Recreation Victoria within the Department for Victorian Communities, previously, Sport and Recreation was located under the Department of Tourism, suggesting a shift away from an economic focus to one associated with social policy relates outcomes. The interests and motivations behind addressing increased sport participation appear to differ significantly between state and federal level. As highlighted by a senior Victorian official, the federal government has:

very little to do with community sport, it's all elite level, high profile issues rather than all grassroots, issues around sport and recreation. And they tend to be sport second and third, whereas we're sport, recreation, physical activity and across all groups (Interview: 28 September 2006).

Likewise at local government level, there appears to be some confusion regarding the potential outcomes of sport policy and the (potential) role of local government, despite the significant role that local government plays in
providing both facilities and opportunities for sporting activity. This has in part has been influenced by a move away from the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s towards a more socially orientated focus of building communities while also providing communities with a voice in decision making at the local level. The move towards a more socially orientated approach along with increased community input into the policy making process is a relatively new phenomenon. As a senior local government official explained:

[Australia has come through] an extraordinarily economic rationalised period, where all sorts of things were closed and competitive, everything. And this is like putting the community back together so that the community has a voice. And I don't know, probably the last 8 years of this have been changing or even less than that (Interview: 29 September 2006).

Structural difficulties combined with the challenges of local government politics make discerning a clear sport policy focus challenging. The relative recency of sport and recreation as a policy area combined with the power of traditional sports (such as Australian rules, rugby and hockey) operating at local level highlights the difficulty in creating policy (change) at local government level. As explained by a local government official ‘there is a lot of money that goes into a handful of [traditional] sports and a lot of other sports struggle’ (Interview: 29 September 2006). In explanation it was highlighted that this was due to the political processes that operate at local government level and the ability of established groups to influence the agenda setting and decision making process:

those groups [traditional sports] probably know how to play the game; the political game. Whereas young groups that are trying to start out probably don't know that you can lobby a councillor to get things on the agenda. And those groups have just as much importance or role to play when it comes to healthier living and a healthy community (Interview: A senior Local government official, 29 September 2006).

The influence of established groups on policy-making is supported by a study conducted by the South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport, which
found that the majority of Australian Councils surveyed were strongly influenced by bids from elected members and the community in making decisions about recreation and sport provision (South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport, 1998). The ability of groups to influence decision making illuminates aspects of Lukes second face of power, where power is exercised through the control or manipulation of agenda setting. In other words where a group or individual ‘have the effect of preventing currently observable grievance (overt or covert) from being issues within the political process’ (Lukes, 2005: 39).

This, at times, reactive approach to sport policy at local government level was also reflected in Boroondara where local government officials explained that there was a focus on reacting to issues rather than developing and implementing a structured sport and recreation policy. As discussed by a senior official, this has caused problems with regard to developing a consistent approach:

I don’t see us as having really sound, structured policy. And I think this is where we are going to start changing, because each time a question comes up about what we will or won’t build, or what we will or won’t provide as a service or who we will or won’t help, we don’t have the [policy] to answer some of those complex questions with this particular approach (Interview: A senior local government official 29 September 2006).

This raises issues of a ‘policy muddle’ with at times conflicting or ambiguous policies between different levels of government and with different tiers of government.

In summary, since 2000 the emphasis placed upon achieving increased levels of participation has consistently remained secondary to that of achieving elite sporting success in Australia. The dominance of the ASC within the sport policy subsystem has strengthened the requirements (by the ASC) to achieve elite sporting success and consequently continued to impact negatively upon both
the desire and ability of NGBs to develop grassroots sport within their respective sports.

The diverging interests and commitment of federal, state and local government with regard to addressing sport participation levels have become more apparent with state and local government becoming increasingly significant in achieving the ASC's goal of increased levels of sporting and physical activity. At the federal level the focus has remained upon achieving elite sporting success despite calls for a more equitable distribution of resources between the elite and grassroots sport. A lack of resourcing combined with a lack of clear measurable targets for NGBs in relation to increasing levels of participation has meant that the key partners of the ASC goal of increasing participation have left the goal of increasing participation as a 'nice to do' rather than an imperative.

There is little evidence of a coordinated or holistic approach by the ASC with regard to achieving adult life-long participation in sport. While difficulties in implementing national programmes within a federated structure have become increasingly apparent for both governmental and non-governmental sporting organisations, there has been no coordinated or holistic approach adopted with regard to increasing overall participation levels amongst all Australians. What has emerged is a 'pepper pot' approach to a range of programmes aimed primarily at four target groups, youth, women, Indigenous Australians and disabled people.

Conclusions to chapter

The domination of elite sport as an area of policy focus since the early 1980s has resulted in relatively high levels of stability and continuity with regard to Australian sport policy. However, the ASC's second(ary) goal of increasing levels of sport participation has remained a relatively marginalised area of policy focus despite a number of calls for funding levels to increase and a more comprehensive approach to be adopted. What is also evident is that while the concept of adult life-long participation in sport has been implicit (and sometimes explicit) in a number of youth related programmes, there is no
coherent approach towards increasing or maintaining adult participation in sport. Over the last 35 years three key themes have emerged in relation to the lack of policy development in this area.

The first theme relates to the difficulty of implementing national programmes within a federated structure. Within the Australian governmental system the different levels of government (federal, state and local government) appear to have adopted diverse and at times opposing views with regard to increasing levels of physical activity and sport. Amongst local government officials interviewed it was apparent that sport policy, especially in relation to the priorities of mass participation, remains a relatively new area and one that is in the embryonic stages of development. For the Victorian state government sport participation is very much linked to the development of communities, again reflecting the salience of sport to achieve diverse goals. The Victorian government’s focus on using sport to build communities contrasts with that of the federal government, where increasing levels of sport participation is focused upon addressing increasing obesity levels, declining motor skills amongst youth and the building an athlete base from which elite athletes will emerge. The contrasting goals of state and federal government are further exacerbated by the, at times, ambiguous relationships between the different tiers of government. The relatively low level of resourcing allocated by the federal government towards grassroots sport in comparison with state and local government, has meant that state and local government have been focused upon their own priorities rather than those of the federal government.

The second them is the ‘policy muddle’ that has emerged in relation to sport policy related to increasing grassroots participation in sport. It is unclear whether the lack a clear and coherent framework that addressed increasing levels of sport participation is a cause or an outcome of the complex and, at times, ambiguous nature of policy relating to participation levels. In contrast to elite sport there appears to be little consensus as to why participation levels should be increased and where responsibility should rest for particular areas. While there is agreement that sport participation levels should be increased there appears little consensus regarding the purpose, priority and resourcing that should be allocated to this objective while further ambiguity surrounds
implementation issues. It is here that Marsh and Rhodes' (1992) concept of policy communities, or in particular issue networks, may provide a useful lens through which to examine the Australian sport policy subsystem. It is here that the concept of a tiered policy network may be particularly instructive. Using the policy example of climate change, Bulkeley contended that a 'policy mess' can occur when the nation state is 'potentially unable to forge common interests between vertical alliances of policy communities and horizontal integration of issues networks' (1999: 730).

The third theme to emerge is the strong emphasis placed upon increasing the sport and physical activity levels of youth. The focus upon youth is evident through the Targeted Sport Growth Participation programme and the subsequent Active After-schools Community programme. Growing concerns related to the health related consequences of obesity are emerging as significant factors for the focus upon youth, however, little mention is made with regard to rising obesity levels amongst the adult population. This is somewhat surprising given that the under-lying premise for both programmes is that encouraging 'good' physical activity habits at an early age will instil behaviours that will continue into adulthood. However, the lack of research or evidence to support such a contention is conspicuous. Key programmes such as the TSGP and the AAsC programme reflect the increasing focus of the ASC in addressing this target group. Furthermore, while declining standards of motor skills and the deleterious consequences of obesity are emerging as key motivators behind the need for higher levels of participation amongst youth, the continuation of sporting participation post-school and increasing levels of obesity amongst the adult population remain largely ignored.

A further question to be raised with regard to the focus upon youth is whether NGBs are well equipped to deliver these programmes given their strong focus upon elite sport and their relatively narrow focus on traditional sporting activity. While NGBs have traditionally seen youth participation as an opportunity to facilitate talented youth into elite sporting pathways, the shift towards addressing health concerns is one that many NGBs are not well equipped to handle.
Chapter 5

Finland

Introduction

Daugbjerg (1998) highlighted that the need to explain policy networks within a broader context requires not only an understanding of the influence of institutions but also an appreciation of the broader contextual setting within which policy has emerged. In conducting a meso-level analysis of Finnish sport it is necessary to explore 'those features of the national government environment which directly impact upon the sub-central system' (Rhodes, 1988: 48) in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing and impacting upon the sport policy process.

This chapter will examine the nature of policy change in relation to adult life-long participation and in particular identify characteristics of government policy that are considered successful in contributing to increasing life-long participation in sport. The chapter has been divided into three main sections. First, there is a brief review of the social, political and sporting history of Finland. This will provide the wider context from which sport policy is examined as well as identifying key events that have impacted upon and shaped sport policy. An overview of sport participation levels in Finland in comparison with other European counties outlines the success of Finland in achieving adult life-long participation in sport. The second section provides an overview of the contemporary structure of Finnish sport including the role and responsibilities of key groups and organisations, the interactions between them, and the way in which they contribute to adult life-long participation. The final section analyses the emergence of sport policy in Finland from 1945 through to the present day across three time periods. The first period, 1945 to 1960, reviewed the post-war period when competitive/elite sport dominated Finnish sport and was used to develop national unity. The second period, 1960 to 1993, is characterised by the emergence of sport as part of social policy during the 1960s. The emergence of SFa and the growing role of sport as part of social policy dominated this period. Government intervention continued and was significant.
in the major restructure of sport in 1993. The final period reviews the development of Finnish sport policy after the major restructure of Finnish sport until 2006. It is from this review that three themes have emerged in Finnish sport, the cohesiveness of the inter-organisational relationships, the increasing professionalisation of sporting organisations and the widening conceptualisation and use of sport in policy.

As this study involves an examination of three different sport policy foci by examining Australia, New Zealand and Finland, it is necessary to clarify the use of certain terms to ensure a common and consistent understanding, and where necessary identify the vagaries of dealing with an area such as Sport for All (SFA). Within this research the terms ‘top-level’ sport and ‘elite’ sport have been used interchangeably and carry a similar meaning that is, performance at a national or international level. The term SfA, poses a rather more complex issue as highlighted in the Introduction. In Finland the term that is used in conjunction with SfA is ‘liikunta’, which translates as movement or physical activity and encompasses abroad range of competitive, recreational, organised and unorganised activities (Heikkala & Koski, 1999). SfA encompasses all physical activity that is conducive to good functional capacity and health and, therefore, extends beyond sport to include a much broader range of activities. For the purpose of this chapter where the term physical activity has been used, it is also considered to incorporate sport. This highlights the difficulty in attempting to disentangle or deconstruct the cause and effect of various policies upon adult life-long participation in sport, not only in Finland but also in Australia and New Zealand.

**Significant historical events that have shaped the development of sport in Finland**

The geography and climate of Finland have played key roles in both its political, social and sporting history. Due to its geographic location, Finland has long winters with heavy snowfalls in many parts of the country, resulting in winter sports having a strong following both as competitive and recreational activities. Finland is a country with a relatively large land-mass, covering 338,145 square km, of which 10 per cent is water and 68 per cent is forests,
and a relatively small population of about 5.2 million (Statistics Finland, 2005b). The main Finnish sports reflect the strong affinity which Finnish people have with the outdoors, with running, swimming, boating, equestrianism and winter sports all having a dedicated following (Thomson & Fairweather, 1999).

While this research is focused at the meso-level it is necessary to consider the wider historical context in which sport policy has emerged in an effort to integrate both macro- and meso-level analysis. It is not possible, nor intended to provide a detailed account of Finnish history but rather the aim is to provide a brief overview of several major events and factors that have shaped Finnish politics and, which in turn, will provide some insight into the distribution of power amongst different groups and individuals in the development of sport policy. Three key political events and factors are highlighted, a) the 1917 civil war b) Finland’s geo-political position as the east-west frontier, and c) the economic recession of the 1990s.

The first event to be discussed is the Finnish civil war which impacted significantly upon Finnish society and in turn the development of sport policy. Finland became a grand duchy of the Soviet Union Empire in 1809, having been part of the Swedish Empire since the 13th century. With the imminent collapse of czarism in Russia in the early part of the 20th century, politically Finland underwent a rapid period of accentuated modernisation, with the prospect of mass democracy promising much. This resulted in the mobilisation of the working class to effectively produce one of the largest social democratic parliamentary groups in Europe at that time (Arter, 1987: 8). After the fall of czarism, the Whites who were associated with the bourgeoisie declared Finnish independence in 1917, with the White Guard, associated with the bourgeoisie, declared the official troops of Finland. Several days later the Social Democrats attempted to seize power, leading to a bloody civil war. The ensuing civil war between the Reds and the Whites, ended in 1919, leaving behind a nation that was divided both geographically and socially (Arter, 1987) with the Social Democrat Party being briefly outlawed and the communist party being forbidden in Finland until after the Second World war (Jantti, Saari, & Vartiainen, 2005). The interpretation of the war by the Finnish people has been
varied, demonstrated by the terms used to describe it, the socialists called it a 'class war', the Social Democrats called it a 'civil war' and the victors called it a 'war for freedom' (Castells & Himanen, 2002). The left-right cleavage emerged as the dominant division in Finnish society and politics, and was to have a major impact on all spheres of Finnish society. Alapuro (2004) highlighted the importance of the civil war in defining political culture, for it was as a result of the civil war that Finland developed a deep-seated attitude that stressed the need to adapt to the perceived constraints and requirements from outside, primarily Russia.

Class division was crucial in the emergence of political parties and sporting organisations in Finland. After the civil war four political parties emerged that were aligned to the Whites: the National Coalition (conservatives); the Swedish Peoples Party (representing the national ethnic minority); the National Progressive Party (liberals); and the Agrarians. Two parties emerged on the left, the Social Democrats who were reformist moderates and had not been actively engaged on the Red side and a breakaway group, the Socialist Workers Party, who came under the control of the Finnish Communist Party (Arter, 1987; Raunio & Tiilikainen, 2003). Political ideology was directly reflected in the two major sport federations, the Finnish Central Sports Federation (SVUL) whose members were predominantly white collar workers with a centre right political ideology and the Workers Sport Federation (TUL) whose members were predominantly blue collar workers with socialist orientations (Heinila, 1989). This division permeated Finnish sport leading to an ideological division between the two major sport federations, who were to dominate Finnish sport until 1993, and the duplication of sporting programmes. While the effect of the left-right division has diminished considerably in Finnish sport since the collapse of the Soviet Union, remnants of the divide are still evident as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The second significant factor to impact upon Finland's political, social and economic environment is the east-west interface between Russia and Finland. Despite gaining independence in 1917, the influence of the Soviet Union on Finnish politics during the 20th century was considerable with Finland adopting
an approach of effectively trying to purge or shut out the Soviet Union, both internally and externally (Maude, 1976). Attempts by Finland to remain a neutral country were hindered by growing security problems during the 1930s as Finland realised that it could not remain a neutral state. Strong fears of internal subversion by the Soviet Union meant the equivalent of the communist party was proscribed in Finland (Maude, 1976). An impact of this tension upon sport was evident between 1932 and 1934 when state funding to the TUL was denied (Woodward, 1986).

The Winter War of 1939 and the Continuation War of 1941 highlighted the difficulty of neutrality given Finland's geo-political situation (Maude, 1976; Singleton, 1998). As a result of the armistice after WWII the communist party was legalised, resulting in a rapid increase in the size of trade unions and a greater tolerance for left wing politics (Maude, 1976). Significant war reparations and the surrender of territory to the Soviet Union was seen as the price for Finland’s continued independence (Maude, 1976). The heavy war reparations imposed upon Finland also contributed to the emergence of social corporatism with government, unions and business representatives establishing a kind of improvised incomes policy (Jantti et al., 2005), which extended to other sectors including sport. With the exception of a brief decline in the 1990s, corporatism has played a significant role in economic and social policy matters, particularly wage agreements in Finland.

After WWII Finland found itself situated on the east-west divide holding a unique geographic position during the cold war (Austin, 1996). A major change in foreign policy occurred after WWII with a major plank of Finnish foreign policy being to maintain cordial relations with the Soviet Union. While class conflict, particularly the opposition between communist and everyone else was the most salient cleavage in Finnish society, simultaneously the Soviet Union gained influence in Finland through the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. Accompanying this external policy was an internal policy aimed at integrating the communists into society and the political mainstream (Alapuro, 2004). Backed by President Kekkonen, the inclusion of the Finnish communists during the 1960s was seen as reasonable in a 'pluralist
society', with an underlying goal of trying to build national consensus. Close economic ties, formalised through the 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, and a desire to accommodate the Soviet Union set limits on the extent of cooperation between Finland and other western and Nordic countries (Raunio & Tiilikainen, 2003). The influence of the Soviet Union upon Finnish politics remained during the 1970s and into the 1980s demonstrated by the exclusion of the conservative National Coalition Party between 1966–1987. However, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union removed the communist shadow from Finnish politics, moving Finland's politicians more towards the West (Austin, 1996). The close economic relationship between Finland and Russia was to impact heavily upon Finland during the recession of 1990s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The collapse of the Soviet Union particularly affected the TUL, which was no longer able to utilise its political affiliations to access sporting facilities, coaching and other support mechanisms.

The ideological differences between left and right that were particularly salient prior to the 1970s began to diminish during the 1980s. As a result of the growing tolerance between the ideological positions, a political environment where practically any coalition could occur developed in Finland. An example of this occurred in 1995 when the largest right-wing party, the conservative National Coalition Party was in government with two left-wing parties.

The third major event to be highlighted was the economic recession of the 1990s, the deepest economic recession in the country's history. The effect of the recession was dramatic, reflected in the fact that Finland was the only OECD country in which the recession of the 1980s and 1990s was deeper than that during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unemployment climbed to 20 per cent, the value of national currency fell almost 40 per cent, GNP decreased in three years by 10 per cent and public debt grew dramatically (Ruostetsaari, 2006; Uusitalo, 2000). A number of reasons, including the break-up of the Soviet Union (a major trading partner) poorly timed liberalisation of private foreign borrowing and flaws in economic policy all contributed to the sudden recession (Keskimaki, 2003). Emergence of neo-liberalistic political arguments
emerged and budget reductions in a number of social policy areas occurred. Ruostetsaari argued that the recession acted as a catalyst for policy favoured by the economic elites to come to the fore, namely the increasing the role of markets, changing the distribution of incomes in favour of capital incomes and business profits, restoring the competitiveness of the export sector, re-evaluation of governmental duties, stopping the growth of the public sector and retarding or even stopping the growth of welfare expenditure' (2003: 3).

Yet despite moves towards neo-liberalism Nordlund (2000) maintained that Finland's welfare state had not contracted but had in fact expanded. Instead of reducing the welfare system, changes were relatively minor while expenditure on social protection in Finland as a percentage of GDP had in fact increased (Nordlund, 2000: 34). In his article examining social security developments in Finland (and other Nordic countries), Nordlund argued that his research supported Pierson (1996), who posited that there appeared to be 'powerful political forces that counteract challenges towards the welfare state' (Nordlund, 2000: 41).

While the left-right division has been a significant factor in Finnish politics, post-war Finnish governments have been characterised by broad coalitions, with cooperation between political parties resulting in a convergence of party ideology, most notably in economic policy but also in sport policy. Finland's fragmented party system is partly a consequence of the proportional representation electoral system, which has resulted in no one political party ever having complete control of the Eduskunta (Raunio & Tiilikainen, 2003). It is the bargaining and ideological moderation involved in building broad coalitions that has been a distinctive aspect of the Finnish political system. The culture of consultation and consensus building evident in the Finnish political system also operates within the sport policy sector with extensive consultation evident in many aspects of the decision and policy making process.
Finnish participation levels

A number of authors have identified Finland as being distinctive with regard to its ability to achieve and maintain high levels of sport participation (Sport England, 2002; Stahl, Rutten, Nutbeam, & Kannas, 2002). The Compass Report (1999) examined sport participation levels across seven European countries: Finland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The results of the comparative survey indicated that Finland had achieved levels of sport participation across various age groups and between gender groups that few other countries had been able to achieve (UK Sport, Sport England, & Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano, 1999). The Compass Report classified sporting activity into seven categories: competitive, organised and intensive, intensive, regular, competitive and/or organised, regular recreational, irregular, occasional and non-participant (see Appendix 5.1 for definition of categories). In comparison with the other European countries Finland has been able to achieve high levels of participation in ‘regular recreational’ and ‘intensive’ categories (see Table 5.1).

However, in two other classifications (competitive organised and regular, and competitive and/or organised) Finland’s participation levels are far more consistent with the other European countries with participation levels declining with age. This would indicate that much of Finland’s sporting activity is based outside the formal structures of clubs where organised and competitive sport frequently takes place. Supporting this contention are participation surveys conducted by Suomen Gallup, which found that that in 2001, 16 per cent of the Finnish population took part in sport and physical activity within a sports club or sport organisation while 75 per cent of Finns took part in sporting activity on their own initiative (van Bottenburg, Rijnen, & van Sterkenburg, 2005).

The high percentage of Finns participating in sport and physical activity outside the club structure has been a consistent phenomenon over a ten year period. In 1991, 1994 and 1997, the percentage of Finns participating in sport and/or physical activity in a sports club or organisation remained stable at 15 percent. Over the same time period the percentage of Finns undertaking sport and
physical activity on their own initiative was 77 per cent, 76 per cent and 82 per cent respectively (van Bottenburg et al., 2005).

Table 5.1 Sports participation across seven European countries amongst adults 16+ years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive, organised,</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24*</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular, competitive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or organised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recreational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participant;</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37**</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43**</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation in other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participant: no</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical activities*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (UK Sport et al., 1999)

Finland’s ability to maintain levels of sport participation across various age groups is in stark contrast to many other western countries. However, with regard to competitive, organised and intensive sport, Finland’s declining levels of participation with age indicate that it has not been able to alter the trend, which is prevalent in countries such as New Zealand and Australia. In spite of this, Finland has been able to maintain relatively stable rates of participation in relation to ‘competitive organised’ and ‘intensive’ sport participation (see Table 5.2). When comparing levels of non-participation with other European

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6 Finland uses 19 years+ as definition for adults and, therefore, was not able to provide information on 16-19 year age group.

* Issues with pre-coding mean that the figures for intensive groups may be inflated

** Issues with data collection are likely to lead to a serious under-estimation of sports participation in comparison with other countries

7 In the reporting of this data, the non-participant category was separated into two groups.
countries, Finland had the lowest percentage in the two non-participation groups with only 17 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men over the age of 19 years not participating at all (UK Sport et al., 1999). In comparison with the six other European countries surveyed in the Compass Report Finland had much higher rates of participation amongst the older age cohorts, which was particularly evident in the 50+ age groups (UK Sport et al., 1999).

Table 5.2 Sports participation by age group in Finland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Competitive, organised and intensive</th>
<th>Competitive organised and Intensive and (2) intensive</th>
<th>Occasional (6) or (7) non-participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (UK Sport et al., 1999).

It is interesting to note that Finland, along with Sweden, had the highest participation levels amongst adults and also has high levels of participation amongst the younger age groups. This may suggest that the foundation for achieving lifelong practice in sport is based upon establishing high levels of participation in children. The level of sport participation across different age groups, and in particular the older age groups in Finland is noteworthy, given the lack of success amongst the other European countries in increasing the levels of sport participation amongst older age groups. While the UK had relatively high levels of participation amongst the younger age groups this did

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8 Note data for 40-44 and 45-40 age group not available
9 Combines statistics for groups 1 & 2 showing percentage of population taking part in sport 120 times a year or more.
not extend into the older age cohorts. This may support the argument that contextual issues regarding Scandinavian sporting culture and/or targeted policy interventions may contribute to this result, a contention that will be explored further.

The level of sports participation by females in Finland also contradicts trends in other countries where female participation is often lower than males. Females in Finland had higher levels of participation in the 'intensive group' than males, which contrasts with the trend in the six other European countries with the exception of Sweden (see Table 5.3). In regular, recreational sport participation female participation was only slightly lower than men indicating that gender disparity with regard to participation in sport is not as great in Finland as the other European countries surveyed (with the exception of Sweden).

Table 5.3 Male/female sport participation rates in Finland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive, organised,</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular, competitive and/or organised</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular, recreational</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participant</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (UK Sport et al., 1999)

This suggests that Finland has been able to overcome barriers that have traditionally prevented women from participating in sporting activities. Again, Sweden also had high rates of female participation in the 'intensive' group, indicating that Scandinavian countries have had more success in overcoming these traditional barriers to female participation in sport.

In summary, the results of the 1999 COMPASS survey indicated that the levels of sport participation in Finland are high in comparison with other European countries' surveys particularly in relation to sporting activity outside the
structure of clubs or competition. That Finland is able to achieve high levels of participation not only amongst younger age groups, but also across the adult population indicates that they may be some way towards achieving life-long participation in sport, a goal which many countries have articulated in their sport policy, but which many have been unable to achieve.

Contemporary Structure

At the highest level the Constitution of Finland requires public authorities to guarantee and provide basic rights, while sport is not directly referred to, the requirement for local authorities to provide the pre-conditions for exercise is interpreted as a basic educational right guaranteed under the Constitution (Sjöholm, 2002). The network of legislation, which underlies Finnish sport (see Figure 5.1) not only clarifies roles and responsibilities but also signifies the importance of sport to the culture of Finland.

The adoption of the first Sports Act in 1980 formalised the division of responsibility within the sports sector where the state and municipalities take responsibility for ensuring that facilities are available for the Finnish people while sport organisations manage and deliver sporting activities (Vuori, Lankenau, & Pratt, 2004; Woodward, 1986). This relatively clear and formalised separation of roles highlights the almost corporatist type relationship that existed between state and sporting organisations. Within Finnish sport several organisations have received government-sanctioned monopoly for representing particular areas of Finnish sport. As the state considered sport was a service that was good for the community, they were prepared to provide economic support as well as providing sports organisations with an influential role in the sport policy process. In return for state support, including the provision of facilities and funding, sport federations deliver sporting activities and opportunities to the people, effectively acting as a quasi government agency.
As well as creating a statutory duty upon the state and municipalities to create the necessary preconditions for sport, the 1980 Sports Act reaffirmed support for SfA and provided increased resourcing. Subsidies were allocated to municipalities for the express purpose of providing 'sports secretaries' (local organisers) in the municipality along with funding directed toward facility development (Vuori et al., 2004). This intervention by the state in directing the way in which municipalities must allocate capital and organise their sport division raises an interesting contrast to the hands off approach, which is taken towards sporting organisations. The establishment of the Sports Act may also have reduced the risk that sporting bodies or organisations may change the focus of sports policy away from SfA towards another area such as the development of elite sport.

The second Sports Act, enacted in 1998, continued to reinforce SfA principles and further increased the emphasis on health and well-being. The purpose of the act was to:
promote recreational, competitive and top-level sports and associated civic activity, to promote the population’s well-being and health and to support children’s and young people’s growth and development through sports...to promote equality and tolerance, cultural diversity and sustainable development of the environment through sport (Liikuntalaki, 1998).

In reinforcing the principles of the preceding legislation, the 1999 Sports Act set out two underlying rationales for government investment in sport, the promotion of health and well being and the promotion of the broader social benefits of sport, both of which require continued participation in sport or physical activity to achieve their goals. Interestingly, while top-level sport is included under the main purpose of the legislation, it is only directly referred to under section 9 of the Act relating to subsidies for research and development.

The allocation of resources from the state, included in Chapter 2 of the Sports Act, further reinforced the goals of SfA by stipulating that the level of state funding to sport organisations will be influenced by the ‘social significance’ and the ‘quality and extent’ of the activities. The gradual introduction of performance criteria by the government was also evident when it was stated that ‘further provisions concerning the performance criteria for government funding may be issued’ (Liikuntalaki, 1998). It is not clear whether this relates to municipalities or sporting organisations, however, the move towards a more evaluative approach for sport, albeit gradual, was evident.

The requirement for evaluation in sport at a municipal level became more explicit with the introduction of the Provincial Act (2000), which mandated an evaluative framework for municipalities in relation to the basic services they provide, including sport. The services of the municipal sport departments are assessed annually against criteria agreed in discussion with the Ministry of Education. This legislation requires municipalities to assess their performance in certain identified areas relating to the delivery of sport policy. Crucially for sporting organisations this Act also identified sport as a basic service that has been interpreted as service that is provided to a large target group, which has
an impact on people's everyday life and the lack of which causes significant problems (Sjöholm, 2002).

The desire to use sport as part of social policy was further reinforced under the Finnish Local Government Act (1995) where it was stated that municipalities 'shall strive to promote the welfare of their residents'. While welfare is a complex concept, sport in Finland has been conceptualised as assisting in developing work capacity and improving health and well-being, which are aims of the Local Government Act (Sjöholm, 2002). Sport has, therefore, been interpreted as part of the municipal welfare policy, playing an important role in resident's welfare and requiring municipal support and resourcing.

Finland's legislative framework places sport in a strong position with regard to support at the state and municipal level, as it incorporates sport within the health and social policy framework. It also places SfA as the dominant milieu of Finnish sport. While adult life-long participation is not directly referred to, there is an implicit assumption that access to sporting activities and facilities is the right of all citizens, placing it as a component of social citizenship. Perhaps more importantly the legislative framework provides sport with formal recognition of what it can provide for society. However, while sport was identified as a basic service that municipalities are obliged to provide, a tension is emerging at the national and municipal level as to whether sport should remain a basic service. This growing debate in part reflects the tension created by the need to compete for decreasing state or municipal resources. As highlighted by a Senior Advisor, Sport and Youth Policy, the Association of Finnish Local & Regional Authorities, '[politicians] do not see it [sport] any more as an investment as they did in the 1960s and 1970s instead investment in sport is [increasingly]seen as a cost' (Interview: 3 June 2006).

**Finnish sport sector**

The purpose of this section is to provide an outline of the key organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, within Finnish sport policy. The two key governmental organisations are the Ministry of Education, within which the
Sport Division is located and local municipalities. At the centre of the non-government organisations are the sport clubs who are responsible for delivering sporting activities to the Finnish public. It is through the extensive sport club network that the majority of Finnish people begin their sport career and are involved in sport at some stage during their life. Other major non-government organisations are the national governing bodies (NGBs), the Finnish Sports Federation (SLU), the domain organisation (DOs) and the Finnish Olympic Committee (FOC), which plays the dual role of a DO and the independent National Olympic Committee (see Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2 Finnish sport sector**

Increasingly sponsorship by the private sector is becoming an important revenue stream for NGBs as is the role of private companies in providing facilities and activities for employee physical activity in the workplace. While other organisations, such as pre-school, church organisation or community groups, are also involved in delivering sporting activities, they are not directly funded by the state and, therefore, have not been included in this study.

**Governmental Organisations**

**Ministry of Education**

In contrast to both Australia and New Zealand, Finland does not have a dedicated organisation established for leading and developing sport policy. The
Ministry of Education is the government agency that is responsible for sports and physical activity policy development in Finland. There are two departments within the Ministry of Education, the Department for Cultural Policy and the Department for Education and Science Policy (see Figure 5.3). The Department for Cultural Policy is responsible for sport and physical culture within the political system, other government organisations and Finnish society in general. As a strategic unit of government, it is relatively small consisting of only 6 full-time employees. Under the Sport Act (1999), the Ministry is required to create and maintain the pre-conditions for physical activity, ensuring that all citizens have equal access to public services. The purpose of the Ministry of Education is to promote the welfare of the whole population through sport by directing, developing and coordinating the creation of pre-conditions for sport. This is achieved by securing public subsidies for sports organisations and the coordination of the building of sports facilities (Heikkala & Koski, 1999). As will be explored later in this chapter, this has established a reciprocal relationship between the state and sport organisations: for the activities that sports organisations arrange and carry out, the state provides public subsidies. It is the reciprocal arrangements between the state and sport organisation, which hold resonance with the corporatist type approach (as interest group mediation) discussed in Chapter 5 and provides an insight as to what groups are granted recognition, and power, by the state at the meso-level.

The National Sport Council acts as an advisory board to government and is a strategic unit of the sport division. The appointment, composition and term of the Council are mandated under the Sport Act (1999) with members being appointed by the Minister after each parliamentary election. A key role is to provide comment and recommendations on key sporting issues. The role of the Sports Council has changed considerably since 1993 when it was previously a key player in determining the allocation of funds to sporting organisations.

Within the Sports Council there are a further four separate divisions (see Figure 5.3). The sport policy division acts as preparatory group for the Council, raising issues and preparing recommendations for decisions to be made by the Council. Recently it has acquired a new role of evaluating changes in terms of
the Finnish physical culture. The facilities division oversees the subsidising of facilities and is responsible for developing a facility subsidy strategy. The two remaining divisions are the sports science division, which prepares recommendations as to the level of state funding for research institutes and the division for disabled physical activities. While the Council remains semi-independent from government, there exists a very close relationship between the Ministry of Education and the Sports Council partly facilitated by the Secretary General who is currently employed by the Ministry of Education. This overlapping of roles and responsibilities within the sport sector is a feature that appears to permeate the Finnish sport sector as highlighted by a senior government official who described Finnish sport 'as a club, a dense closed club' (Interview: 2 June 2005).

Figure 5.3 Sports Division: Ministry of Education

Adapted from Thomson & Fairweather (1999)
Municipalities

At the beginning of 2001, Finland was divided into five provincial areas and 448 municipalities (Raunio & Tiilikainen, 2003). The municipalities create the administrative framework for the delivery of sporting activities throughout Finland with over 30,000 sport facilities provided and about 95 per cent of them owned and managed by the municipalities (Sjöholm, 2002). The dense network of sporting facilities is perhaps somewhat surprising given the large percentage of the municipalities with a relatively small population base; more than 200 municipalities having less than 4000 inhabitants while only 6 municipalities have more than 100,000 inhabitants.

The major source of revenue for municipalities is local taxes, however, they also have the ability to apply for state assistance when building sport facilities. In 2002, the total budget spent by all municipalities on promoting physical activity was about €670 million annually, consisting of about 1.5 per cent of the total municipal budget. It is the municipalities that provide significant resourcing to the sport club infrastructure, mainly through the provision of free or reduced rate facilities (Sjöholm, 2002). Municipalities have attempted to engage sports clubs in promoting physical activity by involving them in planning and through channelling resources towards health promoting physical activity, a new area of activity for many sports clubs. It is sports clubs who are the key partners for municipalities in the delivery of sporting programmes and activities. Surprisingly, there appears to be minimal interaction between the municipalities and the NGBs, Young Finland or the Finnish Olympic Committee.

The significance of municipal investment in sport in comparison to the state is illustrated by the operations expenditure for Helsinki city, which was about €64 million euros with an additional figure of about €11 million invested in Helsinki city sport facilities. This is in comparison to a total state investment in sport of €91,397,000 for 2005. Recent legislative change has increased the autonomy of municipalities resulting in the level of state control over sport at a municipal level gradually decreasing. Prior to 1993, municipalities were required to allocate funding to the areas defined by the state, however, in 1993 this changed and municipalities gained total independence allowing them to
allocate state funding according to their own priorities (Interview: A government official, 2 June 2005). To assist in achieving their priorities, municipalities are developing cross-sectoral cooperation as sport boards work far more closely with other policy areas such as transport, health, environment youth and education policies. This in part reflects the move towards a wider definition of sport and purpose of sport, moving away from the narrow view of competitive sport towards a more holistic view of health enhancing physical activity (Interview: A senior advisor in Regional Government Authority, 3 June 2005).

Non-governmental organisations

Finnish Sports Federation
The umbrella organisation for Finnish sport is the Finnish Sports Federation (SLU - Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu), whose membership comprises about 126 member organisations including NGBs (approximately 76), regional sport organisations, the Swedish Language Sport Association, sports organisations for special groups, student sports groups, TUL, the Finnish Olympic Committee, domain organisations and a number of health related organisations (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Key Finnish non-governmental sport structure
The SLU works at both a national and international level on policy that affects sport in general rather than specific issues related to a particular sport and is considered a key partner of the government, as a senior government official explained ‘SLU is of course our main partner, I would say so’ (Interview: 2 June 2006).

The five main functions of the SLU are to: a) support member organisations’ interests and activities by influencing political decision making, b) enhance the reputation of sport and physical activity in the minds of both citizens and decision makers ensuring that children and youth sports as well as voluntary activities should be visible and recognised; c) improve the pre-conditions in sports and support organisations d) provide and support education and training at local, regional and national levels, conduct international activities to promote tolerance, equality, environment and ethical values, and e) perform administrative work and fund-raising, to enhance the sense of community amongst member organisations (Finnish Sports Federation, 2007). The growing connection between sport and physical activity is highlighted in the goals outlined in the 2006-2010 SLU strategy:

- to increase the amount of physically active people and to develop the quality and effectiveness of sports;
- to ensure the working environment of non-profit, volunteer sports clubs and organisations and thus promote possibilities of sport as citizen activity in Finland; and
- to add cooperation between the different partners within the programme (Finnish Sports Federation, 2007).

Funding is received from three main sources with approximately 30 per cent from government (approximately €1.4 million in 2006) with additional funding for specific projects, 50 per cent from sport federations and 20 per cent is raised by the SLU itself (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006). A key role is working closely with a range of government departments including Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Social Affairs on matters that are of national importance for sport such as taxation or labour legislation. The purpose behind the establishment of the SLU
was two-fold: first, to provide services to the member organisations; and second, to represent the interests of its member organisations and the Finnish sports culture (Heikkala & Koski, 1999).

**Domain organisations**

Three domain organisations operate within the Finnish sport sector. They are focused upon the areas of youth sport, top-level sport and, recreational sport and health related activities. Young Finland (YF) is responsible for youth sport, the Sport for All Association (SFAA) and Central Associations for Recreational Sport and Outdoor Activities are responsible for recreational and health related activities, while the Finnish Olympic Committee (FOC) has responsibility for elite sport (see Figure 5.3). While Young Finland and SFAA were established in 1988 and 1961 respectively, it was not until the structural change of 1993 that recognition of their role strengthened. It was because of the overlap and duplication of work carried out by the NGBs in relation to youth sport, SFA and elite sport that the DOs were given responsibility for coordinating and overseeing activity across each of these areas. Given the comparatively small size of each of the domain organisation, between 10 and 26 staff, cooperation, influence and communication are key to the DOs achieving their goals. All three work through and with a variety of organisations but central partners for all three are the sporting organisations and the club network. The need to work with and through other organisations to achieve their goals has facilitated the need to establish and maintain close and effective working relationships within the sport sector.

Originally a project within the SVUL, Young Finland was officially founded as an independent organisation in 1993. A key reason behind the formation of the project was the recognition by sport organisations of the need to increase the number of young people participating in sport. At this time youth sport was considered as a base from which elite athletes could be groomed and developed. YF wanted to move away from the traditional pyramid model of sport, which sporting federations and clubs were operating. Instead its aim was to concentrate on all youth regardless of ability in an attempt to build a base for life long participation in sport (Interview: A senior Young Finland official, 8
March 2006). Interestingly, one of the main objectives of the Finnish physical education system in schools is also to create a life-long interest in physical activity (Laasko, 1976), however the government appears to be supporting YF in achieving this aim rather than developing and investing in the physical education curriculum. Young Finland has three main revenue streams. In 2006 the government contributed €2.5 million to YF, €1 million was received from business partners while €650,000 was generated from YF activities. Of the €2.5 million allocated by government about €1 million is allocated for specific projects against which YF must report back, however, the remaining €1 million is discretionary funding against which there are no reporting requirements (Interview: A senior YF official, 8 March 2006).

For several years after its foundation YF was not recognised by the government and failed to receive any funding from the state, however, since 1995 both the level of funding and political support for YF has steadily strengthened, mirroring the growing focus on youth sport in Finland. Previously known as the 'killers of competitive sport' by the Finnish Olympic Committee, Young Finland now works closely with the Finnish Olympic Committee in planning and supporting talent development. The strategy of YF focuses on the 6 to 18 year old age group, but more recently its work has focused on 6 to 12 year old age group and extended to include the pre-school group which includes children aged 3 to 6 years of age. The key objective of YF is to 'promote children's and youth's well-being and joy of life by means of physical activity' (Interview: A senior Young Finland official, 8 March 2006). This goal extends the way in which sport is being used beyond the health agenda and towards the wider positive social impacts of sport. The framework from which YF bases its policies is one that provides a basis for children to practise sport 'all their life' (Interview: A senior Young Finland official, 8 March 2006).

Similar to Young Finland, the Sport for All Association (SfAA) was also established by sport organisations, primarily the SVUL. The goal of the SfAA is to promote well-being and health among citizens by providing knowledge regarding recreational sport and health-related physical activity in Finland (Interview: A senior SfAA official, 9 March 2006). The SfAA has articulated
health as a key objective but has also extended their role by using ‘well-being’ as a goal, although this has not been clearly defined. There are three key areas through which the strategy is delivered: organised sport, corporate fitness and gym activities. While the target group of the SfAA is the 19 to 63 age group, a key focus is the working population who have below average fitness levels (Interview: A senior SfAA official, 8 March 2006). Contrary to providing sport for all adults, the SfAA is targeting those whose fitness is at a level that it is impacting adversely upon their ability to work effectively. While adults already participating in sport are the backbone of the SfAA and are provided with programmes, there is now an emphasis on delivering programmes for people ‘who need sports’ (Interview: A senior SfAA official, 8 March 2006). Developing programmes, which involved physical activity, not necessarily sport, has now required the SfAA to come to terms with delivering programmes for people who were not interested in sport, which was an entirely new challenge (Interview: A senior SfAA official, 8 March 2006). To assist in achieving targets the SfAA works closely with private companies and labour unions to deliver and promote physical activity programmes in the workplace and amongst workers. Increasingly the SfAA is working with other government departments such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Health, who also have members on the SfAA Board of Trustees. Through agreements with private gymnasiums there are extensive programmes aimed at increasing the fitness levels of employees. Assisting employers in promoting sport and physical activity is a €200 tax free subsidy (per employee) for providing physical activity programmes or facilities. Of the programmes which are organised by SfAA about 50 per cent of programmes are focused upon physical activity and 50 per cent upon sport.

Finnish Olympic Committee
The Finnish Olympic Committee (FOC) has played a key role in promoting and supporting elite sport in Finland. However, it was not until the mid 1990s that it was recognised as the domain organisation (DO) for all elite sport (Interview; a senior FOC official, 7 March 2006). As an independent organisation, the FOC is responsible for Olympic member sports; however, as the domain organisation for elite sport this responsibility extended to non-Olympic sports.
particularly with regard to the MBR process. The duality of roles does have the potential to create tensions within the FOC regarding its role as a NOC while needing to accommodate the wider Finnish elite sport sector. The decision to expand the role of the FOC to include non-Olympic elite sport was prompted by concern regarding the role of the state in elite sport and the organisation of elite sport itself were expressed in 2004, resulting in the Elite Sport Working Group being established. A key aim was to clarify Finland’s elite sport’s development strategy, the distribution of operational responsibilities and the division of labour (Nieminen, 2004). In 2007/2008 the FOC will extend its mandate further with regard to elite Finnish sport as the FOC will take responsibility for allocating funding for non-Olympic sports a role which they have not previously undertaken. Funding from government contributed towards approximately 50 per cent of the FOC budget (about €2.4 million from a budget of €5.5 million) in 2006 (Interview: A senior FOC official, 7 March 2006).

The role and importance of the DOs has steadily grown, with each playing an integral role in the Management by Results (MBR) process, which will be discussed later in this chapter. It is the DOs which assist in preparing the data relating to the performance of NGBs and provide comment to the Ministry of Education regarding the performance of different sports. This places DOs in an unusual position as, on the one hand they are assisting in the evaluation of sports organisations, while on the other they are selling a service (such as education material and programmes) and need to work with NGBs to achieve their own organisational goals.

National governing bodies
Historically the national governing bodies (NGBs) have been oriented towards elite and competitive sport. Approximately 35 per cent of all NGB resources are absorbed by elite sport and 29 per cent of resources absorbed by youth sport, which has typically been considered part of competitive/elite sport (Heikkala & Koski, 1999). As highlighted earlier a lack of focus on youth and SF appears to have been the catalyst for the formation of YF and the SFAA. While NGBs continued to place importance on competitive/elite sport, there was increasing awareness of the need for youth sport and the SF to be supported within
NGBs. This tension appears to be diminishing and is being replaced with recognition that grassroots sport, youth sport and elite sport need to be integrated for sport to survive financially and also to develop:

we need all these three parts, youth sport, elite sport and leisure sports for all of them, to survive better. Because if you do not have a lot of juniors you will not have elite athletes in future, if you do not have positive sports thinking people you won't have those youngsters and or adults or parents who take kids to ski clubs or have a positive attitude towards skiing itself. So that's why we need all these three legs in our chair (Interview: A senior NGB official, 29 March 2006).

Between 1978 and 1992 the annual budget of NGBs increased dramatically, however, while the relative share of independent fund-raising increased the level of government financing decreased (Heikkala & Koski, 1999: 35). While Heikkala & Koski argued that the shift in funding streams was a sign of increased professionalism in NGBs it may also have reflected the changing economic environment, most noticeably the economic recession of the 1990s, on levels of government funding. There is considerable variation in the level of state funding for NGBs with some receiving as little as 13 per cent with others receiving up to 70 per cent of their funding from the state (Interview: A senior Finnish Academic, 1 June 2005).

With about 1,300,000 members Finnish clubs are the core of Finnish sporting culture (Koski, 1999). The registration of sports clubs has been steady with the most active period of growth being the 1980s when about one fifth of all sports clubs were founded (Heikkala & Koski, 1999). It is difficult to establish the exact number of sports clubs in Finland but it is estimated that there are around 6000-7000, (Heikkala & Koski, 1999). In 1999 about 36 per cent of children between the ages of 3-18 years were members of a sport club, while about 24 per cent of the adult population held a sports club membership (Heikkala, Koski, & Puronaho, 1994). What is significant, however, is the number of Finns who participate outside the sport club structure. The Ski Association estimated that between 1.2 and 2.2 million Finns participate in cross-county skiing outside of the club while in orienteering it is estimated that between 10-20,000 Finns
participate but are not members of a club. This is in contrast to the total club membership of 15,000 and 50,000 for ski-ing and orienteering respectively (Interview: A senior Finnish Orienteering official; 7 March 2006 and a senior Ski Association official, 29 March 2006). However, as clubs and sport federations move towards encompassing SfA ideals there remains a tension between SfA and elite sport at the club and national level.

Pyramid thinking is still prevalent, where clubs filter the masses to get the top athletes. This idea of a change to youth sports to top level athletics is still [the] major idea, the tension is the youth sports which are putting more effort into recreational sport which is not so goal focussed but more to have fun (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2005).

While it is sports clubs that remain central to the provision of sporting activities and maintenance of the sporting culture of Finland it appears that the tension between elite and grassroots sport provision may be diminishing. Despite the traditional focus on competitive/elite sport, sustained government policies focusing on SfA, health and well-being along with the introduction of new funding processes to encourage sport clubs and federations, has encouraged greater emphasis on SfA alongside competitive/elite sport.

Finnish sport policy

The early years of Finnish sport

The oldest sports club in Finland was established in 1856, highlighting the already burgeoning interest in sport. By the end of the 19th century there were already 341 sporting clubs, all based upon voluntary work and covering over 20 different sports (Heikkala, Honkanen, Laine, Pullinen, & Ruuskanen-Himma, 2003). Sport first became popular amongst the Swedish upper and middle classes, however, as Finnish political organisations rapidly emerged towards the end of the 19th century, workers associations and unions began to establish their own sports clubs, ensuring that sport quickly not only became an activity for all people but also a politicised activity (Olin, 1981; Woodward, 1986).
The left-right divide evident in the formation of Finnish politics was reflected in the composition and distribution of sporting clubs and organisations (Kiviaho, 1981). Four central sporting federations emerged in the early 1900s. The Finnish Central Sports Federation (SVUL) was founded in 1906 and was to grow to be the largest central sports federation until the establishment of the Finnish Sports Federation (SLU) in 1993. Dissension within the SVUL in 1912 led to the Swedish speaking sports association breaking away and forming their own Federation, the Central Swedish Sports Federation (CIF), in 1912.

The continuing tension between the Reds and Whites after the civil war led to a number of sports clubs affiliated with the Reds being expelled from the SVUL and resulted in the Workers Sports Federation (TUL) being founded in 1919 (Heinila, 1987). The fourth central sport federation, the Finnish Football Association (SPL), was founded in 1907. Government involvement in sport during this period was indirect with targets being set by the SVUL, which received funding from the government for its activities (Heikkinen, 1987).

The chasm left after the civil war impacted upon the development and history of Finland’s sports federations. The political climate of the 1920s and 1930s created pressure upon the labour movement as a whole, resulting in the disbanding over 100 TUL clubs. Tension between left and right continued to escalate resulting in the relationship between the TUL and SVUL almost coming to a standstill; the friction deteriorated to such a point that state aid was denied to the TUL between 1932 and 1934 (Woodward, 1986). It was not until after WWII and as a result of the reparation demands that left wing organisations were able to operate legally with the same rights as other political groups, enabling the TUL to become a legitimate focus for left-wing sporting activity (Woodward, 1986).

Throughout the early part of the 20th century, competitive sport flourished in Finland. The use of elite sport to foster patriotism was recognised with sport used as part of the liberation movement and as a tool to promote patriotism, most significantly at the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games. The events of the 1912 Olympic Games not only identified Finland as a strong sporting nation, but also had a major effect on the independence of Finland five years later.
It was the success of Finnish athletes at Stockholm, which made the Finnish people more politically aware and above all increased their interest in sport (Heikkinen, 1987). The role of sport in promoting nationalism, led Seppanen to observe that:

Finland was probably the first country in the world in which international success in competitive sports was systematically organized to serve purposes of national integration of society. There is hardly any doubt that sports and sports success in international events served as an important instrument not only in the nation building process of Finland but also in the establishing of Finnish nationalism (1970:17, cited in Woodward 1986).

Meinander (1997) posited that an explanation as to why Finland placed special emphasis on sport in promoting nationalism was due to the lack of ambition in regard to international politics; as a result sport became an important dimension of national identity and self definition. In the minds of the Finnish people it was sport, in particular the success of the Finnish middle distance athletes who ‘ran Finland onto the world map’ (Heikkinen, 1987).

The early part of the 20th century saw sport used as a tool to assist in building military preparedness and as a way of enticing men to join the Home Guard (Vasara, 1997). The defence force’s recognition of sport and the role it could play in building physical fitness and military preparedness extended further when, along with several other government bodies, the defence forces endeavoured to have sport administration placed under the auspices of the War Ministry (Juppi, 1993). While sport was used to develop nationalism and assist in building military preparedness, it was the social and educational values of sport that were recognised and valued by the Finnish parliament. This resulted in responsibility for sport being assigned to the Ministry of Education in 1921 where it has remained ever since (Juppi, 1993). Early debates in Finland relating to the financing of sport reflected the close links between sporting clubs and political parties as well as growing political support for Sport for All principles. As early as 1919, a Bill was introduced to provide extra funding for the promotion of sport and physical education. In the resulting committee
deliberations, the importance of sport and healthcare were highlighted with the committee emphasising the benefits of having wider age groups and larger numbers of people participating in sport (Juppi, 1993). After WWI funding for sport continued to grow steadily (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Funding allocation for sport in Finland (Finnish marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVUL</td>
<td>85.000</td>
<td>300.000</td>
<td>382.500</td>
<td>63,000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUL</td>
<td>60.000</td>
<td>250.000</td>
<td>235.000</td>
<td>30,000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIF</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>36.000</td>
<td>15.000</td>
<td>9,250.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Vuolli (1978)

Sport continued to be discussed at the national level during the 1930s, with the Finnish Parliament engaging in heated debates relating to sport policy and the granting of subsidies to the TUL (Juppi, 1993). In 1932 due to pressure from the extreme right, funding for the TUL was made contingent upon TUL members being freely allowed to join Finnish teams in international competition, a proviso which the TUL refused to accept (Laine, 1996). The popularity of sporting activities grew quickly in Finland, which resulted in sport becoming a mass movement, no doubt influenced by the rapid growth in sport clubs during this period (Heikkala et al., 2003).

In 1940 the Central Sport Federation formed a company to operate the lottery, resulting in the government being able to channel significant funds into sport and reducing the dependence of sporting organisations on the state (Juppi 1993). The establishment of the National Lottery had a significant effect upon funding for Finnish sport with funding levels rising substantially (see Table 5.4). Under the terms of the lottery, all funds were allocated via the Ministry of Education as grants to local authorities or other bodies, for the development of sport (Woodward, 1986). Changes to the allocation of funding to sport from the Lottery occurred in the 1950s with the percentage profits allocated to sport gradually reducing from 100 per cent in 1940 to 25 per cent in 2005 (see Table 5.5). Other areas to benefit from the current Lottery include science, art youth work and libraries, with funding for libraries recently returning to the general budget.
Table 5.5 Percentage of lottery funding allocated to sport 1940 - 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1982</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage profit of Lottery to sport</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from (Ministry of Education)

1945 to 1960: Sport and national identity

The effects of WWII on Finland were felt long after 1945 due to high war reparations, a struggling economy and the shadow of communist Soviet Union. A rapid period of urbanisation where large numbers of the population moved to the cities, coincided with the rise of the recreational sports movement (Woodward, 1986). Despite growing numbers of the population practising sport, the left-right divide remained evident and sport was increasingly used as a tool to develop national identity and build unity in a country split along ideological lines and coping with the effects of defeat. As explained by one interviewee:

I think it's like old culture, mostly because after the second world war when we were struggling with Russia and we were very poor the first thing that we started to do was to come out with good athletes and so on to start to get our country going (Interview: A senior NGB official, 8 March 2006)

The Lottery, which was established by the Sporting Federations, but bought by the government in 1975, provided sport with a dedicated funding stream for the first time. The formation of sports clubs was encouraged and as noted by Juppi (1993), the state supported sport through the building of facilities and the funding and management of sports research.

A significant event in Finnish sport was the awarding of the 1952 Olympic Games to Helsinki. Finland's ambition to hold the Olympic Games was confirmed as early as 1927 when a foundation was established to build a stadium that would be suitable for holding an Olympic Games. Finland maintained that it deserved the honour of holding the Olympic Games due to its contribution to the Olympic movement, which had been demonstrated by
considerable success at earlier Olympic Games and its commitment to
Olympism (Hornbuckle, 1996). However, the Olympic Games also coincided
with the completion of Finland’s war reparation payments and sport was again
used as a tool for building national unity and the promotion of nationalism
(Heikkinen, 1987; Jorgensen, 1997). The awarding of the Olympic Games to
Finland may also have contributed to, and built upon, the already burgeoning
belief that sport was part of Finnish society and an activity for all people.

The Helsinki Olympic Games were the most successful games for Finland in
regard to the number of medals won, finishing 8th on the medal table. However,
since 1952 the success of Finnish athletes at the summer Olympic Games has
been modest in comparison to the pre-World War II period. From 1952 until the
late 1980s Finland’s ranking on the medal table remained relatively stable
however, between 1988 and the 2004 Finland fell from 25th to 62nd place.
However, at the Winter Olympics Finland has performed comparatively better,
consistently finishing in the top ten countries on the medal table, despite having
its lowest ever placing on the medal table in 2006 at the Turin Olympics
(Finnish Olympic Committee, 2006).

The 1952 Olympic Games were considered a great success by Finland yet
despite frequent expressions of nationalism and a large medal tally concerns
were raised regarding the impact of the Olympic Games on SfA. There was a
fear that elite sport would dominate the minds of the Finnish people and as a
result SfA would be neglected (Heinila, 1988). It was about this time that a shift
in focus emerged, with a move towards the ideals of SfA and a reduced
emphasis placed on competitive and elite sport. This move towards supporting
the ideals in SfA was also reflected in the way in which sporting success, or
lack of it, has been conceptualised and justified. Heikkinen (1986) postulated
that the decline in elite sporting performance by Finland was not due to the
weakening of Finnish elite sport but rather due to the increased
competitiveness of sport, issues of doping and increasing commercialisation.
As the explanation for the decline in elite performance has been rationalised as
factors outside the Finnish sport system, this may go some way to explaining
why Finland did not respond by investing more heavily in elite sport at the expense of SFA.

By the 1950s the SVUL, TUL and CIF and the Finnish Football Association (SPL) were the major sports federation in Finland. The 1950s witnessed the establishment of the Central League of Worker's Sports clubs (TUK) which was formed by clubs that were expelled or that had withdrawn from the TUL. Separation of sport organisations according to political ideology and linguistic lines had a major influence on the structure of Finnish sport, illustrated by the TUL hindering early attempts to establish a national umbrella organisation for Finnish sport. This was largely due to the TUL opposing unification with the Swedish speaking minority of Finland who were represented by the Finnish Sports Federation (SVUL) (Juppi, 1993). The influence of Urho Kekkonen on Finnish sport at this time was also significant. He was instrumental in creating certain institutions such as the University of Jyväskylä, and in determining roles and levels of cooperation between different sporting federations (Laine, 1996). During his time as President of Finland, Kekkonen was responsible for ensuring workers' sport would be protected by making commitments to the Soviet Union that he would continue to support workers' sport within the Finnish sport sector (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006). In doing this Kekkonen reinforced and highlighted the strong divisions already established in Finnish sport.

The number of sports clubs increased heavily as youth sport clubs and also sports clubs developed district organisations and national federations, as a result 'it started to be a kind of power inside society' (Interview: A senior Finnish academic, 1 June 2005). Membership in the SVUL and TUL grew rapidly, in 1940 there was a combined membership of 160,000; in 1950 it was 551,000; and by 1960 there were over 699,000 members (Blom 1981 in Woodward, 1986). During the 1950s and 1960s the number of single activity sports clubs grew, with two thirds of sports clubs focusing on a single activity by the 1980s. A potential reason for this posited by Heikkala (1999) was the growing influence of club members and the need to provide activities, which were based on the members' interests and demands.
Participation in competitive sport remained the dominant sporting activity; however, recognition of, and participation in, recreational sport was also emerging. The 1960s saw the establishment of both the SfAA and the Finnish Recreational Sports Association, both formed under the auspices of the SVUL. It is perhaps a paradox that while the SVUL was forming such organisations the majority of its members retained a strong focus on elite or competitive sport. At the same time, the TUL was also developing policies with a similar focus to the SVUL. A new policy programme was introduced by the TUL, which stated that physical exercise was a part of the entire culture of the working class movement. Duplication and overlap with regard to the activities of the TUL and SVUL were evident. Nevertheless, the gulf between the two organisations persisted, which resulted in Finnish sport continuing to operate within discrete silos based upon different sets of political beliefs (Woodward, 1986). The separation of sporting organisations according to political ideology led to an organisational structure in Finnish sport that created duplication; however, Kiviaho argued that the SVUL and TUL catered for separate groups and, therefore,

it maybe that the dichotomy or trichotomy in Finnish sport life has been an advantage...in terms of the growth of the total membership of sport federations [and] as a channel for training talented sportsmen from different social and linguistic group (1973: 3).

It was during the 1940s and 1950s that municipalities began to play an increasingly important role in the provision of sporting facilities. A network of municipal sports boards was established and local authorities began to take responsibility for facility provision in their own particular areas (Woodward, 1986). Despite this, responsibility for providing sporting activities remained largely in the hands of the sporting organisations and, therefore, despite increased state expenditure on recreational sport, it was the sporting organisations that grew in influence (Woodward, 1986).

In summary this period is characterised by the dominance of politics in determining the structure, and tensions between sporting organisations, with
the two most influential sporting federations established according to political ideologies. The strength of the competitive sport coalition during the 1940s and 1950s was in part reflected through sustained bids to host the Olympic Games, one unsuccessful and one successful. Along with this was the use of competitive/elite sport as a tool to assist in building national unity, as a result it was the importance of competitive rather than grassroots sport which was highlighted. However, the emergence of social democratic values in Finland was to contribute to sport being seen as a tool of social policy, and a right of all people, from the 1960s.

1960 to 1993: Sport as social policy
During the 1960s many aspects of social life became part of the political sphere. As a result sport came to be considered by the Finnish government as an activity that could be used for social policy purposes, particularly in relation to health. A more coherent and systematic approach to sport policy emerged during the 1960s with the dominant discourse of competitive sport being challenged and the wider values of physical fitness and health became part of the government’s social goals. Political parties began to become involved in sport and with the modernisation of Finnish society new connections between the state and voluntary organisations, including sport began to develop (Heikkala et al., 2003).

The emergence of the welfare state assisted in providing a favourable environment for SfA to develop with ‘sport and physical activity seen as part of building a welfare society where sport and physical culture were part of our social policy’ (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2005). This was a period when both the state and municipalities began to take responsibility for areas and tasks that had previously been left to families and voluntary workers. Coinciding with sport becoming part of social policy was the introduction of welfarist type policies including unemployment benefit in 1950, earnings related pension in 1962, common health insurance in 1964 and the national pension in 1965. The introduction of the 40 hour week in 1965 saw increased leisure time, which was taken up by sport participation and other forms of entertainment (Heikkala et al., 2003). It is within this welfare milieu that sport firmly embedded
itself in Finnish social and political society. Universalism was evident in Finland’s approach to sport as it was seen as an activity, which was the right of every person:

sport was considered part of social policy that was the first time this happened in sport history, sport was part of the social political, the welfare of the nation and all these preventative things you can do with the help of sport was recognised during those days (Interview: A senior Finnish academic, 1 June 2005).

The 1960s witnessed a change in the way sport was defined in Finland with sport policy development and sport itself increasingly framed in the language and context of SFA. Traditional expressions that encapsulated the more traditional view of sport were replaced; the term ‘urheilu’ (= sport), which implied competitive sport was replaced by ‘liikunta’ (= movement). Liikunta includes top-level and competitive sport as well as sport for everyone in all its forms, including outdoor activities and recreation. Titles of academic chairs and departments within universities were changed to the prefix ‘movement’ instead of sport as were certain sporting organisations, which in effect demanded that the diverse interests of all people were acknowledged (Heinila, 1988). This was accompanied by an increasing emphasis on health and well-being supported by an increasing number of government sport related policies. Increased state interest in sport was reflected by growing financial investment with state expenditure increasing from 0.39 FIM in 1960 to 3.7 FIM in 1977 (Juppi, 1984 in Woodward 1986).

In 1966 the State Committee for planning the future development of Sport for All, which was appointed by the Ministry of Education, signalled government’s intention that sport should be accessible to all. The Report stated that:

Every citizen shall be given the opportunity to participate in physical activities in accordance with his/her individual abilities and inclinations. The organizations of everyman’s [sic] sports shall guarantee citizens the freedom of choice in sporting activity and the opportunity to participate in the decision-making which affects everyman’s [sic] sports (Heinila, 1988: 13)
The shift in focus by government towards SfA was signalled by an extensive period of facility development during the 1960s through to the 1980s (see Table 5.6). It was not until 1979, however, that this period of rapid facility development was formalised with the publication of the first National Sport Facility Plan (Stahl et al., 2002). Access to facilities was seen as an important step in promoting SfA as well as assisting in providing equal opportunities for all Finns to participate in sport (Stahl et al., 2002). A lack of facilities for the elderly was, however, identified as a barrier to their participation in sport during this period (Juppi & Koivumaeki, 1986). While this period of rapid facility development led to Finland having one of the densest networks of sports facilities of any European country it appears the emphasis placed on youth sport and the remnants of competitive and elite focus were yet to be overcome in regard to participation by adults.

Table 5.6 Number of Finnish sports facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sports Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>14,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>24,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>29,280</td>
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Adapted from Stahl et al (2002)

It is difficult to assess the extent to which rapid facility development along with increased investment impacted upon sports participation in Finland. There was an implicit assumption that by providing sporting facilities for all, participation by all groups including adults would be facilitated and in turn adopted by society. However, recent national surveys indicated that access to sport facilities was consistently selected as one of the three most important factors in deciding where people live; perhaps indicating the development of a culture where having easy access to facilities is expected (Interview: A senior official, the Association of Finnish Local & Regional Authorities, 3 June 2005).

However, the focus on competitive and elite sport partly explained the low levels of sport participation amongst older age groups, in particular Finnish pensioners. It was not until the early 1980s that attempts to broaden the scope of sports and physical education activities to include all age groups not only the
young and those involved in competitive sport, began to emerge (Juppi & Koivumaeki, 1986). By providing facilities for all and not only for sport club members, the government enabled and encouraged growth in participation in physical activity for all. While this assisted the state in achieving its goal of maintaining or improving health and ensuring that increased leisure time was used in a socially acceptable manner (Woodward, 1986), it also indicated recognition of the limitations of sports clubs in delivering all sporting activities.

The late 1970s and 1980s witnessed a number of government policies and strategy documents, which reinforced SFA. A key document in the development of the sport policy in Finland was the Report of the Sports Act Committee in 1976, which provided the foundation for the passing of the Sports Act in 1980. The 1980 Sports Act not only set out the already informal structures of sport in Finland but also officially recognised the social significance of the sports movement (Heinila 1988). Woodward (1986) contended that the Sports Act had little to do with setting future policy but more to do with formalising the current situation. A key aim of the Sports Act (1980) was to ensure that the interests of the majority were catered for rather than the building of specialist facilities for elite or competitive sport (Stahl et al., 2002). What the Sports Act did achieve was to identify and consolidate the focus and purpose of sport as seen by the state, it also introduced a state grant to cover expenditure on competitive and youth sport, thereby allowing the tax revenue collected from municipalities to be could redirected more towards SfA (Woodward, 1986). Of interest also is that the state became more directive in its relationship with municipalities specifying that state funding should be used to appoint ‘sports secretaries’ in municipalities. The Act also directed state funds to subsidise the construction of sports sites, support local associations and national sports organisations and to research and international activities. While mandating that municipalities must have an elected sports board, many of these were already in place (Vuori et al., 2004) but it did indicate that the state was prepared to enshrine this in legislation and be directive for those municipalities that had not already established their own sports board.
Growing levels of resourcing and developing rhetoric regarding the benefits of sport began to emerge. State documents began to reflect the growing support for SfA with a Report of the planning section of the State Sports Council in 1970 including recommendations to improve opportunities for fitness sports (Vuori et al., 2004) and in 1974 a government legislative committee was established that presented arguments in favour of Sport for All (Stahl et al., 2002).

The influence of municipalities in promoting sport began to strengthen during the 1960s. By 1962, 97 per cent of all municipalities had a department of sporting affairs (Ilmanen 1995, in Koski, 1999). Increased funding in sport by municipalities demonstrated the growing importance of local government in sport. During the period 1960 to 1974, local authorities invested a total of 4.3 billion Finnish marks (FIM) in sport facilities, increasing to 16.7 billion FIM between 1975 and 1990 (Stahl et al., 2002). An increasing emphasis on the development of an extensive facility infrastructure increased the role of municipalities in sport policy, as until this time their role has been relatively minor.

While government policies supported SfA, municipalities retained a strong focus on competitive sport. Despite the influence of the national government in supporting sport as part of social policy it has only been relatively recently, about the last 10 years, that SfA has begun to take priority over competitive sport within the municipalities (Interview: A senior local government official, 6 March 2006). The unwillingness of municipalities to support SfA despite encouragement by national government policy may reflect the influence of local clubs and their commitment to competitive sport. This placed municipalities between the competitive sport lobby of the clubs and the SfA focus of government. While there were close relationships with many of the local sport organisations, municipalities had little interaction with the DOs, NGBs and the FOC. Despite government emphasis on SfA and the broadening definition of sport, sporting federations and sport clubs continued to retain a focus on competitive and/or elite sport. As explained by a senior Finnish Sports Federation official:
the Federations were mainly competitive sport and they were not talking about anything else but competitions how to organise them and international matters (Interview: 9 March 2006).

Between the 1960s and 1980s sports clubs continued to emphasise competitive or elite sport (Koski, 1999). Understandably this impacted upon the lack of activities made available by clubs for older age cohorts (55-63 year of age) (Juppi & Koivumaeki, 1986). While the sport club was an important provider of sporting activities, Juppi and Koivumäki (1986) identified that it was the municipalities and other age related organisations that were the most important organisations for providing physical activity to older aged adults.

Sports clubs and federations became increasingly professional as the introduction of planning, goal directed strategies and a growing number of paid workers at the national and club level began to occur. The division between sporting organisations based on political ideology continued, with the TUL preventing its athletes from competing at international competitions. The cleavage between political ideologies was evident during the 1960s with the refusal by the TUL to allow its athletes to be selected for the 1960 Rome Olympics despite a request by the President of Finland for them to participate. The continued effect of separated sporting organisation of Finnish sport was explained by a senior Finnish Sports Federation official:

we [sport] had three different organisations and that meant a lot of trouble for sport. [There] was a lot of discussion as to who was representing who, and whose voice should be listened to in discussions with authorities (Interview: 9 March 2006).

The fragmented structure of sport laid the foundation for state involvement in the restructure of sport in 1993 as sport was considered to be inefficient with many overlapping functions between the sport federations. Recognition of the need to change the structure of Finnish sport began to emerge towards the end of the 1980s. While government would later become involved in the process it was the SVUL who identified the need to unify and 'westernise' sport.
there was strong will in the Central Sports Federation to unify sport, a very strong will to unify sport to make it westernised. This was the term that was used we wanted to have a west European structure and not as it was, a national sport and workers sport (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006).

The feeling amongst the SVUL and sport federations was that there should be one voice and sport should be one ideology. Interestingly, notwithstanding the tension between the sporting federations, differences were put aside when deciding the allocation of funding money for sport. In a corporatist style process, the sport federations, in consultation with government, decided where state money would be allocated and what type of activities would occur. As highlighted by a senior government official ‘even if these guys [sport federations] hate one another when it comes to money they can always find a way’ (Interview: 3 June 2005). The corporatist type approach used by the Finnish government in labour negotiations (Heikkala et al., 2003; Raunio, 2004) was similarly adopted in the sport sector:

> even if the TUL and SVUL [were] at war and workers [and] political ideology were in conflict, they sit at the same table to decide how to divide the government money (Interview: A senior government official, 3 June 2005).

From 1960 to the end of the 1980s, the concept of sport changed, adapted and expanded in Finland and a more coherent approach to sport policy emerged. While sport had traditionally been conceptualised by national sport federations and municipalities as being within the competitive and elitist paradigm, by the end of the 1980s sport was established as a tool to assist in achieving social objectives as well as being defined as an activity that was a fundamental right of all citizens. However, an emphasis was placed upon youth with a lack of facilities and programmes for older adults being recognised as an issue.

In summary, 1960 to 1992 witnessed growing government intervention in sport despite continued claims that sport must retain it autonomy. The use of sport as part of social policy coincided with Finland's broader political shift to social democratic values and beliefs. Sport was now considered a basic right and therefore government needed to provide the opportunity or pre-conditions for
sporting activity. Government support for SfA was reinforced through significant investment in facilities and the introduction of legislation and subsidies for facilities which promoted grassroots sport while elite sport was marginalised. While the concept of adult life-long participation was not explicitly stated, the emphasis on providing sporting facilities, and opportunities for all resulted in Finns from all age groups being encouraged to participate rather than merely specific targeted groups. However, the shift in focus from elite sport to SfA was gradual, with municipalities and NGBs both retaining a focus on competitive sport despite the increased government intervention. The structure of Finnish sport remained problematic with parallel organisations, founded on differing political ideologies, duplicating programmes while competing against each other for resources and recognition.

_1993-2006: Sport policy_

Juppi (in Koski, 1999) stated that the role of the state in Finnish sport had changed from the ‘the stern father’ to the ‘kind godfather’. Policies continued to reflect the emphasis of the government on providing sporting opportunities for all regardless of ability, and promoting health and well-being. As stated in ‘Directions of Finnish sports policy in the 1990s; the main aim of government was ‘well-being through exercise and sports – sports for all’ (Vuori et al., 2004). While SfA was the dominant term from 1960 to 1980, Health Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA) was to emerge as a new term, which would encompass sporting activity as well as other forms of physical activity.

In conjunction with legislation, the Finnish government also established national projects to stimulate support, and promote, SfA. Two national programmes _Finland on the Move_ in 1991 and its successor _Fit for Life_ in 1995, were implemented with the aim of motivating opportunities for ordinary citizens, over 40 years of age, to participate in regular activity. The need to introduce such projects was in part a recognition by Government that clubs were unable (or unwilling) to deliver this type of service to its members (Wuolio, 2003) and the need for government to continue steering sport and sport organisation towards the promotion of SfA:
the Ministry of Education is directly influencing the Federations in this area...with
project money, special money and trying to convince them also by giving money
to the local system for sports related activities, and in this way our clubs are
more and more interested in this matter and they are influencing of course
because the clubs are the Federations (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports
Federation official, 9 March 2006).

The projects were also the first time that a number of government Ministries
cooperated towards achieving a common goal. The multi-sector approach
adopted by the Fit for Life project was later formalised in the 2001 Government
Resolution on Policies to Develop Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA).
This government resolution focused upon taking a cross-sectoral approach:

with a view to increasing health-enhancing physical activity and boosting related
activities in a balanced way it is necessary to intensify the cross-sectoral co-
operation (Committee on the Development of Health-Enhancing Physical
Activity, 2001: 2).

While the advantages of a cross-sectoral approach were outlined (see, Ministry
of Social Affairs and Health, 2002) resistance to such an integrated approach is
evident. While NSOs, DOs, the Finnish Sports Federation and municipalities
appear to have developed similar core beliefs regarding the role of sport, this
does not, however extend to other government sectors, which hold contrasting
beliefs and values regarding sport. A senior Young Finland official explained
the difficulty in working with other government sectors:

there are barriers between different bureaucracies [government organisations], it
is very strong...also the Ministries [think that] government sport is something to
do with Ministry of Education [not any other government department]. The
Ministry of Social Affairs and [Ministry of] Health they have old traditions that they
do not [think they should] support sport. It has been difficult [to work with them], it
hasn't been easy to tell them about wellness and joy of life (Interview: 8 March
2006).
A major change to occur to Finnish sport was the structural reform of 1993. A number of external events played a role in creating the impetus for change most importantly the economic recession and the collapse of Soviet Union. A desire by the SVUL to westernise and unite Finnish sport was combined with the recognition that sport needed to have one voice and one set of agreed values and priorities. Government interest in the restructure of Finnish sport was driven by the external events and a need to professionalise sport. As a senior official stated:

The formation of the SLU was in part driven by the political desire of the government and in light of the economic recession and recognition that resources were being wasted there was a need to rationalise and streamline the sporting organisations (Interview: 2 June 2005).

Combined with this was the wish of government to remove the political influence involved in the funding of sport, which was based upon the political support of the sport federations by different political factions. The extent of political influence was evident in 1992 when a right wing coalition government was elected, which resulted in funding to the TUL being sharply reduced. The influence of the SVUL was reduced greatly in 1992 when due to the economic recession and poor financial judgement, it was close to bankruptcy. As a result much of the SVUL's influence dissipated allowing the TUL and government to seize the opportunity to structure Finnish sport with minimal input from the SVUL. While some saw the intervention of government as assisting the process, others in sport viewed the intervention as the state forcing sports to accept a particular solution. What this also indicated was the preparedness of government to intervene in sport matters despite claiming that sport must retain its autonomy. That the government was prepared to intervene so strongly is surprising given the contention that sports organisations must retain their autonomy, as explained a senior government official:

the whole idea in our civil society is the idea of autonomy, even though its a little of a paradox that the state is subsidising volunteer [sporting] activity we are
trying to maintain a partnership but still have them [retain] their own autonomy in these issues (Interview: 2 June 2006)

As explained by a senior academic, in restructuring the sports organisations, the government was prepared to invest resources to influence sports organisations; ‘money is a very good consultant, in this case it was’ (Interview: 1 June 2005). A further goal in forming the SLU was to change the structure of the sport sector, moving it away from the traditional hierarchical structure so that sport was controlled from the bottom not the top (Heikkala & Koski, 1999).

Objections to the formation of the SLU were raised by the central federations and were based upon the need for organisations to retain their own individual culture, such as the Swedish speaking Finns and the workers (Juppi, 1993). The structural changes have also led to a redistribution of power within Finnish sport as ‘there are a lot of players in the field now and no monopolisation for representation, even the SLU... is not at the top’ (Interview: A senior government official, 2nd June 2005). Although the SVUL was the only one of the four major federations to be disbanded, its influence is still evident in the sport policy sector. Many of its previous employees are now in senior positions within domain organisations or other sporting bodies. The influence of the TUL has dissipated considerably since the structural change of Finnish sport, coinciding with a fall in the level of political backing. As highlighted by a senior official, it is the two mandated positions on the Executive Board of the SLU (as a result of the negotiation at the time of the restructure) that has provided the TUL with a level of influence, which they would not have otherwise had.

The structural change was followed by the introduction of managerial processes to the sport sector. The 1990s witnessed a drive for increased efficiency and evaluation by government in the introduction of the Management by Results (MBR). MBR is used to assist the government in allocating funds to NGBs based upon their performance in three areas, youth sport, SfA and elite sport. State funding is allocated according to the NGBs’ result in each of those areas with 50% allocated to youth sport, 25 per cent to SfA and 25 per cent according to results in elite or top-level sport (Heikkala & Koski, 1999).
four years a national survey is conducted involving over 11,000 respondents to
determine the type of sports activities that are being undertaken by the public.
This information is then presented to the Ministry of Education by the domain
organisation and it is from this, in conjunction with other information, that
funding is determined. Unlike more prescriptive management evaluation
processes, the MBR process used in Finnish sport is not a strict or inflexible
system as factors outside the MBR process are taken into consideration in
allocating funding. Recent changes have introduced a quality dimension along-
side the number of participants. Under the revised MBR process, 70 per cent of
points are allocated for 'quality', while 30 per cent are allocated for the number
of participants in the areas of youth, SfA and elite sport. Each of these three
areas has stipulated quality criteria against which they are evaluated. While not
fully implemented at this stage it is intended that this will make it easier to
evaluate sport federations against the set criteria. In discussions with one
interviewee it is clear that there is uncertainty surrounding the term quality and
how this will be defined. The effect of this process has been two fold, first, to
influence the focus of the sport federations in their activities and second to
increase the efficiency and professionalisation of Finnish sport (Heikkala &
Koski, 1999). As explained by one NGB official:

As a result of MBR it has meant that the national sport governing bodies SfA is
more professionalised terms of organisation. Nearly all national sport governing
bodies have their own SfA programme. It is better organised, professional and
so on (Interview: A senior SfAA official, 9 March 2006).

The introduction of MBR has had a significant effect on NGBs resulting in a
growing emphasis on youth sport and SfA (Heikkala & Koski 1999). However,
this change has been gradual and elite level sport remains a major focus for
many sport federations. This may be explained by the fact that despite the
introduction of MBR, NGBs still retain considerable autonomy on how state
funding is spent. While it is allocated according to performance in the three
domain areas, NGBs are able to allocate funding wherever, or on whatever
they wish. There is no compulsion for them to spend the funding on those
areas for which the funding was allocated, allowing sports to retain a high level of autonomy in relation to their own direction and focus.

There is a paradox, however, as despite increasing levels of evaluation by government the autonomy of sport has also been retained. Sport federations do not have to allocate their spending according to MBR, and can allocate state funding according to their own priorities. While it is necessary for NGBs to provide an annual report, there are no detailed requirements for federations to report back on how government funding is allocated unless it was allocated for a specific project. As discussed by a senior sport official:

it [MBR] may be a good system. Anyway it's up to federations to decide how to use the money, even if the money comes 50 per cent SfA or the money comes like that the federations can decide how to use the money. So in that regard it is quite OK (Interview: A senior NGB official, 7 March 2006).

The role of the SLU has grown and developed over the last 13 years. As the voice for sport the SLU has been able to provide a level of coordination of Finnish sport that was previously not possible. A key benefit of establishing a voice for sport has been the ability to provide coordinated and focused responses on a number of policies and in a number of forums and to work with other sectors, 'before we [sport, arts and science] were battling each other it means there is a consensus between organisations that get Lottery money' (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006). While government policies have directly impacted upon sporting organisations, sport itself has become increasingly coordinated in the way in which it lobbies for change and support from government. Interestingly it is sport, through the SLU that is lobbying for the utilisation of the wider social benefits of sport:

we [SLU] are asking the political parties to include sports in their election programmes. That's something they have not done, we have tried very many times but they have not been interested. So we are offering two different things. That organised sport or sports in organisations is developing the social economy and social identity of people and so on. It's important, it's not only important to
move and have physical activity it's also important to be a member of a group or sub-group to get your social education so to say and that sort of thing. And the other, so how we call it, call it social life through sport or something like that. And the other is physical activity in itself as part of well-being of all national health (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006).

This raises two interesting points. First, that government has not deemed sport important enough to include it in election programmes and second, the way in which the SLU emphasised the value of sport incorporating not only health issues but wider social investment values. As with the establishment of YF and SfA, and the restructure of sport, sport itself has been a strong catalyst for these changes and in setting the direction of sport policy in Finland. The emergence of Young Finland as an influential sporting organisation is not surprising given the emphasis placed on youth, both by government and sport federations albeit with different motivations. Over two-thirds of YF’s budget is received from government: €2.5 million from the state and €1 million euros is received from other business partners. Of the €2.5 million allocated by the state, €1.5 million was provided specifically for projects identified by government. The significant level of funding provided by government for YF and the other domain organisation is in contrast to the generally stable or at times reduced funding provided to NGBs. Increasingly YF is also attempting to influence government to invest in sport facilities or schools. The Finnish school physical education system has been identified by sporting organisations and local government alike as an area of weakness in the Finnish sport sector and is considered to provide minimal value to Finnish physical culture. YF is educating teachers to deliver sport programmes to children. The lack of government investment in school sport is in part reflected in the fact that more than half of schools have school yards or sport facilities, which YF consider to be below standard. Despite lobbying government for over five years there has been a reluctance by central government to act although this is slowly changing (Interview: A senior YF official, 8 March 2006). What is unclear from the lack of state investment in school sport is whether government considers NGBs and local government the key providers of sport to youth, rather than the education system, or whether there is a lack of commitment to achieving life-long
participation. An added issue may be the reluctance of NGBs and domain organisation to relinquish or diminish their role in youth sport.

The 1990s saw the unification of the sporting organisations, and although still embryonic, this change appeared to provide Finnish sport with a more cohesive sport policy sector. Sport Federations work closely with other actors within the sport policy sector such as DOs and the FOC to achieve both the government's and sport's goals. Between 1995 and 2003 funding to sport organisations comprised between 23 per cent and 26 per cent of total sport funding. Along with this, funding from the state has remained relatively stable at €20,351,000 in 1995 and €22,434,000 in 2003 (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Distribution of state funding 1995-200310 (€1000)

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<tr>
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From Finland Ministry of Education (2003)

However, as a percentage of sport federation income, state funding varies considerably across different NSOs. Sporting Federations such as the Finnish Ski Association receive 14 per cent of their total funding from the state, composed of about 9 per cent from lottery funding and about 5 per cent from the Finnish Olympic committee. A similar situation is evident in Finnish athletics where 20 per cent of the total budget is received from the state, while in orienteering state funding comprises about 33 per cent of the total budget.

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10 Monetary values have been scaled to 2003 value
Increasingly this has required NGBs to seek funding from other sources to bolster or increase revenue streams. However, despite the at times low level of funding, the influence of government on sport federations appears strong, based upon commonly held core beliefs regarding sport:

If you think of it from a company point of view if the state owns 14 per cent, so they have a 14 per cent influence but they have much more than that because of the strategies that they are running.... they are in a way included in our own activities they have influenced more than the [money they invest] (Interview: A senior NGB official, 29 March 2006).

The ability of the state to influence NGBs beyond the level to which they are resourced raises the concept of power. It is here that Lukes (2005) third face of power may be insightful. As Lukes argued, the exercise of power occurs when 'A exercises power over B when A affects B a manner which is contrary to B's interests' (Lukes, 2005: 37). What is unclear is whether the power exerted by the Finnish government is in the interests of NGBs; in other words is this the securing of voluntary compliance? Alternatively the NGBs maybe acting in accordance with wider patterns of control while believing (maybe falsely) that they are able to act otherwise.

Finnish sporting federations appear to have a strong sense of social responsibility and acceptance of the need for sport to assist government in achieving its social objectives. The close working relationship between sport and government itself appears to have also influenced the way in which sport itself has been conceptualised. Sport federations are increasingly aware of the need of SfA, elite and youth sport to be not only coordinated together but conceptualised, with all three areas dependent on each other. However, there is still evidence that youth sport and SfA are used to support elite sport rather than integral parts of the same concept. This may also reflect the growing interest in supporting clubs as federations realise the need to ensure volunteers are adequately trained and motivated to stay within sport.
Evident within Finnish sport was the extent of over-lapping posts, and the web of close relationships between sports organisation, federations and politicians at both national and local level. Reciprocal board membership, the presence of politicians on Sport boards, regular contact with key partners and stakeholders has led to previously competing organisations supporting and working together.

It is a small world, the sports world we have here, the relationships are very personal which means there are lots of communication and now people are learning a new culture when you get to know the interests of the various parties (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2005).

The structural changes have facilitated closer working relationships through the increased role of DOs and the need for sports organisations to work together and share resources to achieve their goals. The need to develop and maintain networks was explained by a senior NGB official:

so even though we are a big Federation, one of the biggest in Finland, we will not manage ourselves, we have to have a lot of networks we have to take advantage of the expertise that exits in Young Finland, the Olympic Committee and Kunto [SfAA] (Interview: 7 March 2006).

It is here that the policy network literature is instructive as policy communities are characterised as having ‘Frequent and high quality interaction between all the members of the community’ (Rhodes, 1997: 43). Furthermore, the ability of the policy community to play a role in agenda setting, or in other words affect the range of problems and solutions, which are considered (see Marsh & Smith, 2000), may have contributed to the consistent and dominant path of SfA in Finnish sport policy.

The process of breaking down the tensions between the left and right political ideology cannot be reduced to a structural change. These tensions have decreased but are still evident in certain settings, mainly with older officials who have experienced the previous system.
For example [in the Council] the SLU has strong basis from the former SVUL, this bourgeoisie federation. It was not built on it but it has lots of members and lots of the national sports organisation you know the old SVUL and it happens to be that the chairman is from the other side. When ever there is a question of money there is a little nagging going on, why are they [SLU] growing up, it was supposed to be a light organisation this SLU why are they still giving money to it. On the other side what he does not say is the TUL is not getting any more money and that is what he is really saying (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2006).

The second Sports Act (1999) reinforced the government's continued focus on using sport to achieve a broad range of objectives. While the rapid development of facilities during the 1970 to 1980s slowed, changes to the criteria for state subsidies for construction of facilities and sites for exercise and sports emphasised the need for increased access for 'ordinary people'. The government continued to invest in facilities as mandated under the Sports Act (1999), with funding for facilities modestly increasing between 1995 and 2003 from 10,596,000 to 14,386,000 (Ministry of Education). To assist in achieving these aims, the Ministry of Education directed that over a five year period a major proportion on the state resourcing for facility development would be directed at sites that served 'ordinary people in their daily environments' (Vuori et al., 2004: 334).

While total funding for sport has increased since 1995 total state support for municipalities has actually decreased (see Table 5.7). The total budget for sport from the government in 2004 was about €86,389,000 and for 2005 was about €91,397,001 (Heikkala, 2004). In 2004, 26 per cent of total government funding was allocated to sports organisations (it is unclear how this group is defined) with 18 per cent allocated to municipalities, indicating the significance of both groups in achieving governments goals. Recent changes to Lottery legislation have increased sport funding from 23 per cent to 25 per cent, with the increase being phased in over a number of years (Ministry of Education).
The 2001 Government Resolution identified eight key areas including, a) organisation of the co-operations on HEPA, b) financing of HEPA, c) use of community structure and everyday settings promoting physical activity, d) integrating HEPA into municipal welfare policy, e) promoting physical activity at different stages of lifespan f) education in HEPA, g) research for HEPA, monitoring and evaluation of the populations physical activity and functional capability, and h) issues relating to the implementation of the Government Resolution. The fifth area highlights the need for Finnish sport development to adopt a model that encompasses all ages. Evident from the Resolution, is the purpose of life-long practice of physical activity to increase the ability of citizens to work and improve their health, which results in greater independence and less reliance on state resources. As population trends predict that Finland’s population in the over 65 year old age cohort will increase from 15.9 per cent in 2004 to 27 per cent in 2040 it is not surprising that there is now a growing concern to use sport and physical activity to assist in reducing the potential costs (Statistics Finland, 2005a). However, promotion of physical activity at the different stages of lifespan focuses on youth, families and those who are to increase their levels of fitness rather than targeted policies aimed at life-long participation.

Consistent with the move towards increased evaluation has been the requirement for sport policy initiatives to be based upon research. The economic recession was a catalyst for sport having to justify continued government investment. As a result a comprehensive review, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, on the social justification for physical activity and sport was produced by academics and officials in the sport sector. This was the first time that in which the exercise and sport research community was asked by the government to contribute directly to sport policy development (Vuori, Paronen, & Oja, 1998). The need for evidence based research is in part reflected by the relatively high investment in research in comparisons with other Nordic countries (Kokkonen, 2000). Acceptance of the evidence relating to physical activity is evident in the Government Resolution (2001) on policies to develop health-enhancing physical activity. This document stated that ‘there is indisputable research-based evidence of favourable effects of physical activity'.
activity' and that the benefits of this are not only on the improvement of health and well-being but also the saving of public expenditure as a result of this activity (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002: 1).

The 1990s saw increased autonomy given to municipalities by the state. Legislative change altered funding arrangements, allowing funds given to municipalities by the state to be spent as they wished. However, although the funding by municipalities for sport had increased since 1993, the level of state support both in actual values and as a percentage of the total municipal budget has been steadily decreasing. The extent of the investment in sport by municipalities is unclear with estimates between €670 million and €368,307,000 by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education). What is evident is that the level of investment by municipalities is significant in comparison with the central government. With increased autonomy of the local government and the increased investment in sport the influence of the municipalities in delivering sport policy objectives is steadily growing whereas the direct influence of government appears to be lessening. A steady change has, nevertheless, occurred as municipalities move towards supporting SfA principles rather than focusing on competitive sport as previous. The growing economic pressure on municipalities has led to an increase in joint initiatives between municipalities especially in relation to the development of facilities and the desire to reap future economic health for their citizens. While national policies such as MBR have focused on youth, municipal sport policy takes into account local conditions and the need to cater for all its citizens.

It is through maintenance, development and building of sport facilities that municipalities provide support to the sport club and sport organisation. They are usually provided free of charge or heavily subsidised. The relatively small market for the provision of sports service in Finland also creates issues. There is very little private sector provision of sport facilities or programmes although this is increasing in areas that are normally considered to be more expensive such as horse-riding or golf. As discussed by a senior local government official, municipalities also try to control the price of activities provided by the clubs by
charging moderate fees. Because of this, sport organisations, including clubs, are unable exploit their relative monopoly in the market.

Evidence of government concern with the 'fitness' of the workforce is evident in the focus of the SfA Association. The budget for SfAA, about €700,000 pa, is considerably smaller than that of YF. Again about 60 per cent of SfAA funding is received from government with the remainder generated through conferences, educational material and the delivery of services. As highlighted earlier in the chapter, a key focus for the SfAA are those people within the working age group, in particular those considered to be below average in physical fitness. It has been mainly through the financing of specific projects that funding for SfA has increased, again highlighting the way in which the government has influenced the direction of the DOs. As the SfAA is primarily focusing on those with low levels of fitness in an effort to achieve health and economic benefits, the broad range of programmes often associated with SfA is not occurring, or in other words there is a focus on the inactive with those already participating in physical activity having few targeted programmes. A key stakeholder and partner group for the SfAA are private companies who invest about €220 million in physical activities programmes each year (Interview: 9 March 2006).

Elite sport has undergone considerable change during the last five years. The event which was to be the catalyst for this change was the doping scandal at the 2001 Lahti Nordic World Skiing Championships where six Finnish athletes tested positive. As well as having a considerable financial impact (estimated that the Finnish sport lost at between €10 and €15 million from sponsors and state funding) upon Finnish sport and in particular the Ski Association, the following Doping Enquiry Taskforce resulted in far reaching changes for to elite sport (see Anti Doping Report 2001). Most significantly for Finnish sport and ALLP this incident also reinforced why government should not invest in elite sport as it reinforced the negatives aspects of top-level sport. While the level of state support for elite sport has increased, it appears to be struggling against a dominant discourse of SfA. As stated by a senior official:
No one really dares to talk about more investment [in elite sport] ... it's not really a good thing today to talk about elite sport because there are too many problems with doping and cheating and whatever there might be. So nobody really dares to talk so much about it' (Interview: A senior Finnish Sports Federation official, 9 March 2006).

It is here that Lukes (2005) second and third face of power may provide a useful insight into power relations within Finnish sport. It would appear that the hidden power of non-decision making is occurring with elite sport struggling to find a voice in Finnish sport. However, at a more insidious level, Lukes' third face of power may be evident, that is where people's interests are manipulated. Difficulty in clearly identifying which framework of power may be at work again highlights the empirical difficulties inherent in analysing power relations.

In contrast to the often expressed need for sport to retain its autonomy and the hands-off approach adopted by the Finnish government towards sporting organisations, the Finnish government has intervened on matters of significance such as the restructure in 1993 and doping scandal of 2001. This would indicate that there are certain issues, which the government is prepared to intervene on and will, therefore, not leave the direction and focus of sport policy completely to sporting organisations. While a lack of winning Olympic medals was not considered a matter which the Finnish government would intervene with regard to, the impact of the 2001 doping scandal was such that government intervention was very direct. As discussed by a senior NOC official, the Finnish government ‘wouldn’t withdraw funding for [a lack of] medals, no, but for doping offences of course that one [is a different matter]’ (Interview: 7 March 2006).

**Conclusions to chapter**

Since the 1960s, there has been considerable change in the direction of Finnish sport policy. The emergence of a social democratic welfare regime in the 1960s coincided with increased state interest in the welfare role of sport. Not surprisingly, the social democratic values and beliefs that emerged during the 1960s created an environment, which was predisposed to the goals of SfA, and from which the current path of sport development in Finland emerged.
However, the level of state intervention fluctuated considerably, from a hands-off approach to one of direct intervention. The introduction of legislation (at national and regional level), the establishment of national SfA programmes and the introduction of MBR contributed to shaping not only the actions of NGBs and local government but also an environment in which SfA became the dominant discourse. In contrast, the lack of support for elite sport development indicates that the government was prepared to sacrifice elite success, however, recent developments signal that this may also be changing.

Despite Finland being recognised as one of the most active countries in Europe in terms of sport participation, it is impossible with any certainty to determine what effect policies have had upon achieving this. However, three themes have emerged that may provide an insight into Finland’s success. First, the close network of relationships in Finnish sport, second the increasing professionalisation of sport and third the widening concept of sport and use of sport in Finnish social policy. Despite Finland’s success in achieving high levels of sport participation across a range of age cohorts there appears to have been no overarching policy aimed at achieving ALLP. By creating the pre-conditions for sport through an extensive facility network, participation by adults has been left primarily to their own initiative. As one senior state official explained:

basically the adult mass sport or SfA is very dependent on individuals and their own motivation. There are various projects that we have that subsidise in health or whole life project. But they are like pressure points in various municipalities, here and there and here and there. But there is no overall programme or overall institution like that (Interview: 2 June 2006).

The first theme concerns the tight network of relationships within the sport subsystem demonstrated by the close relationships between different sporting organisations and the Sport Division of the Ministry of Education. The changes of the early 1990s, initiated in part by the sport federations but instigated by government removed the structural barriers that were evident between the different political ideologies. As a result the ideological antagonism between the various federations that had dominated Finnish sport since the early 20th
century was reduced. As a result of the changes there was an enhanced need for close cooperation between different sporting organisations, such as the DOs and the NSOs, to achieve their organisational goals. Furthermore, the disestablishment of the SVUL resulted in many of its members shifting to different sporting organisations, which created a web of strong personal and professional relationships. Board membership frequently consists of members from different organisations leading to a greater understanding of role and purpose between the sporting organisation and government. This combined with an ethos of consultation has contributed to the development of a sector with common core beliefs, with SfA as the dominant discourse. In contrast elite sport remains a topic that is seldom supported openly. It is somewhat unclear whether the high level of consultation reinforces or shapes the already dominant SfA ideology or whether it provides an opportunity for discussion and debate. Any tension that may exist appears to be managed through extensive consultation and no doubt facilitated by the close relationships and small network within which sport in Finland operates. This has allowed for a momentum to build where SfA and the right for all citizens to participate in sport is a strong value (priority).

The increasing professionalisation of Finnish sport is the second theme to emerge. While a strong volunteer base and broad civic activity remains the backbone of Finnish sport, the introduction of MBR, the increasing number of paid and full-time staff employed in the sport sector and an increasing emphasis placed on the need to justify state funding has led to greater professionalisation of the sport sector. In part this occurred due to the economic pressure created by the recession of the 1990s and factors that were seen to be unfavourable to societal spending on sport such as doping, violence and commercialisation of sport. Youth sport has gained increasing support due to the introduction of MBR and the funding formula it entails. The introduction of MBR is tempered by the autonomy that sport organisations retain in Finland, resulting in the move towards greater transparency and evaluation not developing as far as might have been anticipated. The establishment of the SLU has provided Finnish sport with an umbrella organisation that is able to represent sport to government agencies and other external organisations and
provides sport with a coordinated and professional approach in building support and dealing with issues at the national level. This has given the sport sector, which is strongly based on the ethos of civic duty and volunteerism, a professionalism that was not previously always apparent.

Finally the widening definition and use of sport is the third theme to emerge. The traditional narrow view of sport has given way to one where sport is considered part of a wider health and social welfare concept. While the benefits of health have been a strong focus for government investment in sport, this is also the case for daily physical activity. In making a recent submission for sport to be included in political manifestos, the SLU has highlighted the social impact of sport and the extent to which social investment in sport has benefits beyond physical activity. This may indicate a move by some sports organisations to differentiate the value of sport over that of physical activity. Government use of sport as a tool to promote nationalism and nation building has been surpassed by the use of sport to address health issues associated with declining health and an ageing population. This change in focus was highlighted by a senior government official who signalled a shift in the future direction of Finnish sport policy:

[we are entering] a third phase now, we are talking about well-being which is even broader, not just sport and physical activity, equality, wellbeing, employment, prevention of marginalisation all of these social issues have become very important and in this context Finnish physical culture is currently looking for its identity. We have come from one core thing [and we] have broadened out (Interview: 2 June 2005).
Chapter 6

New Zealand

Introduction

This chapter will examine the nature of policy change in relation to adult life-long participation and in particular identify characteristics of government policy that are considered successful in contributing to increasing life-long participation in sport in New Zealand. The chapter has been divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief socio-economic overview of New Zealand as well as brief discussion on the early years of sport in New Zealand. The second section considers sport participation levels in New Zealand while the third section reviews the contemporary structure of New Zealand sport along with a discussion on the current levels of participation in sport in New Zealand. The final section considers the development of sport policy over three time periods. The first is from 1970 to 1987, a period when the New Zealand government signalled a change in the way in which it viewed sport. Increasing government intervention during an era dominated by the welfare ethos resulted in sport being seen as the right of all people. Despite the emergence of competing coalitions during this period, Sport for All principles dominated the approach to government intervention in sport. The second period begins in 1987 with the establishment of the Hillary Commission and ends in 2002 with the establishment of Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) the new crown entity under which for the first time all three areas of sport and recreation were included; elite sport, grassroots sport and physical recreation. Increasing concerns regarding the high levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity resulted in national programmes being developed in an attempt to reverse these trends. The final period to be discussed is from 2002 until July 2007. It is this period, which has seen the most rapid change, both in the level of investment by government, the growing salience of sport to assist in achieving stipulated government outcomes and the marginalisation of grassroots sport as an area of government investment.
Three themes have emerged from this review of sport policy in New Zealand, the first of which has been the emergence of coalitions of interest, based around elite sport, grassroots sport and physical recreation and more latterly physical activity. While the existence of these coalitions became more apparent, particularly during the 1990s, there has been a blurring of boundaries surrounding physical activity, grassroots sport and physical recreation as distinct coalitions of interest. The elite sport coalition is based on the development of competitive sport at national or international level while grassroots sport is sporting activity which is participated in by the masses (this is also referred to as mass-sport and recreational sport by SPARC). The physical recreation coalition, is centred upon activity which is generally not as structured as sport, and includes activities such as tramping, fishing, boating, fitness classes and walking (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001). Finally, the physical activity coalition encompasses a wide range of organisations and interests, and relates to any activity, which involves physical movement and can include both grassroots sport and physical recreation. Physical activity has a clear focus on improving the health of individuals and encouraging individuals to be come more active in their everyday live. The blurring of boundaries between grassroots sport and physical activity and its impact on achieving life-long participation in sport will be discussed in further detail in this chapter. The second theme relates to the increasing emphasis of health as a driver for introducing new programmes, as a result there has been an emphasis on physical activity, with sport considered only one of many activities, which people are encouraged to participate in. Increasingly SPARC is being drawn towards opposite ends of a continuum, towards the development of elite sport and, at the other extreme, to addressing physical activity levels and poor nutrition. The final theme to emerge from this study is the strong focus on youth, much of which has been driven by increasing obesity levels amongst young people. However, it is also based on the assumption that physical activity habits formed at a young age will continue to be engaged in post-school. While there is no coherent policy framework surrounding adult lifelong participation in sport, there is a clear desire to achieve this goal. Whether this can be achieved without a dedicated and clear strategy directed towards achieving adult life-long participation is yet to be determined.
Background

New Zealand, situated to the southeast of Australia, consists of two main islands and a number of smaller coastal islands. Given the land area (268,000 square kilometres/103,000 square miles and a population of 4,098,300 (NZ Statistics, 2005), New Zealand has large areas, which are sparsely populated. A country with about 4 million people New Zealand has prided itself on its performance on the international sporting stage (Gunson, 1999). It is predominantly mountainous and hilly, with 13 per cent of the total area consisting of alpine terrain, including many peaks exceeding 3,000 metres (9,800 feet). Climatic conditions vary considerably with mountainous regions in the South Island to subtropical climes in the North Island. The variation in both climate and geography combined with large areas of open space has contributed to the type and nature of sporting activities in New Zealand.

Unlike the Australian federal system, New Zealand’s political system is based upon the British Westminster system but with a uni-cameral House of Representatives. From the outset, New Zealand has been a country that has been at the forefront of instituting social welfare legislation. New Zealand was the world’s first country to give women the right to vote in 1893 along with a range of other welfare related policies implemented throughout the early part of the 20th century. The welfare state dominated New Zealand society and politics until the mid-1980s when, under a Labour led government, New Zealand underwent radical economic and social change. In 1984 the welfare state, which was the cornerstone of New Zealand politics, was replaced after the rapid and aggressive adoption of neo-liberal policies - presenting a stark contrast to the history of welfarism evident in earlier years (Shaver, 1999). A number of external events were key drivers for this rapid change in the style and manner of government including a decade of failing growth, adverse terms of agricultural trade, a large external debt and growing criticism of public sector bureaucracy (Martin, 2001; Shaver, 1999). The system of controls that had regulated the New Zealand economy were dismantled and a programme of extensive economic reform that had been previously unknown in the western world occurred (Shaver, 1999). This resulted in marked benefit cuts, scaling down of the state, empowering of the market economy and the removal of
subsidies and other incentives. Corporatisation and privatisation of state owned assets and the introduction of private sector management values and techniques into the public service were rapidly adopted (Miller, 2001). Through a number of statutory instruments and the reconfiguration of government, the Labour government transformed the structure, staffing and culture of the New Zealand public sector (Martin, 2001).

Two factors were of particular relevance to sport during this period. First, was the emergence of crown entities (semi-autonomous state agencies similar to quangos12) within the machinery of government and second, was the aggressive adoption of managerialism within the public sector. However, while many crown entities have their own empowering statutes, there remains uncertainty as to the degree of independence from Ministers. This lack of clarity regarding the demarcation of the Minister and the crown entity has caused confusion in regard to the extent of Ministerial involvement. While there are certain areas where the Minister is unable to direct the action of the crown entity, there also exits an obligation for crown entities to focus on governments medium and long-term goals, which needs to be steered by Minister (Martin, 2001). Under the Crown Entities Act (2004) the Minister of Sport and Recreation is unable to direct Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) in regard to the allocation of funds to any person or in relation to a policy, practice or procedure or decision. Despite this the Minister has had considerable influence on the direction and focus of SPARC. The influence of the Minister has been clearly evident, in part due to his position as a member of Cabinet, as noted by a senior SPARC official, ‘the fact you have a senior minister means that your ability to influence or be party to major government decisions is so much greater. We have much more direct access to a lot of the government's decision making processes’ (Interview: 25 October 2006).

Assisting this were the other ministerial portfolios held by the Minister of Sport and Recreation. At the time of the establishment of SPARC, the Minister of Sport and Recreation also held the Education portfolio and because of this was

12 A Quango is a quasi-autonomous national-governmental organisation. The non-governmental organisation performs governmental functions and is staffed by appointees rather than by ministers or civil servants.
able to directly impact upon the way in which both the Ministry of Education and SPARC worked together. This was highlighted in an interview with a senior SPARC official when discussing the early relationship between the Ministry of Education and SPARC:

we were very lucky as the Minister Trevor Mallard, was the Minister of both Sport and Recreation, and Education. So he could see the links and the necessity of linking the two so he just knocked their heads [SPARC and the Ministry of Education staff] together and that's when it [co-operation] started to happen, so we were fortunate really (Interview: 16 October 2006).

The influence of the Minister on the development of policy was evident in the recently adopted Mission On programme which was designed to encourage youth to increase physical activity levels. As highlighted by a senior government official the new programme was instigated very quickly due to the Ministers input and direction:

At the beginning of the year he [Minister of Sport and Recreation] called us into his office and said 'there is youth, recreation and pathways...I want to know what we can do to work across government'. Within a couple of days we were being called in to list everything that was going on and coming up with new ideas. He said 'don't analyse them bring me the ideas and I will talk to the ministers', and the whole thing took off [within four days]. Eventually it evolved into the Mission On package (Interview: 16 October 2006).

The second factor to impact upon the sport sector was the extent to which the public sector adopted ‘managerialism’ (New Public Management), in relation to which New Zealand is considered to have gone further and faster than other countries. As a result, the focus of government policy turned to performance being measured quantitatively (rather than qualitatively), an emphasis on the market, clear objectives for organisations and the freeing of managers to manage (Schick 1996 in Martin 2001: 136). Along with this also came the requirement to develop and produce strategic plans, key performance indicators and the need to demonstrate a return on investment. This approach has cascaded down to organisations within the sports sector who wish to be
resourced or supported by government. A key goal of these changes was the move towards greater efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, government agencies, including SPARC were required to make a case in the 'market place' for continued investment and support. This corporate approach within SPARC as evident in discussions with a senior SPARC official:

it is quite an important economic question for us to be able to optimise sport, how much you should spend in terms of what goals you should set' (Interview: 25th October, 2006).

The extent to which return on investment has impacted is clearly evident in regard to the approach to elite sport and the winning of medals when a senior SPARC official attempted to explore the correlation of numbers of Olympic medals won to happiness:

what is an optimum elite result?. Because if this is happiness and this is sadness and this is the number of medals. We know zero is sadness, ten is gold and ecstatic. What is the state of this curve and I suspect it is something like this, we need to know roughly what that is (Interview: 25 October 2006).

It is against this political background that the New Zealand sport sub-system has developed. The impact of the newly formed crown entity Sport and Recreation New Zealand and the adoption of New Public Management within the sport policy sub-system are clearly evident. As will be highlighted in the following section the contemporary structure of sport policy in New Zealand is dominated by the recently established government crown entity Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) and the adoption of business orientated practices in the search for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

New Zealand participation levels

New Zealand has prided itself upon its level of sports participation, both at the elite level and also amongst ordinary New Zealanders. However, statistics on the level of sport participation have been sporadically gathered leading to a lack of longitudinal sport participation statistics. To date information on
Participation levels in New Zealand have been based upon the Sport and Physical Recreation Survey that was conducted in 1997/1998, 1998/1999 and 2000/2001. The survey interviewed New Zealand adults (people aged 18 years and over) and young people (people aged 5-17 years). The lack of a survey tool to establish levels of participation has frequently been highlighted as an area of concern, resulting in a New Zealand Sport and Physical Activity survey being commissioned for 2007/2008. Given the relatively short duration over which the surveys were conducted it is difficult to identify long-term trends in levels of participation.

**Sporting activity**

Participation in sporting activity is highest amongst 18-24 year olds and falls as people get older, a trend consistent with many other western countries. However, levels of sport participation amongst the 18-24 year old age group has fallen from 97 per cent in 1997/1998 to 94 per cent in 2000/2001 while in the corresponding period participation in the older age groups slightly increased or remained static (see table 6.1). However, consistent with Australia, levels of sporting activity declined with age (see Table 6.1) and men also participated in higher numbers than women (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2003). While this may indicate high levels of participation, it is necessary to note that the data do not indicate intensity and relates to taking part in sporting activity only once in the last 12 months, again making comparisons with other participation surveys (such as Compass 1999) difficult.

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<td>18-24</td>
<td>97.1</td>
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<td>25-34</td>
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<td>65+</td>
<td>61.9</td>
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Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003b)

In considering levels of sport participation in a club setting, a similar trend was found with levels of participation decreasing with age. A club was defined as
any sport and/or leisure activity club and association, gyms and fitness centres, work places and social clubs and any other clubs people belong to in order to take part in a sport (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2003b). The most significant decrease in levels of sport participation in a club setting was found in the 18-24 year old age cohort where participation decreased from 53 to 42.5 per cent between 1997 and 2001 (see Table 6.2). This also corresponds with a fall in participation in organised competition from 45 per cent to 32 per cent for the same age cohort (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.2 Adults participating in sport as part of a club in New Zealand

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<td>65+</td>
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Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003b)

However, in all other age cohorts, with the exception of the 50-60 year old age cohort, there has been a slight increase in the number of adults participating in sport as part of a club. It would appear, therefore, that the shift away participating in sport in a club setting appears to be stronger amongst the younger rather than older age groups. However, given the rather wide definition of a club, it is difficult to ascertain amongst which organisations adults are participating most, or least, with regard to their sporting activities.

Data gathered with regard to taking part in organised competition also indicated declining levels of participation with age (see Table 6.3). Organised competition was defined as participation in any organised competition, at any level from a local league to international competition. What is interesting is the decrease in levels of participation in organised competition amongst the 18-24 year old age group, between 1997/1998 and 2000/2001, from 45.1 per cent to 32.1 percent (see Table 6.3). This may indicate that amongst the 18-24 year old age group New Zealanders are moving away from organised sporting.
activity. However, as noted earlier, given the short period time over which data was collected makes it difficult to claim any trends in levels of participation with certainty.

Table 6.3 Participation by adults in organised competition in New Zealand

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<td>65+</td>
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<td>16.9</td>
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Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003b)

Physical activity

The New Zealand Sport and Physical Activity Survey not only measured sport participation levels but also levels of physical activity, which included sport and leisure activities. Being inactive was defined as participating in physical activity for less than 2.5 hours per week while being physically active was defined as taking part in more than 2.5 hours of physical activity per week. In 1997/98 and 1998/99, and consistent with levels of sport participation, levels of overall physical activity declined with age (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Percentage of physically active adults in New Zealand

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<td>64.2</td>
<td>67.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003b)

13 Leisure activities might include activities such as gardening, tramping, aerobics, fishing or walking.
14 Took part in at least 2.5 hours of sport/leisure-time physical activity in the 7 days before the interview.
Of note however, is that in 2000/01 levels of physical activity overall actually increased with age; what is unclear however, is what was behind such an increase.

As noted earlier, further longitudinal data is required to determine whether the 2000/01 physical activity participation levels indicates a shift in participation patterns or is merely a brief exception to previous trends. However, this data might suggest that New Zealand has moved towards achieving life-long participation in physical activity (which includes sport and active leisure). While the Sport and Physical Recreation Surveys indicated New Zealanders had relatively high levels of physical activity, there remains a considerable percentage of the population which are inactive (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Percentage of adults physically inactive in New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
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<td>33.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>35.8</td>
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<td>65+</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003b)

While levels of inactivity are similar for all age groups, it is interesting to note that adults in the 25 to 49 year old age groups were more likely to be inactive than those in the 50+ age cohorts. This may be related to work commitments as the level of inactivity for the 60+ age group (when most people are likely to retire) in 2000/2001 were the lowest for all groups.

With the limited data available, it is suggested that New Zealand, despite increasing levels of physical activity, has been unable to achieve adult life-long participation in sporting activity. However, with regards to levels of physical activity, there are indications that life-long participation is more likely to be achieved. New Zealand is consistent with other countries such as England, Ireland and Great Britain with participation declining with age and higher levels of participation amongst men than women (UK Sport, Sport England, &
Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano, 1999). Noticeable is the shift away from organised sporting activity despite relatively stable levels of club participation in the 25+ age cohorts.

**Contemporary Structure**

While the landscape of sport policy in New Zealand has had several iterations since the 1930s, the most recent and perhaps most significant change occurred in 2002. For the first time responsibility for sport policy, elite sport, grassroots sport and physical recreation all resided under the umbrella of one government organisation. The contemporary structure of New Zealand sport policy sector consists of a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations (see Figure 6.1).

**Figure 6.1 New Zealand sport policy structure**

![Diagram of New Zealand sport policy structure](image)
**Governmental Organisations**

**Sport and Recreation New Zealand**

Responsibility for the development of sport policy in New Zealand resides with the crown entity SPARC. Established under the Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act (2002), and located under the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, SPARC has responsibility for developing and balancing the areas of elite sport, grassroots sport and physical recreation. Under the initial structure of SPARC each of the three areas operated as a distinct group: a) the New Zealand Academy of Sport (high performance); b) Sport Development; and c) Physical Recreation. However, in an effort to meet the sector’s changing needs and to better integrate the areas of high performance and participation all three areas now operate under the Sector Development Division. The other business areas within SPARC include organisational development, corporate services, marketing and communications, and research, policy and planning (see Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2 Structure of Sport and Recreation New Zealand**

It is under the division of Sector Development that the groups, which address increasing physical activity levels (and elite performance), are located. Two major programmes address youth and adults respectively. While *Active Children* concentrates on increasing physical activity and awareness amongst
youth (0 to 24 years of age), the Active Living programme has a broader focus including the post-school group, indigenous peoples, parents and the inactive. Both programmes focus upon a broad range of activities which include, but are not restrictive to sport. Other activities such as physical recreation (including outdoor recreation) and physical activity ensure the continuum and intensity of activities included under the mandate of SPARC is extremely broad.

Nevertheless, SPARC is reliant upon other organisations to achieve its outcomes and has moved away from being a provider of programmes to being a strategic partner providing funding, information and other support services to its partners (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b: 9). Within SPARC the High Performance Unit (HPU) is the group primarily responsible for the development and delivery of elite sport policy. The HPU works directly with NGBs to improve high performance plans and programmes and directs its elite sport investment through its NGBs and its high performance services network, the New Zealand Academy of Sport. Established in 2000, and funded directly by SPARC, the New Zealand Academy of Sport network delivers services to athletes in the areas of coaching, sport science, sports medicine, athlete career education and training facilities. The network also delivers coaching support, coach education and coach professional development.

More significantly, SPARC allocates funding to national governing bodies (NGBs), Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs), local government and other strategic partners with regard to delivering particular outcomes relating to elite and recreational sport. Funding for SPARC is received from two key sources: Vote Funding (allocated direct from the Crown) and New Zealand Lotteries Commission, with additional funding received from other government departments including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education; however, frequently this funding is allocated to specific programmes. Funding is distributed by SPARC according to established priorities and allocated to organisations/agencies within the sport sector that are able to assist SPARC in achieving its organisational goals. The rapid increase in funding of SPARC and the subsequent allocation of resources to NGBs and other sporting bodies has
resulted in SPARC attaining an influential position in the sport sector due to its increasing level and control of resources.

**Local government**

New Zealand’s Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) are divided between 15 city councils and 59 district councils. Local government in New Zealand is independent of, but subordinate to central government. Local body authorities can be separated into 4 separate categories: territorial, regional, community and *ad hoc*. Major areas of concern such as education, policing, health and social welfare are the responsibility of central government and fall outside the responsibility of the TLA’s. However, there are a number of functions, which local governments are mandated to deliver. Under the **Local Government Act (2002)** section 10 sets out the purpose of local government which is to a) enable democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of communities and, b) promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future, however, TLAs have no regulatory responsibility to deliver sporting or recreational activities to their community.

Despite this, local government plays a key role in New Zealand sport, primarily through the provision of sport facilities and together with Regional Sports Trusts, the development of recreational sport in the community. Increasingly local government is moving away from merely being a provider of facilities and adopting a strictly user pays approach to the provision of facilities and services that was adopted during the economic shift of the 1980s. One senior local government official highlighted the change in thinking by local government:

> the 1989 legislation kind of turned us upside down and many authorities were subjected to the funder/provider split and many services were contracted out. So much of the recreational planning strategy work was lost and just wasn’t done. We are just kind of in the last 5 to 8 years coming back onto that (Interview: 11 October 2006).
The influence of SPARC upon local government and the direction of sport policy is variable, largely due to the significant levels of investment already committed at the local government level. As explained by a senior local government official:

> there has been some influence from SPARC, but the reality is, especially way out here, they’re actually a small player, our budget’s as big as theirs. The city spends the same as they do every year, on just our city (Interview: 19 October 2006).

The Education sector, in particular the role of schools, has been a significant factor in supporting sport participation in extra-curricular pastimes of students. Administered nationally there is a single curriculum for sport in schools. A significant shift in physical education occurred with the introduction of the new Health and Physical Education syllabus introduced in 1999. This resulted in a holistic focus, which was underpinned by four inter-related concepts wellbeing, health promotion, sociological perspectives and attitudes and values (Burrows, 2003). The existence of a national compulsory curriculum system, as noted by Connell and Edwards (2000) has provided a system with the potential to shape attitudes towards increasing and maintaining sport participation as well as educating about the value of sport and lies at the heart of the strong focus upon youth programmes also delivered by SPARC.

**Non-governmental organisations**

The key non-governmental organisations involved in delivering and implementing sport policy within the New Zealand are the National Sports Organisations, Regional Sports Trusts, New Zealand Olympic Committee and the New Zealand Drug Agency.

**National governing bodies**

NGBs are responsible for the development of their sport both in respect of increasing participation levels and the development of elite performance. Funding is provided direct to NGBs from SPARC for the purpose of achieving both increased participation levels and improved elite performance, with the achievement of key priorities and targets a key aspect. Since 2001/2002
funding for NGBs has increased significantly, from NZD$13,358,624 to NZD$35,492,882 in 2006/2007, a 165 per cent increase. While it is difficult to separate funding allocated directly to NGBs for increasing participation levels, it is interesting to note that between 2001/2002 and 2004/2005 funding allocated directly to NGBs for high performance increased from NZD$7,123,440 to NZD$11,491,300. During the same period, under the banner of National Development, which included funding for increasing participation, improving governance and management systems and coaching, funding to NGBs increased from NZD$5,717,240 to NZD$8,114,588.

New Zealand Olympic Committee
The New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) assists SPARC and the NGBs in the preparation and selection of athletes for the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. An autonomous organisation, the NZOC operates independently from SPARC, however, the level of funding received from SPARC has steadily increased from NZD$100,000 in 2002/2003 to NZD$500,000 in 2005/2006 (Sport and Recreation New Zealand 2003a; Sport and Recreation New Zealand 2006a). While not directly involved in delivering SPARC related programmes aimed at increasing participation, currently the NZOC has nine programme areas, of which Sport for All (SfA) is one. The SfA programme supports ‘the right of all people to play sport that suits their needs by contributing to the promotion of sports programmes and competition at all levels’ (NZOC 2006). The NZOC SfA programme has identified three key areas in SfA which are driven primarily through education and the support of events which promote the principles of Olympism. However, these have not been integrated into government programmes that address increasing participation. While the involvement of the NOC in sport policy in New Zealand has involved a focus upon the preparation and logistics of sending athletes to the Olympic Games in more recent times, it has been utilised and perceived as an organisation that represents the voice of NSOs. However the level of influence appears limited, in part due to their singular focus. This was highlighted by a senior NGB official who explained that the NZOC ‘provide a coordination and servicing role for when they send teams away and they do a good job and we
have a good relationship with them, but whether or not they influence – not really’ (Interview: 24 October 2006).

Regional Sport Trusts

The role of Regional Sports Trusts in implementing national programmes (on behalf of SPARC) aimed at increasing participation levels and in delivering sporting activities to communities has grown considerably over the last 15 years. The establishment of the first RST occurred in 1983 and took place during a period when successive governments had sought to reduce expenditure and transfer costs to the end-user and when market forces were used to allocate resources (Gunson, 1999). Since 1983 the number of RSTs has steadily increased and there are now 17 Trusts established throughout New Zealand. The two core goals of the RSTs are to: increase regional levels of physical activity and strengthen regional sport and physical recreation infrastructures (Sportnet New Zealand, 2007). As community-based organisations, their relationship with the community is of great importance however, increasingly they have become dependent on national organisations for funding. All 17 RSTs are independent charitable trusts and are governed by a Board of Trustees drawn from the local community and to which the management of the RST report to. Offering a wide range of programmes, the RSTs work with a number of other community groups such as schools, iwi (local Māori tribe or clan), district health boards, sport and recreation organisations, local government and community organisations in an effort to ensure every New Zealander has the opportunity to participate in physical activity. In 1998 the RSTs collectively had a funding base that was about one-third reliant on Hillary Commission (the forerunner of SPARC) funding; however, the extent of support varied between Trusts with at least one Trust receiving only 13 per cent of its funding from the Hillary Commission (Gunson, 1999). Since the inception of SPARC, RSTs have become increasingly important providers of activities and programmes aimed at increasing participation. While funding has increased in relation to RST’s, from NZD$6,592,760 in 2001/02 to NZD$16,305,993 in 2006/2007 (see Table 6.9), about one-third is allocated to deliver national programmes such as Green Prescriptions, He Oranga Poutama (a national initiative aimed at increasing
physical activity amongst Māori), and *Push Play Day* on behalf of SPARC. However, despite SPARC requiring RSTs to increase levels of participation there has been a lack of data available to determine whether programmes have achieved their goals, as explained by a senior RST official:

> the over-riding part of the contract [with SPARC] is tied into increasing participation levels...how you ensure [we have achieved] that is quite difficult and we certainly do not have the capacity or funds to do all that sort of measuring. So what SPARC are working on is a national survey which has cost and arm and a leg and more than they thought it would (Interview: 5 October 2007).

Consistent with SPARC's principle of moving away from being a provider of programmes, SPARC's new investment in RSTs was targeted at 'enhancing the delivery of sport and recreation programmes and initiatives at a regional level throughout New Zealand' (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2004a). The importance of RSTs in assisting SPARC achieve its stated goal of New Zealand being the most active nation has recently been demonstrated through increased funding allocated to RSTs, with some RSTs receiving up to 40 per cent of their funding from SPARC. In 2006/2007 funding to RSTs made up 25 per cent of SPARCs overall investment in sporting organisations (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2007). The growing reliance on government funding was highlighted by a senior RST official:

> We have to handle that [the relationship with SPARC] very carefully, because the other thing is some of the Sports Trusts depend on SPARC more than others. And I think one thing you will find, people say are we mini-SPARCs and that's a fair comment (Interview: 5 October 2006).

Along with increased funding has been the shift in the way in which SPARC views RSTs. The early relationship between SPARC was at times uncertain as recognised by a senior RST official 'it would be fair to say the new SPARC did have some concerns about where this group should be positioned' (Interview: 5 October 2006). SPARC now sees 'RSTs as a key partner and pathway into the heart of New Zealand communities' (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2004a). This significant change in the tenor of relationship between RSTs and
SPARC along with a commitment of increased funding indicates that RSTs will remain a key deliverer of government programmes and a partner for the foreseeable future.

New Zealand sport policy

Early years of sport in New Zealand

Early New Zealand society was heavily influenced by the United Kingdom with British sporting traditions and activities spreading with the colonisation of New Zealand in the 1800s. Since then New Zealanders have had a long sporting history with a high degree of involvement in sport either as participants, spectators or volunteers (Gunson, 1999). The introduction of games such as cricket and rugby enabled sport to be used as a vehicle to spread British values and codes of practice that were associated with playing sport (Hindson, Cushman, & Gidlow, 1994). From New Zealand’s early days sport was used as a tool to develop a sense of loyalty and identity, with overseas competition such as the 1905 All Black tour of Britain and Wales conjuring a growing sense of national identity and pride among many of New Zealand’s new immigrants.

By the turn of the 20 century there were about fourteen national sporting associations already formed in New Zealand. National governing bodies (NGBs) began to form towards the end of the 19th century with many being established between 1860 and 1900. As access to transport began to improve, sport began to be played on a more regular basis with local competitions beginning to develop (Booth, 2000). Local county or city councils began to invest in sporting facilities, often providing and maintaining the grounds upon which sports such as rugby soccer and hockey were played (Stothart, 2000). Despite this early involvement by local authorities, until the post war years sport was an activity that was considered the responsibility of the individual with little local or central government assistance. Government involvement was limited to aspects such as the establishment and provision of national and local parks, playgrounds, selected sports facilities and community halls (Collins & Stuart, 1994).
As New Zealand's population grew and it became a more settled society, the role of sport migrated from being a spontaneous and rugged form of physical recreation to a more formalised form of activity (Collins & Downey, 2000b). The character building qualities and values such as teamwork cooperation and discipline contributed to sport becoming a compulsory part of the school education system in 1914 (Hindson et al., 1994). The continued influence and connection with English sport continued with the English sports syllabus adopted in 1920, however, it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the establishment of sport facilities began to increase in schools (Cushman, 1980). Until the 1930s it was the voluntary and private sectors that provided most of the sporting needs of New Zealanders, with little assistance from the public sector (Hindson et al., 1994).

The first formal government involvement was prompted by concern regarding the low level of fitness amongst young New Zealanders, more specifically the implications for defence. While this concern led to the establishment of the Physical Welfare and Recreation Act (1937), it also provided the government with a structure that would enable state involvement in sport, despite government involvement in sport being resented by some of the more organised NGBs (Hindson et al., 1994). Under the 1937 Act, central government was able to grant funding to local governments for the building and development of sport facilities, however, coalitions of interest were emerging as there was considered to be too much of a focus upon physical recreation and not enough upon sport (Stothart, 2000). Another offshoot of the initiatives was the establishment of a Council for Sport in 1943. While the establishment of the Council for Sport may have been a first attempt to amalgamate and coordinate sport organisations, rugby, tennis and lawn bowls, three of the largest sports chose not to join and after a few months the organisation was disbanded. In the period just before World War II, accusations of poor administration and continued criticism of political interference remained. The Department of Internal Affairs was also far from supportive of the programmes, leading to a very critical report recommending that the Physical Education Branch be transferred to the Department of Education. As a result, the National Council
was disbanded and funding allocated to national sports bodies was received from lottery funding (Stothart 1977 in Stothart, 2000).

The aftermath of WWII saw sport flourish in New Zealand with clubs growing across a wide number of codes. Many alpine facilities such as ski-huts were developed during these affluent years. This was a period where most sporting codes were run by enthusiastic volunteers with only a few of the larger NGBs being able to employ administrators. Urbanisation occurred during the 1950s and 1960s with many New Zealanders shifting to the main cities. Much of public sector involvement in sport was limited to trying to rectify the negative effects of this urbanisation, with an aim to reinstate traditional values and controls (Hindson et al., 1994). From the early 1950s to the late 1960s, New Zealand experienced a long economic boom, which led to considerable change in New Zealand society; many youth started to break away from the traditional organised sport and into more individual sporting activities and sport and recreation was now being considered by the state as an antidote to social problems, and, therefore, a social good in its own right. By changing the way in which sporting and recreational activities were viewed by the government, efforts were made to remove constraints on sporting activities and facilities and ensuring that access was available to all groups (Collins & Stuart, 1994).

In summary, up until the 1970s, government involvement in sport was characterised by a non-interventionist approach. Sport delivery was still generally seen as an activity in which state involvement should be avoided, however, there was a slowly growing acknowledgement that it was an area where government had a valid interest. Viewed as a social good, sport was used as a tool to tackle emerging urban social problems with policies and programmes aimed at concerns about youth morality and delinquency (Hindson et al., 1994). It was not until the 1972 general elections that the non-interventionist approach of government was challenged and recognition of sport as significant policy sphere and an area for government intervention emerged. The next section will consider the emergence of sport policy in New Zealand, particularly in relation to supporting adult life-long participation in sport.
1970 to 1987: Era of welfare and participation

The 1970s signalled a change to the way in which the New Zealand government viewed sport. During the 1950s and 1960s, leadership programmes and the provision of community facilities were aimed at reinstating traditional values associated with good citizenship. State involvement during the 1970s, however, migrated to encouraging participation in sporting activities and physical recreation for its own sake with access to facilities a focus rather than the use of sport to promote the moral fibre of the country (Collins & Stuart, 1994; Hindson et al., 1994). The dominant welfare state ideology of the 1970s created an environment where sport in New Zealand was considered the right of every citizen and, prior to 1984, sporting and recreational opportunities were considered to be a public good, which the state should provide (Hindson et al., 1994; Sam, 2003) while also being an activity that should retain its autonomy from political interference. This shift towards participation in sport as a human right, resulted in efforts by the government to remove constraints on the provision of sporting services and facilities so as to ensure access for all groups in society (Collins & Stuart, 1994). Despite calls for sport to retain its autonomy, the 1970s were characterised by growing pressure for government to become involved in both recreational and elite sport, which included proposals for the establishment of a Ministry of Sport. Noticeably, pressure was growing for the government to become more involved in elite sport as there was growing recognition that New Zealand needed to keep pace with sporting developments in other countries, particularly in regard to Olympic sports, if it wished to remain competitive (Stothart, 2000).

In the build up to the 1972 general election, a clear divide emerged between the two major political parties in regard to the debate surrounding the extent and level of government involvement in sport. Whereas the Labour Party supported the idea of a new sports agency, the National Party made it clear that the national government should not become involved as this would be detrimental to sport itself (Stothart, 2000).

In 1973, the Labour government through the Recreation and Sport Act created the Ministry of Recreation and Sport (under the Department of Internal Affairs)
and the Council for Recreation and Sport (CRS). The Act stipulated three functions for the CRS:

a) to foster and promote the total well-being of, and the fullest use of leisure by the residents of New Zealand;

b) to advise the Minister on matters relating to sport and recreation; and,

c) to investigate developments in recreation and sport, and disseminate knowledge and information about such developments.

The Ministry was responsible for administering the Act while the CRS was responsible for the development of policies and programmes and providing advice to the Minister. An autonomous body, the Council for Recreation and Sport, had two key roles, a) acting as an advisory body at ministerial level, and b) promoting national programmes (Hindson et al., 1994). The members of the CRS, who were appointed by the Minister, advised the Minister of all aspects of recreation and sport and, when conflict arose between the two entities, it was the Minister who had the final decision (Stothart, 1976).

The central role of the Ministry was to encourage local government involvement in recreation planning, provide funding for community recreation initiatives and partially fund recreation personnel in local authorities. This included the heavy subsidisation of new sport and recreation staff with new local government appointees receiving a two-third salary subsidy while community organisations received a 50 per cent salary subsidy for up to three years (Stothart, 1976). This focus on a community orientated approach represented a shift in sport policy; while earlier sport policy initiatives focused upon constructing facilities, activity was now directed more towards encouraging 'community and individual-initiated programmes through community development processes' (Hindson et al., 1994: 35). During this period the Council of Sport established three programmes of financial assistance, one for national sport, one for regional facilities and one for sport and recreation organisation at a local level (Collins & Stuart, 1994).

Under the local scheme every community in New Zealand received funding based upon the population and in 1975, 70 cents was allocated for every
person in the community. This approach indicated a focus on ensuring that every New Zealander should benefit from the scheme where possible and reinforced an approach where sport was an activity for all New Zealanders. The regional scheme facilitated regions combining together to deliver large scale projects, while under the national scheme funds were allocated to national organisations. Funding provided to national organisations was based upon criteria, which prioritised allocating resources to personnel, facilities, administration and leadership. The division in funding led to criticism of a haphazard approach to funding at a local level and a call that funding for sport should be funnelled through the sport federations at the national level for distribution to local associations and clubs as NGBs would know best where to allocate funds (Stothart, 1976).

A broad range of programmes were initiated by the Ministry and the CRS with a strong emphasis on developing sport at community level (see Stothart, 2000). One such programme was the Come Alive campaign, a publicity campaign established by the CRS to encourage all New Zealanders to join community groups and engage in sport and physical activity. A key goal was to try and encourage New Zealanders to participate in sport and recreation (Stothart, 1976). While considered successful in motivating people to take up new activities, the full potential and benefits of the campaign were not realised due to the early curtailment of the programme (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985).

Although there were a number of criticisms regarding the inherent problems of a bifurcated structure, more significantly both the CRS and Ministry signalled to sports organisations the need to professionalise and become more efficient if they were to receive funding. Through the provision of direct funding, the Ministry was able to exert pressure on NGBs to adopt more effective management techniques and processes; for NGBs unable to provide evidence of increased efficiency, grants were either delayed or withdrawn (Stothart, 2000).
It was during this period that the underlying tension between elite sport, on the one hand, and recreation and mass participation, on the other, began to emerge as the Ministry and Council faced criticism from sports organisations for an over emphasis on recreation and mass participation rather than (or at the expense of) elite or competitive sport. This was compounded by the perception that the needs of sports organisations were not being met (Stothart, 2000). The dual focus on recreation and sport was to also cause concerns and the relationship between recreation and sport programming emerged as an area of perennial difficulty. Concern was raised by sports people that recreation was receiving too much attention to the detriment of sport, however recreationists, who also happened to be in influential positions at this time, were concerned with an undue focus on elite sport (Collins & Stuart, 1994).

Apprehension regarding the undue attention and resourcing provided to recreation and concern regarding the influence or recreationists led to the establishment of the New Zealand Sports Assembly which was to provide a united voice for sport and lobby for increased funding (Collins & Stuart, 1994). The tension between sporting bodies and recreationists resulted in the CRS being unable to establish itself as a credible force in the field of sport; which was to have ramifications in the restructure of sport in 1987 (see Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 33). Those in the sport coalition saw recreation as an area of non-competitive and, often passive activity, which may absorb large quantities of funds for relatively unidentifiable results. As identified in the Sport on the Move Report, the conflict appeared to be largely centred around the competition for scarce resources; as a result NGBs almost unanimously supported a separation of recreation and sport (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985).

Competition for resources signalled the first overt signs of competing coalitions of interest within the New Zealand sport sector with elite sport supporters seeking both recognition and government support. Growing support for elite sport interests resulted in the establishment of the New Zealand Sports Foundation (NZSF) 1978 by a group of businessmen who believed that elite sport was not being given the emphasis it deserved. This signalled diverging
areas of interest between elite sport and recreational sport along with recognition that elite sport required more support if New Zealand was to compete successfully on the world stage. A private organisation, the NZSF linked elite sporting success with the enhancement of ‘national pride, unity, morale, and confidence in New Zealand, both economically and socially’ (Collins & Stuart, 1994: 49). One of the key aims was to ‘put new Zealand’s top athletes into a position from which they can succeed and bring pride to themselves, their sport and their nation’ (McConnell & Edwards, 2000: 115). Despite being a private entity, the NZSF was funded directly by government with the expectation that these funds would be matched by the corporate sector. This was an interesting addition to the sport policy landscape as a private organisation effectively took responsibility and control of elite sport in New Zealand with little resistance from government.

The level of commitment by central government to sport was however ambiguous, as surprisingly, the establishment of the Ministry and the CRS Council failed to result in an increase in central government funding. An estimation of government funding to national sport projects in real terms (accounting for inflation) indicated a decrease from $954,800 in 1975 to $188,840 in 1986, a fall in real terms of 80.2 per cent (see Table 6.6).

The election of a National government in 1975 was met with apprehension due to the pre-election stance of the non-intervention. While the Ministry and the CRS were retained, it was with reduced funding. However, the regional funding scheme was abandoned and the Come Alive programme was discontinued, largely due to it being perceived as a Labour party initiative (Collins & Stuart, 1994).

The role of local government throughout this period remained primarily focused upon the provision of sporting facilities in the community. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the sharing, and joint planning and development, of sporting facilities between schools and communities (Cushman, 1980). The sharing of open green space and sport facilities provided the opportunity for participation in sport and physical activity for both the community and school children (Gunson,
1999). Closer relationships between schools and clubs also began to emerge with the sharing of facilities such as golf courses and squash clubs and the use of external specialists or teach activities in schools (Cushman, 1980).

### Table 6.6 New Zealand Government funding to sport 1975-1986 (NZD)

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Adapted from Sport Development Inquiry Committee (1985)

While the focus of the Ministry and the CRS was to develop and encourage participation in sport and recreation, the use of sport as tool of foreign policy was also evident throughout the 1970s and 1980s. New Zealand's sporting links with South Africa resulted in the boycotting of the 1976 Montreal Olympics by 22 African countries. Sporting links with South Africa raised the question of government involvement with the 1981 Springbok tour to New Zealand dividing the nation. The importance of sport to both the public of New Zealand and the government was evident during the 1978 general election when both major parties (National and Labour) included sport in their manifestos with community development being the rationale for government involvement (Collins & Stuart, 1994). The growing salience of sport to the New Zealand government was evident when the Labour Party lost considerable support during their election campaign because of their stance to cancel the proposed tour to South Africa, while National Party's support of the tour was considered key in their election victory (Collins & Stuart, 1994). Despite the potential of sport to influence the
voting public, sporting organisations were unsuccessful in converting this position of influence into an ability to influence government in regard to legislation, which would impact upon sport (Collins & Stuart, 1994). This may in part be due to the inability of NGBs to unite as a single voice as evident in numerous, yet unsuccessful attempts, to establish an umbrella or coordinating body for national sport federations. Despite the inclusion of recreation and sport policies in the manifestos of both the Labour and National Party, funding actually declined under three successive National governments (Garrett, 1980, in Collins & Stuart, 1994).

On the back of a newly elected Labour government in 1984 and amidst growing concerns regarding the focus and structure of the Ministry of Sport and the Sports Council, the Labour government instigated a major review of recreation and sport in 1985. The inquiry, Sport on the Move, took place during a period of considerable social and economic upheaval in New Zealand and led to the establishment of the quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation known as the Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport. It was during the 1980s that New Zealand underwent some of the most radical economic reforms of any western country. As part of the sweeping changes there was a systematic programme of corporatisation within the public sector. This period of rapid economic, political and social change impacted directly upon sport, acting as a catalyst forcing sports organisations to become more professional as well as increasing the commercialism of sport (Collins & Downey, 2000a). Impacts of the economic reforms were also reflected in the Sport on the Move report. Calls for higher levels of support for elite sport in the Sport on the Move enquiry reinforced the need for ‘very hard headed, cost effective, non-egalitarian policies’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee 1985: 128). However, reluctance for government or community funds to be invested in elite sport was still evident during the 1980s. Calls for increased support of elite sport was tempered by recognition that funding of a small number of international athletes from community and government sources was ‘hard to justify in a democratic society - to do so challenges the principles of social equity’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 130).
Significantly, the 1985 Report recommended the establishment of Lotto with the intention of providing funding to sport and recreation along with other activities and programmes. Lotto was to provide guaranteed future funding with 20 per cent of the lottery commission profits allocated to sport and for the first time a regular stream of revenue was secured (Collins & Stuart, 1994; Stothart, 2000). The instigation of the *Sport on the Move* Report highlighted the continuing dual approach of the government towards sport, with the development of elite and recreational sport being the focus of the Report. A key area of concern identified was the low level of fitness amongst young people combined with low motor skills competence and a crisis in confidence regarding the ability of schools and the community to provide the necessary resources for coaching of junior sport. Amongst the range of other issues identified were a crisis in sports funding, inherent structural problems and a misleading impression that sport received adequate resourcing in part due to its international success. Intervention by the government in sport was still very much based upon sport being used as tool of social policy with a strong focus on youth. It was clearly outlined in the Report that the funding of sport by the tax payer was considered vindicated when it was spent in areas that directly affected the community and was seen as contributing to health, welfare and well-being. However, it was also noted in the Report that community benefits from sport of a ‘less essential nature should be funded by money from discretionary sources such as lotteries, sponsorships and donations’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 14).

In defining where funding should be directed the *Sport on the Move* Report viewed sport in terms of its benefits to the community and identified five areas which in order of priority were:

- personal and private benefits, to the individual, including self-esteem, sense of purpose and achievement and personal status;
- physical competence benefits including physical skills and capabilities;
- social and moral benefits, including attitudes and values such as integrity, team work, co-operation and honour;
- health and fitness benefits; and
human potential benefits, in which the individual extends the physical expectation and capabilities of the human race (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 13).

While reference to achieving or pursuing life-long participation was not explicitly stated in the Report, it highlighted that the education system had a significant influence on whether young people see sport or physical recreation as a life-long pursuit. This would appear to indicate that while life-long participation was not a specific goal it was one which was aspired to. The focus on grassroots sport rather than elite sport development was in part reflected through the majority of submissions to the Committee, which wanted to see an increase in the numbers of people actively involved in sports participation, as this was considered to have the greatest potential for creating broader community benefits, with sport as a health promoting activity (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985).

The Report provided encouragement and support for Sport for All (SfA) by noting that New Zealand was ready for a SfA promotional programme, similar to those adopted in other countries, with the aim of fostering the positive qualities of sport and making it more attractive to New Zealanders. Although the concept of SfA was not defined, clear objectives were set in regard to the proposed SfA campaign. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the already identified issues surrounding the health of youth in New Zealand, one of the objectives was to improve the health and well-being of the community by encouraging more people to adopt ‘health promoting physical activities’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 105). However, the potential problems in promoting participation were also recognised. During the ‘Come Alive’ campaign the demand for badminton facilities was not able to be matched by existing facilities. The lack of planning with regard to the provision of facilities identified the need for NGBs, community officers, recreation officers and administrators at local and central government to evaluate whether existing sporting facilities could cope with increased levels of participation (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985).
The need to target specific groups that had low sport participation rates was also identified as an area that needed to be addressed. Specific groups which were identified as having difficulty in accessing sporting and/or recreational facilities included school leavers, women of all ages, ethnic communities, parents of young children, veterans, lower-socio-economic groups and the disabled. However, the impact of the socio-economic changes that had occurred in New Zealand was also impacting upon the way in which access to sport facilities, and activities was perceived. Despite supporting increased participation and access to sporting facilities, the Inquiry indicated a move away for the welfare type ethos of SfA towards a more neo-liberal approach, where the individual should take responsibility for their own actions. Participation in sport was considered to be the responsibility of the individual, as sport should continue to be a ‘self help activity, and that no form of community funding should be established which reduced or disrupted the independent sport and motivation of sportsmen and women and their club structure’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 66). Government’s responsibility to maintain the value of community benefits for sport was clearly articulated throughout the Report with the recommendation that funding from both the Crown and discretionary grants should be directed towards practical support policies at all levels of sport for the benefits of all New Zealanders (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 67). However, detail of what the practical support policies may consist of was not expanded on.

The hands off approach of the Government towards investment in sport facilities remained. While the investment being made by Australia in facilities was noted, this approach was not considered the most ‘cost effective’ form of investment stating that ‘the provision of facilities has its unsatisfactory aspects, the Committee does not regard remediing this as a major priority’ (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985: 14). Surprisingly, the Report argued that local government should be encouraged to provide more than facilities or space for sport and recreation, this during a time when local governments were undergoing restructuring and amalgamation, and in some areas the provision of sport and recreation services was actually under threat. Amongst the reasons for local government retreating from providing sport and recreation
services, was the negative impact of the restructure accompanied with a belief amongst elected representatives and officers that during this period of fiscal restraint that services such as these should be divested (Vincent & Trenberth, 1994).

In summary, the 1970s through to the mid-1980s can be characterised by organisational confusion in the sport sector. The duplication and confusion caused by the establishment of the Ministry of Recreation and the Council for Recreation and Sport also highlighted the tension between sport and physical recreation interests as neither establishment was able to provide clear direction with regard to the development of sport. As a result, coalitions of interest began to emerge, centred primarily around recreation and sport. Also emerging during the 1980s was an elite sport coalition as increasingly calls were made for elite athletes to receive increased levels of government support.

Increasing the levels of sport participation remained central to the Sport on the Move Report, however, despite a lack of reliable information upon which to base an accurate assessment of the current levels of sporting activity. Finally, while the establishment of the government sport organisations in the 1970s and the government initiated report, Sport on the Move inquiry in 1985 may have indicated the growing salience of sport to national government, declining levels of Crown funding indicted that sport remained a marginal area of policy focus.

1987 to 2002: Neo-liberalism and management efficiency
As a result of the 1985 Sport on the Move report the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure was established under the Recreation and Sport Act 1987. An independent and statutory body, the Hillary Commission replaced both the Ministry of Recreation and Sport and the Council of Recreation and Sport. Under the Recreation and Sport Act, the Hillary Commission had responsibility to 'develop and encourage fitness and leisure'. In performing these functions, the Commission had a focus on providing opportunities for all, indicating an approach that encapsulated the values of Sport for All and increasing participation, over and above those of elite sport. Along with this, and in response to the Sport on the Move report, was a clear goal of
transforming the effectiveness of national sports organisations (Ferkins & Wiersma, 2001). Established during a period when the government was adopting a strong neo-liberal approach across government, it was surprising that the functions of the Hillary Commission appeared based on more welfarist type principles. The functions of the Hillary Commission included the requirement to:

a) promote the fullest use of leisure;

b) facilitate equal opportunities for participation by all New Zealanders;

c) encourage persons to make the most effective use of their abilities and aptitudes;

d) facilitate the physical, mental and social well being of New Zealanders and enhance their quality of life; and

e) promote community based and group leisure, and appropriate indigenous and ethnic forms of sport and leisure.

In contradiction to the user-pays philosophy that was prevalent during the 1980s, the Hillary Commission, perhaps surprisingly, introduced KiwiSport and SportFit, programmes based more upon equity, accessibility, health and welfare and a more general egalitarian ethos. KiwiSport was a programme aimed at children 7 to 12 years of age and offered a wide variety of sports modified to suit different social, physical and emotional levels of the participants. The aims of the programme included encouraging participation, skill development and the promotion of fair play while discouraging a win-at-all costs attitude among children. Interestingly, another aim was to ‘establish a sound foundation for activity throughout life and for higher level sport’ (Russell, Allen, & Wilson, 1996: 270). The SportFit programme was developed to try and build upon the success of KiwiSport and maintain and encourage participation into teenage years. Schools were provided with partial funding which could be used for full- or part-time sport coordinators, time allowances for recreation and sport teachers and school-based programmes to reduce participation barriers for groups such as females, Māori, Pacific Islanders, people with disabilities, or those from remote schools (Russell et al., 1996). Again, part of the rationale behind the funding of the programme, as highlighted by Russell et al, (1996) was the establishment of positive attitudes and the development of skills that
would benefit young people after leaving school. While these programmes clearly had an intention to provide a foundation for adult life-long participation, the nature of the link, and at times tension, between clubs and KiwiSport in particular was highlighted (Cushman, 1991 in Russell et al, 1996). While the objectives of the KiwiSport programme focused upon skill acquisition and enjoyment rather than competition, sports clubs were considered to emphasise competition and winning.

Recognition of the need to address Māori participation levels in sport was recognised in 1998 with a Ministerial Taskforce for Māori Sport and Fitness. The Taskforce coincided with government's increasing willingness to address Māori demands for bi-culturalism and Māori self determination in major organisations and institutions (Shaver, 1999). As well as defining sport from a Māori perspective, the Taskforce identified a number of barriers to participation by Māori in sport. The Hillary Commission adopted a multi-agency approach in establishing He Oranga Poutama (a national programme aimed at developing healthy lifestyles), involving Te Puni Kokiri Health Sponsorship council, the Community Employment Group and the Alcohol Advisory Council (McConnell & Edwards, 2000). The focus of He Oranga Poutama is upon Māori, and operates through a network of Kaiwhakahere (network coordinators) throughout the country.

An emerging theme during the 1990s was the increasing focus on health as a driver for increasing levels of physical activity and sport. In a joint policy statement in 1999, the government indicated that this was to be achieved through a cross-sectoral approach. With a vision that aimed for 'All New Zealanders enjoying regular physical activity as part of their everyday lives', the Minister of Sport, Fitness and Leisure and the Minister of Health signalled growing government awareness of the advantages of having all New Zealanders physically active. With research indicating that a 10 per cent increase in the number of adults being active returned a health cost saving of $NZD55 million per year, both the social and significant health costs gained were clear motivators for increasing government intervention. Despite the involvement of the Hillary Commission (through the Minister of Sport, Fitness
and Leisure), organised and recreational sport was only briefly mentioned as one of many activities, which people could do to increase their physical activity levels. Predominantly aimed at the percentage of the population who are physically inactive, the joint policy statement indicated a desire to achieve life-long participation in physical activity rather through only sport participation.

It was under the Hillary Commission that a further ten Regional Trusts were established with the intention that they would represent the regional voice of sport and oversee the regional delivery of sport. Throughout the 1990s the Hillary Commission increased its focus of working through and with RSTs in delivering sport-related programmes at the regional level, while raising participation and activity at the local level, however, this was not necessarily translated into increased sport club membership (Collins & Stuart, 1994). A fundamental difference in the beliefs and values of NGBs and RSTs led to a tension emerging between the Active Living objectives of RSTs and the elite sport objectives of NSOs. In contrast to the objective of the RSTs, Gunson (1999) noted that many of the sports participation programmes delivered by the Hillary Commission and NGBs were linked to the production of high performance. While the RSTs delivered a number of sport development programmes aimed at increasing participation, they also played a role in elite sport through the provision of the Passport to Gold programme (delivered on behalf of the New Zealand Sports Foundation) which assisted elite athletes development at the community level. As the RSTs had a funding base that was approximately one third reliant on funding from the Hillary Commission, this dependency on resourcing and potential conflict in philosophical base created an interesting tension in the delivery of sport participation programmes at the regional level. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the emerging health focus of the Hillary Commission was also reflected in the programmes conducted by the RSTs. As a result, the rationale behind the programmes changed with health becoming much more of a factor in driving the activities of RSTs. This was highlighted by a senior RST official:

from the early 1990s to the late 1990s for RSTs there was more of a physical activity focus with the aim of getting the community involved. Earlier activities
included programmes such as walking groups, masters games and 'have-a-go' type activities, but in more recent times this changed to trying to address the increasing obesity issue (Interview: 17 October 2006).

Despite the Hillary Commission's relatively small budget, due to its links with local governments and NGBs and along with the establishment of the RSTs, it was able to set the direction of sport policy in New Zealand (Sam, 2005). Under the Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, three categories of funding were identified. The first category of funding concentrated on international and national sport development programmes where organisational and professional development, training of volunteer coaches, officials and administrators and international representation were all addressed. The second category focused issues which were specific to New Zealand sport, such as drugs in sport, fair play and research for the Accident Compensation Corporation. The third category of funding focused on initiatives, which were directly controlled by the Commission, which were to assist mass-sport development. Amongst the initiatives that were aimed at increasing participation levels were KiwiSport, the establishment of Regional Sport Trusts and a Women in Sport programme (McConachie Smith, 1991).

In 1988/1989 the Hillary Commission distributed nearly $1.5 million to 61 NSOs. However, while funding to the Hillary Commission increased between 1987 and 1992, perhaps of more interest was the change in the funding sources, with government funding decreasing - from 79 per cent of the Hillary Commission revenue in 1987 to 4 per cent in 1992 (Collins & Stuart, 1994). In contrast, funding from the Lotteries Board steadily increased resulting in it becoming the major funder of the Hillary Commission.

In 1987 the structure of local government underwent radical change. Because of an excessively complex and fragmented structure, new management practices, that had previously been the domain of central government not local government, were introduced and there was a reduction in the number of TLAs from 675 to 86 (Bush, 2001). New local government legislation in 1989 impacted upon the way in which local governments operated. The introduction
of the funder/provider split with regard to providing services impacted upon the
approach to the provision of sporting facilities and services. As a result of the
Local Government Act local authorities rationalised their expenditure and re-
established their core activities. The new neo-liberal approach to local
government resulted in the adoption of a user-pays approach for sporting
facilities and for the first time a case had to be made for the continued support
of sport at local government level (Gunson, 1999). The 1991 Report the
Review of Hillary Commission’s support for recreation and sport at the local
level identified a number of reasons why the amalgamation of local councils
had such a significant impact upon the provision of recreation and sport
services. First, there was ineffective lobbying to protect recreation and sport
services which resulted in many of the services for sport being marginalised.
This was evident in Christchurch where the services were distributed across
four different departments with little cooperation between them (Hillary
Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure, 1991). Second, a search for
economies of scale, a rush to contract out services and remaining services
having their funding dramatically reduced led to deterioration not only in the
level of services provided but also in the quality of services provided. Finally,
many elected representatives saw the provision of leisure services as a burden
that was not an appropriate local government function. As a result this period of
fiscal restraint led many local governments to divest services that were not
considered part of their core business (Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness
and Leisure, 1991). While the Review of Hillary Commission’s support for
recreation and sport at the local level was primarily concerned with considering
ways of improving participation and achievement in sport, fitness and leisure at
the local community level it also highlighted the tension between the
government’s economic reforms and the goals of the Hillary Commission. In
amalgamating the local authorities and demanding increased efficiencies, the
provision of recreation and sport services in a number of local government
administrations became marginalised despite the Hillary Commission and Sport
on the Move wanting local government to become more involved and active in
delivering sport and leisure services and programmes at the local level (Hillary
Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure, 1991; Sports Development Inquiry
Committee, 1985).
Also significant was the confusion over the role of RSTs, the tension that was evident between local government and RSTs and the impact of this on the delivering of sport and leisure services at the local level. In some areas RSTs championed the anti-user pays debate, placing itself in an adversarial position to local government. As local government withdrew from providing sport and leisure services, RSTs in some areas began to assume responsibility for these services prompting significant concern for the Recreation Association of New Zealand. The relationship between recreation and sport remained a tension within the sport sub-system and was also identified as an important concern in *The Review of Hillary Commission’s support for recreation and sport at the local level* Report.

Coalitions of interest that emerged during the 1980s continued to develop during the 1990s, with elite sport becoming more vocal in its demand for increased resourcing from government. Despite hosting the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland, by the mid-1990s concern was growing for the level of support and funding of high performance sport in New Zealand. A government initiated review of high performance sport, the *Winning Way Review* was undertaken in 1996, amidst concerns regarding the support and funding of elite sport. Again, despite recommendations for a one-stop shop to deliver high-performance sport support and funding, the outcomes of the review were less than hoped for. Importantly, it did manage to increase government funding for elite sport, with increased resourcing provided for the development of elite level sport in the build up to the 2000 Olympics Games in the hope of winning more medals, but again there was no long term or ongoing commitment to provide support to elite sport (Collins & Downey, 2000b).

In 1992 the newly elected national government passed the *Sport Fitness and Leisure Act*. This legislation changed the name of the Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport to the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure. More than a mere name change, this decision reflected the perennial tension between sport and recreation. Under the new legislation, sport was accorded a higher priority and was to be more than just a ‘bed fellow’ to the large number of cultural and non-physical recreational groups (Collins & Stuart, 1994). The
new Act also provided an opportunity for the government to appoint a new set of commissioners who were more aligned to the government's view and ideology on sport. Significantly for sporting organisations, the Minister of Sport, Fitness and Leisure ensured an increase in funding to the Hillary Commission combined with a guaranteed future funding of 20 per cent of the lottery commissions profits (Collins & Stuart, 1994).

The awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney also impacted upon the direction of New Zealand sport policy as additional pressure was placed on government to maximise the opportunity of having an Olympic Games so close to New Zealand. The 1996 the Winning Way Review signalled a move in the balance of power in New Zealand sport with the influence of the New Zealand Sports Foundation (based on elite sport) growing. As argued by Collins, high performance sport was considered a prize worth capturing (2000b: 213). What is interesting is that after the 1996 Winning Way Review a partnership developed between both private and public sectors with the NZSF having significant resource coming from the Hillary Commission and government. It also received funding for the NZOC and the private sector partly resourced by the public sector. Government remained distant from elite sport while investing more heavily towards enabling participation. Support for the 'trickle down' approach to elite sport also emerged at this time as the Winning Way Review advocated participation for the purpose of supporting elite sport rather than for its own benefits. Support for grassroots sport as a feeder for elite athletes signalled a shift in the way in which sport participation was viewed.

Although previous enquiries had failed to bring about significant government involvement or investment in sport the Report of the Sport, Fitness & Leisure Ministerial Taskforce in 2001 (also known as the Graham Report after the Chairman of the Taskforce, John Graham) was conducted during a period when both sporting organisations and the government were ready to accept change. The Graham Report had a major impact upon the structure and development of elite sport policy in New Zealand. Not only did the Graham Report act as catalyst for the establishment of a new government entity but it also signalled growing recognition of the benefits of sport (elite and
recreational) to the New Zealand government. The Report was instigated three months before the 2000 Olympic Games as a result of a Labour Party promise to provide leadership to the sports sector (Sam, 2004). The aims of the Taskforce were broad:

to define the vision for sport fitness and recreation for the next 25 years, with the aim of identify strategies to encourage and sustain the interest participation and achievement of New Zealand's as well as completing a structural review of the sport fitness and recreation sector (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001).

As part of the inquiry the Taskforce was to take cognisance of the Government's principles of access, equity and participation. The Taskforce's findings covered a range of areas and called for 'drastic action' to be taken. As a result of the enquiry 7 recommendations were identified:

- increasing the physical activity of all New Zealanders;
- schools providing more effective prescribed time for physical education, recreations and sport. This will require restructuring of the school timetable and major resourcing. Lifelong involvement in physical activity is best learned in the education environment;
- national recreation and sport organisations being significantly advanced in their ability to provide high quality leadership and services for the next 25 years;
- regional organisations, clubs and schools being recognised as the foundation of recreation and sport which must be resourced and integrated into a strategy to ensure participation in recreation and sport for the next 25 years;
- Regional Sport Trusts must be refocused to lead and unify the presently fragmented local recreation and sport sectors;
- greater rationalisation and commensurate resourcing of elite sport; and
- developing greater active involvement in recreation and enhanced awareness of the outdoors.
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the recommendations indicated an intention to increase the levels of physical activity, not sport. Accessibility was at the forefront as participation in physical activity was seen as an ‘inalienable right’ and recreation and sport opportunities should be available to any sector of the population without undue constraints of cost or access. These principles of equity and access were placed alongside the clear intention to try and develop the concept of life-long participation in physical activity as ‘Lifelong participation in recreation and sport is an integral part of the experience of being a New Zealander’ (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001: 64). This concept was further expanded as a key principle when it was identified that participation in physical activity ‘should be a seamless progression of participatory experiences through all ages and all levels of involvement’ (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001: 65). While identifying the need to try and increase participation levels the report also identified where and how this could be addressed. In discussing participation levels, it was highlighted that there was a lack of accurate information regarding participation levels, as also identified in the earlier Sport on the Move Report, however, it did identify that those in the 40+ age group were less likely to be engaged in sport. The growing prevalence of social sport, which is played outside the traditional structures of clubs, schools and competing frameworks and is practised in informal settings such as work, street sport or ‘pick-up’ matches at the local park, was highlighted. There was an emphasis placed upon increasing the participation levels of minority groups, with young people, women, older adults, people with disabilities and Māori and Pacific Islanders all identified as groups that required particular targeted approaches. Given the lack of information on participation statistics, it is unclear why these groups have been identified or what was the rationale for identifying them as a target groups.

Interestingly, the Graham Report identified that it was local government that needed to be prepared to provide facilities and be aware of and respond to the needs of social sport, while local clubs and Regional Sport Trusts must provide assistance in this area (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001: 74). The increased importance placed upon the role of local government in the Graham Report signalled that local government was considered a key partner in the
implementation of sport policy objectives. Recognising that the sport sector had been virtually ignored by successive governments the Taskforce identified that change was necessary. Worthy of note is the fact that the Taskforce Report, which claimed to represent the voice of sport, called for more government intervention in sport. It appears that the Taskforce was prepared to pass control of sport to government when it recommended that despite the assertion that ‘sport should run sport’ the variable quality of sport and recreation leadership and administration does not justify the allocation of unmonitored funds (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001: 60). This invitation for government to become more involved in sport signalled a significant shift in thinking from 30 years previous. In building a case for government involvement in sport the Taskforce identified, health, public good, social cohesion, an enhanced sense of identity and image, crime prevention and economic benefits as reasons for increased government investment in the sport sector.

Significantly for the structure of New Zealand sport, the Taskforce recommended the establishment of a crown entity that would include the functions that were currently being undertaken by the New Zealand Sports Foundation, the policy function of the Office of Tourism and Sport and the role of the Hillary Commission. As noted in the Graham Report, a high level of fragmentation, poor coordination and leadership, and lack of direction across the sport sector were strong reasons for change; accompanying this was a lack of resourcing from government and an identified need to change the organisation of the sector at both national and regional level (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b). As discussed by a senior government official:

> there was lot of dissatisfaction around the administration of sport, it was highly fragmented, there were a lot of question marks as to whether money was getting through, the Hillary Commission the Sports Foundation, the Olympic Committee all fought with each other so there was general concern that in fact the structures were not working well (Interview: 25 October 2006).
Throughout the process of establishing the new agency, Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), the impact of the different coalitions of interest within the sport sub-system and there levels of influence became evident. While the NZSF was to be amalgamated under the SPARC umbrella the division between elite sport and recreational sport and recreation remained. As a result of the amalgamation of organisations the NZSF was able to ensure that it was able to promote the cause of elite sport by ensuring the Chair of Board of SPARC would be from the NZSF. As explained by a senior SPARC official:

In the process of that report being finalised there was a rear-guard action by the sports foundation and deals were done with the Minister. The Sports Foundation came across, John Wells who was on the Sports Foundation became the chair [of the Board of SPARC] and there was an agreement with the Sports Foundation which was a private foundation to bring its operations across, so that influenced things a bit (Interview: 25 October 2006).

Although creating a coordinated approach to sport and physical activity policy was seen as key in attempting to achieve the recommendations of the Graham Report, the coalition of interests merely appears to have shifted, from their own separate organisations to the umbrella of SPARC. It was this that led to the appointment of a CEO who had not worked within the sport sector; having an independent person was deemed to be more important given the current divisions within sport:

the issue that they had was to find someone [to lead SPARC] who did not come with baggage from the sport and recreation sector but also understood how to work in government and the private sector, but the sport bit was less important in that (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October, 2006).

While the elite sport coalition appears to have strengthened during the 1990s, the emergence of physical activity as an area of government interest appears to have blurred the boundaries surrounding grassroots sport, physical recreation and physical activity as discrete coalitions based upon distinct values and beliefs. The importance of physical activity and its ability to help address declining health standards was reflected in the rationale for the new
crown entity SPARC. As explained by the then Minister of Sport Recreation and Fitness, a key driver behind government investment in sport and the formation of SPARC was the need to address health issues which 'requires a focus on physical activity not health' (Interview: Minister Sport Recreation and Fitness, 3 October 2006). Whether grassroots sport and physical recreation coalitions have remained as discrete coalitions, or have become integrated within a physical activity coalition, remains unclear at present. While it was identified earlier that the ACF may be the most useful theoretical lens through which to consider the New Zealand sport policy subsystem, the nascent nature of the physical activity coalition, and its relationship with grassroots sport and physical recreation, makes it difficult to identify with great clarity the deep core and policy core beliefs, which may be held by this group. This may raise questions as to the usefulness of the ACF for new and emerging coalitions given the likelihood of changing and at times amorphous belief systems. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

In summary, this period saw the emergence and strengthening of the elite sport coalition most noticeably through the formation of the New Zealand Sports Foundation and increased pressure placed upon government to support elite athletes by NGBs. Along with increasing levels of government intervention, especially with regard to elite sport development, were growing concerns regarding declining levels of physical activity (rather than increasing levels of sport participation) and the impact upon the health of New Zealanders. As a result of the increased focus on physical activity the emphasis upon increasing levels of sport participation appears to have faded as the physical activity-health nexus began to emerge. The effect of the radical neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s impacted upon local government with the adoption of a user-pays approach towards the provision of sporting and recreation facilities. As a result, the earlier rationale for local government involvement in sport shifted towards one which was dominated more by economic principles than social equity or development issues. In contrast to local government, the importance of Regional Sports trusts in delivering programmes aimed at increasing sport participation level was growing. Finally, there remained a lack of robust data. The lack of research and data relating to the levels and benefits of increasing
sport participation levels raises questions of policy learning. As argued by Sabatier and Weible policy-orientated learning results ‘from new experience and/or new information’ (2007: 198). However, it would appear that it has been pre-existing normative and perceptual beliefs, rather than technical information, which have played more of a key role in setting the direction and focus of mass-sport policy within the New Zealand sport subsystem.

2002 to 2007 (June): Professionalisation

From 2002, the direction and focus of sport policy in New Zealand has been dominated by the new crown entity Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). The invitation for government to play a greater role in sport policy signalled a significant shift in thinking from the previous 30 years. Interestingly, this period also saw increased and agreed support from all political parties with regard to government involvement in sport, a significant change from previous periods where political parties held disparate views as to the extent and role of government involvement in sport. This assisted not only in setting a clear direction for SPARC but also in gaining increased levels of funding for the new agency as government was able to pass ‘legislation that had cross-partisan support and as a result of that they agreed to increase the funding for sport’ (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006).

Declining levels of physical activity and the associated health problems were key drivers behind the establishment of the new government entity. The rates of obesity amongst adults over the age of 15 years in New Zealand had steadily increased from 11 per cent in 1997 to 21 per cent in 2002. As discussed by the Minister of Sport and Recreation, the ‘health issue’, was a key motivator for central government to invest more heavily in the area of sport and increased physical activity (Personal communication: 3 October, 2006). Furthermore, the government announced that sport was seen ‘an investment in a healthy future for New Zealanders’ (Mallard, 2001). The contribution of increased levels of physical activity in reducing rates of cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and depression has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Health along with the need to be physically active for 30 or more minutes per day (Ministry of Health, 2002). In comparison
with other OECD countries, New Zealand's rate of obesity is relatively high, with a rate of 23 per cent in 2003, compared with the OECD median of 13 per cent with New Zealand's rate lower than only four other countries (United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia) (Ministry of Social Development, 2007).

Accompanying this was recognition of elite sports potential in achieving a core central government outcome, building national identity. As stated by the Minister of Sport and Fitness, ‘building national identity is a key goal for this government. Elite sport and participation in international competition gives us a sense of who we are as New Zealanders, not only this, it lets the rest of the world see who we are’ (Minister for Sport Fitness and Leisure quoted in Anon, 2001: 19; Personal communication: 3 October 2006). Other areas where investment in sport was seen to contribute to the goals of government included economic growth and social cohesion. However, it was in the areas of health, and social cohesion in particular, that increasing participation levels were identified as being particularly relevant (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2004c).

In setting out the mission of SPARC, it was clear that the government agency was to have a broad mandate covering elite sport, recreational sport and physical recreation. While the Graham Report recommended the development of elite sport as a core function of the proposed new government entity, surprisingly this was not included as one of the functions under the Act (see Appendix 6.1). Despite this, achieving in elite sport was identified as one of the three objectives around which the services, policies and investments of SPARC would be built. The three objectives of SPARC included:

- being the most active nation;
- having athletes and teams winning consistently in events that matter to New Zealanders; and
- having the most effective sport and physical recreation systems (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002a).
In the SPARC corporate document *Our Vision, Our Direction*, the future direction and focus of SPARC for its inaugural four year period was set out. Low levels of sport participation and many New Zealanders lacking access opportunities to participate in sport were identified as key problem areas. To address this several areas were identified: a) working with RSTs to become the sport development leaders in their regions; b) investing funds only where they will have a positive result for sport development rather than on the basis of entitlement; c) helping co-ordinate the delivery of services across the sector through key funding contracts; d) working with groups to try and increase the number of volunteers and to make them more effective; e) helping make changes to government policy that will enable the sector to grow; f) improving the linkage between regional sporting infrastructures and schools; and g) targeting key organisations to develop and up-skill people (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b: 13). In judging the performance in relation to increasing the number of people involved in organised sport, a number of measurements were identified upon which SPARC’s performance would be assessed. While the measurements covered a range of areas, having ‘people involved in sport for life, in a variety of roles’ indicated a focus upon sport participation whether that be as an active participant or in an administrative or coaching role (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b: 13). Other ways in which success would be measured in regard to increasing participation included:

- more players coaches officials and administrators;
- making better use of resources in regional sport;
- better governance in key organisations across sport;
- more competitions with more teams and individuals involved;
- facilities that are used more often; and
- a well developed coaching system.

While the concept of achieving life-long participation was referred to in the way in which success would be measured, it was not stipulated as a specific goal. Rather, life-long participation appears to have been an aspiration rather than a clear objective. In a press release announcing an increase in funding aimed at improving participation and performance in sport and physical activity, the
Minister for Sport and Recreation explained ‘we want to engender a life-long interest and participation physical activity’ (SPARC Ihi Aotearoa, 2003). This would appear to indicate that life-long participation is considered more of a consequence of current programmes rather than a specific goal in itself. In describing how the SPARC programmes mesh together, a senior SPARC official highlighted:

what we are trying to do in all our programmes is getting people to think about how they fit in here and influence it. That they are not creating barriers to getting people into life-long participation, as that’s where everybody wants to end up (Interview: 16 October 2006).

SPARC developed two national programmes, Active Living and Active Children, with the aim of increasing participation in physical activity. Under the Active Living banner are strategies aimed at increasing the physical activity levels of the post school group (see Table 6.7).

Policies directed at increasing activity levels of youth (0-24 year old age group) fall under the Active Children programme. Several programmes which SPARC currently deliver have been extended or continued from the Hillary Commission, which include Push Play, He Oranga Poutama and Green Prescription. However, He Oranga Poutama is mandated under legislation, whereby SPARC is required to promote and support the development and implementation of physical recreation and sport in a way that is culturally appropriate to Māori, highlighting that it is not only low participation levels, which drive the development of programmes directed towards increasing physical activity levels.

What is evident from the strategies developed under the Active Living programme (see Table 6.7) is the heavy emphasis on increasing the physical activity levels of the in-active group which is defined as people who fail to achieve 30 minutes of physical activity a day. What is evident from the current programmes is the paucity of programmes directed at increasing or maintaining adult participation levels in sport or physical activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key deliverers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
<td>Push Play</td>
<td>Increase awareness of and motivation to undertake physical activity</td>
<td>In-active group</td>
<td>Promotional Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVING</td>
<td>Green Prescription</td>
<td>Enables general practitioners and practice nurses to prescribe physical activity to a patient.</td>
<td>In-active group</td>
<td>RSTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Exceptions</td>
<td>Strategy aimed at guiding agencies in provision of recreation and sport opportunities for disabled people</td>
<td>Disabled persons</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Push Play Parents</td>
<td>Provides advice and resources for parents to assist them in getting their children more active</td>
<td>Children aged 0-12 years</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He Oranga Poutama</td>
<td>Aimed at increasing physical activity levels of Māori</td>
<td>Māori in the 0-5 age group</td>
<td>Iwi authorities, RST, Kaiwhakaheres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
<td>Active Schools</td>
<td>Aim is to increase levels of physical activity through developing physically active culture within primary schools</td>
<td>Primary school aged children</td>
<td>Schools and RSTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILDREN</td>
<td>Active Schools - SportFit</td>
<td>Aim is to improve delivery of physical activity, sport and health programmes and increase opportunity to participate in sports and physical activity</td>
<td>Secondary School Children 13 - 18 years of age</td>
<td>Schools and RSTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission On</td>
<td>A cross government initiative including ministry of Education, Health and Youth Affairs. Includes both national and targeted programmes and aims to embed healthy behaviours for post-school living</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>A wide range including General practitioners, RSTs, schools and local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Movement</td>
<td>Teaches fundamental movement skills</td>
<td>Under 5 year years of age</td>
<td>RSTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active Workplaces</td>
<td>Aimed at employers wanting to promote health and fitness in the work environment</td>
<td>Adults in the workplace</td>
<td>SPARC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both Green Prescription and Push Play focus upon increasing awareness of the benefits for physical exercise and targeting those at most need of increasing their level of physical activity.

The focus on inactive people was also evident in recent research commissioned by SPARC, which aimed to explore the obstacles to physical activity. The target group for this research was the 45 per cent of the New Zealand population who are not physically active but do have some intention in the next 6 months of becoming active. While Push Play has been credited as being very successful in raising awareness of the key physical activity messages, its influence in increasing participation has been questioned (van Aalst, Kazakov, & McLean, 2003: 16-17). This may in part explain the recent change in the focus of Push Play from an initiative focused solely on increasing awareness of the benefits of physical activity to motivating people to take action in physical activity (Deloitte, September 2006).

The Active Workplace strategy provides resources for organisations wishing to encourage their employees to become more active, however, at present there are no national incentives schemes such as tax claw-backs for organisations providing employees with opportunities for physical activity. Consistent with the focus on youth, a number of resources have also been developed by SPARC, which provide information on how New Zealanders can become more active and available on-line. The increasing importance of health as a motivator for government is also evident in the recently implemented Mission On programme. While this initiative addresses the post-school group as well as youth (0-24 year old age group), a key focus of this programme is upon increasing physical activity and education regarding healthy nutrition; signalling a further expansion in regard to the type of programmes and initiatives developed by SPARC. Although there is no clear or coherent framework that addresses adult-life long participation recognition of the need for this to be addressed is evident:

we have focused on the national bodies around governance and management and we have focused on physical activity...We haven't really done anything on
how do you develop grassroots sport and that is increasingly on our agenda
(Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006).

There is evidence of an aspiration to achieve life-long participation, however, while government programmes may not explicitly set out the goal of life-long participation, it is clearly an outcome which SPARC wish to achieve as explained by a senior SPARC official:

what we are trying to do in all our programmes is get people [SPARC employees] to think that they...are not creating barriers to getting [people] into life-long participation, as that's where we want everybody to end up (Interview: 16 October 2007)

With the increasing focus on health (including nutrition) and youth dominating the current strategies of SPARC, the ability of SPARC to address such a wide spectrum goals must be questioned. On a continuum of activity, with elite sport at one end and physical activity and nutrition at the other, the goal of increasing sport participation falls between the two (see Figure 6.3).

**Figure 6.3  Policy focus areas of SPARC**

The 'stretching' of objectives, has drawn government resources towards opposite ends of the activity continuum. As a result, the development of strategies aimed at increasing and maintaining participation in sport have been over-looked by SPARC. The absence of government policy aimed at the development of grassroots sport is also driven by a lack of clarity and information, as to how to address this area:
Elite and youth [is the current focus] and if we can be criticised and we can, we have tended to get drawn to the two ends of the spectrum so we are driven much more this way to elite. Yes, the whole Push Play has been a big focus. What we are busy tackling about internally is how do we develop sport at grassroots level? (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006).

The lack of focus on grassroots sport as an area of government policy emphasises the uncertainty of sport as a tool to achieve increased levels of participation. Ambiguity surrounding grassroots sport appears evident in the amorphous way in which it has been utilised a contrast with elite sport development where the use of sport to achieve international success has been clearly defined. Incorporated within the title of SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) the lack of emphasis on increasing levels of grassroots sport may indicate a rhetorical rather than actual commitment to grassroots sport. Furthermore, is the way in which grassroots sport has been marginalised as an activity to address rising levels of obesity and physical inactivity, being used as one of many tools/activities by RSTs and local government, perhaps indicating a waning interest in sport as a tool to address increasing levels of obesity and the associated health risks. However, there appears to be a reluctance by the government to openly sideline sport from policies or programmes perhaps reflecting a tension between the cultural significance of sport to New Zealanders and the need to increase physical activity (rather than sporting participation levels) levels to address the consequences of obesity levels.

The influence of SPARC upon NGBs and RSTs in regard to increasing physical activity levels of youth is also evident. NGBs in particular are considered to be the lead agencies for increasing the numbers of participants in their respective sports. In May 2005, SPARC allocated extra funding for the establishment of regional sport development officers within NGBs with the aim of increasing sport participation rates within local communities and encouraging young people to keep playing after they left school (Mallard, 2005). Despite this programme, the comparatively small level of funding allocated to sports for increasing participation would indicate that the development of elite sport is of more concern than grassroots or recreational sport. While funding to NGBs has
increased, the emphasis is placed upon the development of elite sport in NGBs:

the bulk [of resources] definitely comes from SPARC they are our major funder they would contribute between 50 and 60 per cent of our income. We are heavily reliant on them and the bulk of that income is directed to high performance because that is what they are investing. (Interview: A senior NGB official, 24 October 2006).

However, it is difficult to accurately identify the level of resourcing directly allocated to NGBs for increasing participation levels due to the structure of the funding streams. While sport development funding allocated to NGBs is considerably less than funding allocated to developing high performance, it is also focused on a number of different areas, only one of which is developing grassroots sport:

We get $250,000 a year annually [for sport development]. That's purely as I see it for coaching and development and administration. Now that's separate. We get $1 million or nearly $1 million for high performance, that's the 2 sums of money that you get. And then there are lots of coaching scholarships but that's all part of the elite programme. (Interview: A senior NGB official, 14 October, 2006).

While the funding of NGBs in relation to the development of grassroots is considerably lower than for elite sport, SPARC has also encouraged NGBs to have a focus on youth. As explained by one senior NGB official in regard to the agreement with SPARC, 'the focus was youth, the agreement was reached before I got in, at the end of 2003 and the start of 2004, they [SPARC] were looking at I suppose crudely 5 to 14 year olds. They wanted participation in the younger age levels [not older]. (Interview: 27 October, 2006). It would appear, therefore that government funding of NGBs has focused upon elite and youth sport development with little consideration of the post-school group or the grassroots level. The emphasis on youth and elite sport was reinforced by a senior NGB official:
Our turnover was $3.6 million last year and about $2 million is in high performance. We spend around $800,000 to $900,000 on what we class as education which is all the things to do with programmes to the under 5 year olds (Interview: 24 October 2007).

In contrast, other sports have identified the need to take a more holistic view towards increasing participation across all age groups. For Swimming New Zealand, there is a clear goal of increasing membership to 60,000 people in 2008, however much of this has been instigated from the sport itself in a desire to grow the sport.

Definitely our approach towards participation is not about swimmers who are aged between 12 and 22 its about from when you are born to right through until you are 100 I suppose. And for us what we have been doing is going through and plugging the gaps in the pathway so it's seamless and continuous. (Interview: A senior NGB official, 24 October 2006).

The common theme that focusing upon youth would in turn lead to life-long participation in sport was also espoused as key aim of the SPARC youth strategy where it was highlighted that the targeting of youth was to ‘to ensure they continue to be active in sport and recreation beyond secondary school’ (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002a). This discourse was also evident in regard to RSTs. As explained by a senior RST official, ‘we've got this philosophy that if we actually get this ground-breaking work right early on, you position people well enough with the skills to be able to continue on’ (Interview: 17 October 2006). This is despite the lack of evidence to support such a contention.

The lack of urgency in creating a policy aimed at increasing adult participation in sport appears to be also fuelled by the expectation that taking part in sport or physical activity is the responsibility of the individual. Given the neo-liberal approach, which New Zealand has embraced, it is not surprising to observe that responsibility for taking part in sport and physical activity rests with the individual, not the state. As explained by a senior RST official, the expectation
is that once people leave school they will pay for their own sporting and recreational activities:

I think traditionally it has been left to people. If we take 18 year old plus, they are either in tertiary or working and therefore it's over to them to join the clubs or the RSTs or their clubs or activities. It is more in their hands to do it. (Interview: 5 October 2006)

Not only did the establishment of SPARC signal a growing recognition of the importance of sport to the government but more significantly this was now demonstrated by the willingness to significantly increase crown funding for SPARC. From a relatively modest contribution of NZD$2.7 million in 2001/02 government funding increased to over NZD$59 million in 2007, while total overall funding in the corresponding period increased from NZD$35.6 million to NZD$98.6 million (see Table 6.8). Resourcing of all three key areas has risen steadily since 2002 with funding for 'being the most active nation' more than doubling between 2003/2004 and 2006/2007 (see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8 SPARC actual total funding (NZD million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Crown Funding (Vote Funding - Sport and Recreation)¹⁵</th>
<th>Winning in events that matter to New Zealanders</th>
<th>Being the most active nation</th>
<th>Having the most effective sport and recreation systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>14.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>17.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2002a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2004b); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2005a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2005); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2006a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2007b)

Increased investment by the crown into the sport sector (via SPARC) looks set to continue with the incumbent Labour government, in its 2005 Election

¹⁵ Does not include funding from other Government Agencies
manifesto, committing to increased funding to sport and recreation of NZD$59.76 million in the 2008/2009 financial year (New Zealand Labour Party, 2005).

Not surprisingly, the increased funding from government has had a flow-on effect to a number of other organisations in the sports sector. As discussed earlier, the level of funding for NGBs has increased significantly (see Table 6.9). This has been accompanied by increased levels of funding to the Academies, Regional Sports Trusts and Local Government. This rapid increase in, and control of, funding by SPARC has drawn attention to the inability of NSOs to retain autonomy without compromising their (often) major source of income. In part this is due to the tagging of funds for particular programmes leaving little discretion for the NGBs to develop their sport according to their own wishes, as highlighted by a senior NGB official:

the SPARC programme, half a million a year is dedicated to particular outcomes, so it's not just thrown into a pot and we can spend it on general stuff, its specifically targeted. Some people hated the view that SPARC was going to push their precious industry or community in a said direction (Interview: 4 October 2006).

In contrast to NGBs, the influence of SPARC on local government has been marginal, largely due to the insignificant allocation of funds to sport and recreation and also due to the independent nature of local governments. Although local government is a critical provider of facilities and increasingly programmes at the local level, it is interesting to note the comparatively low level of funding allocated to local government in comparison with NGBs and RSTs (see Table 6.9). In 2006/2007, local authorities received 3 per cent of SPARC’s total investment budget, while RSTs received 25 per cent and NSOs 54 per cent (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2007). Recent moves by SPARC to address the development and maintenance of sport facilities has highlighted the tension between local and national government. Moves by SPARC to develop a national facility strategy revealed the difficulty in coordinating local governments:
I don't know that that it will ever occur because I think local governments being local governments are fiercely independent of their own sovereignty in terms of we will make our own decisions as we are the ones funding it. So SPARC and the previous Hillary Commission had high aspirations for saying you have one here, and three here and whatever. I tell you, the only way you will get that is if government say we will tip in 10 million and you tip in 10 and we will build it together. It's a toughie. (Interview: A senior local government official, 11 October, 2006).

Table 6.9 Allocation of SPARC investment funds (NZD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Sports Organisations</th>
<th>Academies (North, Central and South)</th>
<th>Regional Sports Trusts</th>
<th>Local Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>13,358,624</td>
<td>3,647,328</td>
<td>6,592,760</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>15,634,406</td>
<td>3,925,068</td>
<td>7,077,053</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>18,740,318</td>
<td>4,624,744</td>
<td>8,123,750</td>
<td>925,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>22,334,055</td>
<td>4,271,395</td>
<td>11,538,301</td>
<td>1,975,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>32,552,342</td>
<td>5,251,718</td>
<td>12,760,334</td>
<td>2,743,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>35,498,882</td>
<td>6,252,698</td>
<td>16,305,993</td>
<td>2,121,190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2002a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2003a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2005a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2006a); Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2007b)

Increased funding has led to an enhanced ability to deliver programmes; it has also created certain tensions at times between the expected goals of SPARC and those of other partners or stakeholders. This raises potential conflict situations between groups such as RST's and their community, which RST's serve. As highlighted by a senior RST official:

"The other thing we have to be mindful of is we do have to get money from the community. The community can get a little funny at times if they think you are getting too much from government, then [they think] do you need our money (Interview: 5 October, 2006)"

As highlighted earlier, SPARC identified the need to build the capability of sporting organisations. Improved governance and management practices were seen as a sound base upon which the goals of achieving increased
participation levels and success in elite sport could be based. In doing this SPARC insisted that NGBs improve their ability to respond to the changing needs of the sector and those involved in sport. This required attracting professional people to organisations that had previously been managed by volunteers while also ensuring the governance and structure of NGBs enhanced rather than inhibited the successful operation of the NGB:

if you get somebody into the sport whose job it is to run it, with the right mandate and governance structure they will start to solve those problems rather than us sitting in Wellington trying to do that. (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006)

Increased funding of sporting organisations by SPARC was combined with an increased demand for greater accountability and the need for partner agencies to demonstrate a ‘return on investment,’ which was to be assessed against the ability to assist in achieving SPARC’s mission (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b). Most noticeably, in 2006, the allocation of sport development funding to Athletics New Zealand was withdrawn due to its inability to impact upon participation levels in the sport. What is perhaps highlighted is the lack of robust baseline data as well as difficulty in understanding the best way in which participation information will be measured. Funding agreements were to be signalled well in advance by SPARC to enhance sporting organisations’ and partner agencies’ ability to plan more effectively and over a longer period. From the outset SPARC stated it would assist national organisations ‘which demonstrate they can assist us in achieving our mission...the return from these investments will be the subject of negotiation and will be documented in new contracts with SPARC ’ (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2002b: 10).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the criticisms outlined in the Graham Report, more effective governance was seen as a key area for improvement. Implementation of governance and leadership programmes across 70 per cent of targeted organisations was identified as early key performance indicators for SPARC to achieve (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006a). Poor
structures and management practices were identified as key barriers to NGBs being able to achieve SPARC's mission. For SPARC this was about:

- growing the sporting infrastructure in NZ and that includes working around government, improving management and the quality people. If you do that and you get that right then why then we can approach issues about where the opportunities are. Let's get the infrastructure working well then figure out where the gaps (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006).

Striving for increased efficiency amongst sporting organisations by SPARC meant that organisations that did not have, or did not demonstrate, an improved governance structure were less likely to receive support or resourcing from SPARC. The drive by SPARC for more effective management structures and practices amongst NGBs appears to have precedence over policies aimed at advancing their sport. This is not surprising given the incentives from SPARC:

- Well yeah, I suppose our focus at the moment is the implementation and the structures, governance area. But hot on its heels we want to be producing policies that strengthen our clubs and strengthen the membership level (Interview: A senior NGB official, 4 October 2006).

In summary, the period 2002 to 2007 was dominated by structural changes to the New Zealand sport policy landscape. The establishment of SPARC as the key government organisation with responsibility for sport policy led to a more simplified structure, along with, greater clarity surrounding the roles and responsibilities for sporting organisations, particularly with regard to elite sport development. While SPARC's vision is to have New Zealand as the most active nation, this has been largely driven by government concerns regarding declining health statistics resulting in physical activity and youth, rather than grassroots sport, becoming the focus of policies. Adult life-long participation remains an acknowledged aspiration of sport policy that will be achieved by a focus upon youth and the embedding of healthy practices which will be maintained throughout a life-time. This has been part of the explanation for the lack of policies directed towards the development of ALLP.
The significant increase in levels of government funding has led to SPARC emerging as an influential and dominant organisation, which has been able to shape the direction of New Zealand sport policy. Interestingly, it has been the emergence of RSTs as key deliverers of SPARC's participation programmes, rather than NSOs, that has become increasingly apparent over the previous six years. However, cognisance must be given to the relative recency of SPARC. While NGBs have been focused upon ensuring improved governance structures along with more efficient management practices, largely at the behest of SPARC, it is unclear what focus NGBs will place upon improving levels of participation within their respective sports. This raises questions as to the future role of NGBs in increasing participation levels amongst their respective sports.

**Conclusions to chapter**

The New Zealand sport policy landscape has been transformed considerably over the last 35 years, with significant change occurring since the establishment of SPARC in 2002. While adult life-long participation in sport has no coherent policy framework, it is considered an important by-product of many of the current strategies aimed at increasing participation. Three key themes have emerged over the last 30 years in relation to the sport policy landscape in New Zealand.

The first theme is the emergence of coalitions of interest from the 1970s up until 2002. For much of this period the responsibility for elite sport, mass-sport and recreation came under the auspices of independent agencies, both governmental and non-governmental. This combined with influential groups of individuals steering the direction (and funding) of the government agency resulted in coalitions of interest emerging around elite sport, grassroots and recreation. The establishment of SPARC in 2002 has to some degree blurred the boundaries surrounding the coalitions. With SPARC becoming the dominant agency, due to increasing levels of resourcing and its influence as a government agency, many sporting agencies appear to be content with the rapid increase in funding and little debate appears to have developed surrounding the focus of SPARC's strategies, which are primarily directed at
the development of elite sport and the increasing of physical activity levels amongst those who are inactive.

The second theme is the emergence of health both as a catalyst for investment and as a focus of strategies. This has also meant that the focus of SPARC has spread further to also include the development of strategies aimed at education and awareness regarding nutrition. As a result, increasing levels of physical activity, especially amongst ‘inactive’ people has become a priority, while increasing sport participation levels has been marginalised. In conjunction with this, comparatively low levels of funding have been allocated to NGBs from SPARC for addressing grassroots sport. This is in sharp contrast to the increasing levels of investment in elite sport development. For NGBs heavily reliant upon SPARC for their funding, there is little opportunity to invest in developing strategies aimed at increasing participation. Where resourcing is allocated towards increasing sport participation levels this is frequently targeted at youth, reinforcing the national programmes of SPARC and again over looking the post-school group.

Thirdly, there is a very strong focus on the development and implementation of strategies aimed at increasing the physical activity levels of youth. Again this has been driven by increasing rates of obesity amongst youth and the associated health impacts. Combined with the assumption that habits formed during youth will carry over into adulthood, the youth programme's ultimate goal is to ensure patterns of physical activity developed during childhood form the foundation for adulthood life-long participation in physical activity. Somewhat surprising is the assumption that once youth leave school there is no need for further encouragement to maintain the levels of physical activity. Along with this is the apparent marginalisation and lack of clarity regarding the use of grassroots sport as an activity to increase participation levels and to address rising levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity. Any attempts therefore to increase adult participation levels appear to remain solely with NGBs rather than with government initiated programmes/policies. However, while there are no national strategies aimed at developing or
maintaining adult levels of sport participation, there is recognition that this needs to be addressed.

I think it is fair to say that we have focused on elite system, we have focused on the national bodies around governance and management and we have focused on physical activity and coaching has certainly been a strong area in terms of sport development. We haven’t really done anything on how you develop grassroots sport and that is increasingly on our agenda (Interview: A senior SPARC official, 25 October 2006).

A lack of any clear framework may in part be explained by the relative recency of SPARC and the need to address issues surrounding governance and improved management systems before addressing major goals such as adult life-long participation in sport. However, with a government focused un addressing the obesity epidemic and an increasing emphasis placed upon achieving at the elite level, it appears that adult participation in sport will remain an aspiration rather than a clear and focused goal.
Chapter 7
Conclusion
The nature of policy

The focus of this study is upon government policies that are considered successful in contributing to adult-life long participation (ALLP) in sport. Given the ambiguity and at times amorphous definitions and interpretations of SfA, both between and within countries, the concept of ALLP focuses upon a more specific aspect of SfA. As discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 the term SfA, grassroots sport, community sport and mass-sport are all terms that policymakers and sports officials have used interchangeably. However, a common thread through all of these approaches is the desire to increase the number of people participating in sport or physical activity through a variety of targeted policies. While SfA-related policies have frequently been directed at specific groups, such as youth, the disabled and indigenous peoples, and accompanied by a range of goals, the existence of policies specifically directed towards developing or maintaining ALLP, have not been as apparent.

Australia, Finland and New Zealand all expressed an aspiration to achieve ALLP, however, there was little evidence of a policy or strategy that could be 'pulled off the shelf' and called ALLP. The absence of a definable policy is in stark contrast to the areas of elite and youth sport in particular, where in all three countries relatively clear policies and programmes have been developed to support and develop these areas. The lack of a clearly articulated ALLP policy, despite varying expressions of aspiration, raises questions as to how 'policy' is actually defined, and in turn, how policy has been executed through various actions or inactions in each country.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there has been considerable difficulty in finding an authoritative definition of policy, as eruditely argued by Hill it 'is difficult to treat it as a very specific and concrete phenomenon' (1997: 7). Hogwood and Gunn discuss a number of common usages of the term policy: as a field of activity, as a specific proposal, as decisions of government, as a programme, as
outcomes, as outputs and as an expression of general purpose or desired state of affairs (1984: 13-19). However, the lack of a clearly articulated policy with regard to ALLP may also suggest the need to consider inaction as a focus of government policy-making. As suggested by Heclo, who emphasised action in policy making, ‘A policy may be usefully considered as a course of action or inaction rather than a specific decision’ (1972: 85). Heclo’s reference to inaction is particularly pertinent with respect to policy making and also relations of power. It is policy as inaction which appears to hold some resonance within the Australian context, where repeated expressions of commitment to increase support and resourcing of grassroots and community sport have not been translated into ‘policy as action’.

Since the establishment of the ASC in 1985 the Australian government has consistently maintained that it has placed equal emphasis on the two goals of achieving excellence in elite sport and increased levels of participation. Policy implementation and levels of resourcing for grassroots sport have, however, continually failed to reflect the rhetoric of politicians or the claims and intentions of government as outlined in policy documents. As Hogwood and Gunn argued ‘the ’intent’ of policy makers is not always reflected in their policy’s ‘content”’ (1984: 14-15). The low levels of funding and lack of action-oriented policies (or inaction) directed at maintaining or increasing levels of adult participation indicate that the Australian government has adopted a stance whereby ALLP is of little relevance or importance, despite repeated claims to the contrary. As will be discussed later in this section, this policy of inaction has been a powerful means by which grassroots sport, as an area of Australian sport policy, has been marginalised.

In contrast to Australia, SfA in Finland has been formally embedded within Finnish sporting culture. Enshrined in legislation it is possible to consider policy making with regard to SfA in Finland as ‘formal authorisation’ (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). In other words through a specific or set of statutory instruments, ‘which permit or require an activity to take place’ (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984: 16), participation in sport has been labelled as a fundamental right for all citizens for which the government is required to create the necessary pre-conditions.
Through a legislative framework that legitimates the rights of citizens to participate in sport and physical activity, the Finnish government has overtly endorsed sport as an activity for government support and as an important feature of Finnish culture. While it may be argued that the enacting of legislation in itself does not guarantee any further action to ensure that these principles or rights are both enforced (see Hogwood & Gunn, 1984), as discussed earlier, this has not been the case in Finland, with national programmes and government resource allocations strongly supporting SfA.

New Zealand presents a more uncertain picture as to how policy might be categorised. While ALLP was acknowledged as an area that needed to be addressed no action or policy has been implemented to support or develop ALLP. The apparent lack of action must be mitigated by the fact that SPARC, as a relatively new government entity, has prioritised other areas in order to create an environment and the expertise, whereby sport policy outcomes can be more effectively delivered. Whether SPARC will address this area in the future remains unclear. However, given the acknowledgment that this is an area for future policy development, it would appear that ALLP remains 'an expression of general purpose or desired state of affairs' (Hogwood & Gunn 1984: 14).

This raises questions as to the implications of not having a definable policy and, furthermore, whether a definable policy is necessary to achieve ALLP. In countries such as Finland, where legislation provides an evaluative framework and confirms sport participation as a fundamental right, the lack of clearly defined policy objectives has not been critical to the success of ALLP. In contrast, the absence of an ALLP policy, along with low levels of sport participation may suggest that Australians are deluded by perceptions of their own rugged athletic participation, which implies that such policies are not required – despite evidence suggesting otherwise. As suggested by Houlihan (1997) the tendency to mythologise the role of sport has led to less critical investigation than one would hope for given the low numbers of Australians, who regularly and frequently participate in sport throughout their life. This may indicate that the absence of policy is not necessarily critical to the realisation of
certain objectives particularly when there is a culture of participation embedded within society. However, it does raise the importance of a country's historical context with regard to the shaping policy. A further consideration, therefore is the impact of the wider social and cultural context in which sport policy is embedded. Before addressing the key findings with regard to Australia, Finland and New Zealand and ALLP, it is, therefore pertinent to address the ways in which sport policy is mediated by cultural factors.

The role of historical context

Australia, Finland and New Zealand have all been faced with similar issues over the last thirty years, which have impacted upon the direction of, and salience of sport policy to government. All three countries have been challenged with rising levels of obesity and the associated health risks and costs, declining levels of physical activity (particularly in New Zealand and Australia) and continued aspirations for elite sporting success. For Finland, however, it may be argued that the goal of achieving elite sporting success has been tempered in comparison with New Zealand and particularly Australia.

Despite the existence of these broadly similar factors, quite different sport policy approaches have been adopted in each of the three countries. Thus, the variation in sport policy development focus raises questions regarding the extent to which different policy foci have been mediated by domestic factors. In other words, is it the case that a country's distinctive domestic socio-economic, political and cultural system shapes, to a large degree, the formulation of sport policy? As discussed in Chapter 3, the concept of institutionalism may provide some insight into the diverse paths taken by Australia, Finland and New Zealand with regard to ALLP. As explained by Houlihan the impact of factors, such as 'the accumulation of policy decisions, the organisation of the machinery of government, the history of relations with other countries, religious values, the distribution of function between national and sub-national government, the political party structure, and the relationship between the legislature and the executive all combine to provide a series of institutional
constraints on the scope of policy choice’ (2007: 9), need to be considered. It is these factors, which merge to provide a series of institutionalised constraints on the scope of policy choice, ‘shape how political actors define their interests and...structure their relations of power to other groups’ (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 2).

**Australia**

A number of historical factors have impacted upon the trajectory of Australia’s (elite) sport policy development. Australia’s early sporting history and its close associations with English sporting traditions impacted upon the nation’s desire for sporting success and the path it carved towards that goal (Adair & Vamplew, 1997). Perhaps more important was the use of sport as a tool to unite the nation, particularly when securing wins over England – in other words winning has long been considered a way of building national identity. This culture of winning was to have a significant impact on the level and type of government intervention. The disappointing performances of Australian athletes at the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games resulted in cross-party political support for the development of (elite) sport policy, primarily as a tool to promote national identity and to restore Australia to its ‘rightful place’ on the international sporting stage (Collins & Green, 2007). It is clear that any examination of Australian public policy since 1975 shows an apparent reluctance to address both sport development policy goals – fostering elite performance and mass participation - with equal commitment (cf. Armstrong, 1997; Booth, 1995; Hogan and Norton, 2000; Nauright, 1996).

A culture of sporting achievement was also shaped by an increasingly centralised and federally-funded organisational and administrative structure. At the heart of this organisational and administrative structure was the establishment of the ASC and AIS – the country’s leading governmental sporting agency, which reinforced the institutionalisation of political commitment to elite development – despite continuing official federal rhetoric around support for mass participation (cf. Booth, 1995; Commonwealth of Australia, 1999). An important moment for Australian sport development was the decision in 1993 by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to award
the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney. This decision had a profound effect on the pace and direction of federal sport policy organisation, administration and funding allocations throughout the 1990s; a decision, moreover, which further strengthened the elite sport lobby in Australia (cf. Green & Houlihan, 2005).

Finally, the impact of a federal structure, in particular the constraints of the Constitution and the adoption of a neo-liberal ideology have influenced the direction of Australian sport policy development. With regard to institutional constraints, it may be argued that the Australian Constitution limits the ability of the federal government to interfere in the implementation of sport policy at state and local government level. Without the institutional infrastructure to effect change at state and local government level, the ability of the Commonwealth to encourage and support SfA has been limited. A further constraint is the difficulty in effecting change to the Constitution, or other political mechanisms, which might enable the federal government to intervene more directly with regard to state and local government policy.

Since the mid-1980s, Australian politics has been underpinned by a neo-liberal ideology (see also Dean & Hindess, 1998; Wanna & Weller, 2003). Drawing on Esping-Andersen's work, liberal welfare regimes 'reflect a political commitment to minimize the state, to individualize risks, and to promote market solutions' (1999:74ff). For grassroots sport, the emergence of a neo-liberalist ideology shifted responsibility for participating in sport away from the state to the individual. Therefore, consistent with the beliefs and values of neo-liberalism, the individual (particularly adults rather than youth) were increasingly required to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and the costs associated with participation in sporting activities. It is somewhat of a paradox, therefore, that the level of Australian government intervention in (elite) sport has steadily grown when increased investment in sport did not fit neatly with the ideology of neo-liberalism. However, the strong electoral appeal of elite sport was an attractive driver for continued support by the Australian government (Stewart et al. 2004).
Finland

Finland’s history contains several key factors which have shaped the direction of sport policy including the depth of political involvement in sport, the shift to a social democratic ideology in the 1960s and the introduction of legislation, which reinforced values and beliefs with regard to SfA. As highlighted in Chapter 5, up until 1993, Finland’s key sporting organisations were separated according to political ideology resulting in the formation of two parallel sporting organisations, which dominated Finnish sport. As a result, sports funding and sporting debates were frequently associated with intense political debate and imbued with weighty political symbolism, particularly with relation to the Soviet Union and the influence of Soviet politics on Finland’s domestic politics. The development of Finnish sport and the Finnish political system were closely related, both in respect of timing and substance, with the political system having a major influence on the support and, at times, the existence of sporting organisations (Kiviaho, 1981).

A critical factor in shaping Finnish sport policy was the emergence of a pro-welfare ideology during 1960s. The embracing of a social-democratic regime provided a favourable environment for SfA to emerge as tolerance of differences was promoted and opposition to national patriotism was supported (Alapuro, 2004). According to Esping-Anderson (1999: 78ff), the social democratic regime is synonymous with the Nordic countries and ‘is committed to comprehensive risk coverage, generous benefits levels and egalitarianism’. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that SfA emerged as a dominant policy focus with the alignment of values between SfA (universalism and egalitarianism) and the social democratic ideology. Access to, and opportunities for, participation in sport was now to be considered a right of all citizens with responsibility for providing this shifted to the state. As a result, the desire to achieve elite sporting success, while still considered a goal worth pursuing, was not awarded the same level of support as SfA by the government.

While the passage of the two Sports Acts in 1988 and 1998 reinforced sport as a part of social policy and formalised the roles and responsibilities of the state
and municipalities with regard to sport policy, the Acts merely recognised practices that were already in operation within Finnish sport. What, therefore, is uncertain is whether the enactment of legislation merely reflected changes taking place within Finnish society (and sporting organisations) or whether the actions taken by government, to further enforce the social democratic ideology, were instrumental in bringing about change with regard to the direction of sport policy. Perhaps more important with regard to the direction of sport policy in Finland is that the policies, now grounded in law and backed by the coercive power of the state, signalled what could, and what could not be done, while also establishing many of the ‘rewards and penalties associated with particular activities’ (Pierson 2000: 259). This supports Fisher who argued that cultural institutionalism emphasised the social construction of meaning and ‘how interest groups, politicians, and administrators decide their policy preferences’ (2003: 29). The values and beliefs that were encapsulated within legislation were reinforced through organisational change (the formation of the Finnish Sports Federation and domain organisations), which further shaped the way in which actors both perceived and developed policies, notably around youth and SfA. The allocation of responsibility and the new role of domain organisations impacted upon the distribution of preferences. In other words greater emphasis was again placed on youth and SfA while elite sport was considered a policy area with inherent risks. This was reinforced by the Minister of Culture, who highlighted that it is the taking part in sport that is important and when winning in sport receives too much emphasis it ‘drives the athlete into hopeless, unthinking acts, there is no shame in losing honestly. The shame lies in winning by questionable means’ (Pyykkönen, 2003: 23).

New Zealand

In considering New Zealand’s distinctive historical context, three factors appear influential in shaping the direction of sport policy. First, New Zealand sporting culture and the desire to maintain its standing on the international sporting stage, second, the radical shift to a neo-liberal ideology in the 1980s and finally the establishment of SPARC in 2002. While Australia’s sport policy has strongly focused upon elite sport development and Finland’s has been on
promoting SfA, New Zealand's recent sport policy focus has been characterised by supporting elite sport development and physical activity.

New Zealand's sporting history has been one which has been associated with instilling discipline and national pride (Hindson, Cushman, & Gidlow, 1994). Since the 1800s, when sport was brought to New Zealand by colonial settlers, it has held a strong place in New Zealand society and in accord with Finland and Australia was used as a tool to promote national identity. Participation in sport was considered to instil valuable traits such as discipline, the value of obeying authority, courage and loyalty and also respect for the rules (Hindson et al., 1994). Despite its relatively small size, New Zealand had considerable international success, which was underpinned by a belief that New Zealand athletes would succeed regardless of the level of government support due to their 'can do' approach. This view of New Zealand athletes was accompanied by a deeply embedded welfare state system in which government intervention in sport policy was strongly centred on providing opportunities for community development and grassroots sport, rather than elite sporting success.

The radical shift towards neo-liberalism in the mid-1980s signalled a shift in values, beliefs and norms, which in turn was reflected in the way in which sport policy developed and was implemented at both national and sub-government level. Esping-Andersen's categorisation of a liberal welfare regime fits comfortably with the New Zealand context, as there was a political commitment to minimise the state, individualise risks and promote market solutions (1999). The welfare goals of participation were abolished and universality was replaced by the introduction of a modest safety net which targeted the most 'at risk' groups - in the case of sport policy this was youth and the physically inactive. As argued by Esping-Andersen within liberal welfare regimes 'social guarantees are typically restricted to "bad risks"' (1999: 74ff). New Zealand's focus on increasing physical activity and targeting youth and the inactive, rather than grassroots sport, can be considered to reflect this approach. A stark contrast to sport as part of social citizenship evident in Finland.
Finally, the establishment of SPARC in 2002 impacted greatly on the direction of New Zealand sport policy. In drawing attention to Houlihan's argument that institutions 'constrain choice through their capacity to shape actors' perception of both problems and acceptable solutions' (2007: 10), the establishment of SPARC may be considered an important variable in shaping the direction of sport policy. The centralised funding and administrative structure of SPARC shifted support and policies away from SfA to that of elite sport development and physical activity. As with Australia, it is also somewhat of a paradox that in the midst of a period of government down-sizing, the New Zealand government wrested responsibility away from both governmental and private organisations to create an independent crown entity with responsibility for sport.

In summary, it can be argued that each country's historical and political context, heritage of institutions and collective social values has shaped the direction of sport policy. Given the social-democratic ideology of Finland, it is not surprising that sport policy has focused on an approach that incorporates values aligned with universality and egalitarianism. In contrast, New Zealand and Australia, although both having neo-liberal underpinnings, have adopted slightly different approaches to SfA. It may also be posited that the focus upon elite sport development fits more comfortably with a neo-liberal ideology as it focuses upon the individual and rewarding excellence. The importance of organisational infrastructure as a variable in shaping policy has also been highlighted within all three countries with regard to the establishment of the ASC, SPARC, DOs and the SLU (cf. Houlihan & White 2002; Green & Houlihan 2005; Roche 1993).

The way in which SfA has been rationalised in Australia, Finland and New Zealand highlights the malleability of SfA and the extent to which it can be manipulated to achieve stated government outcomes. Of note, especially with regard to Finland and Australia has been the consistent yet divergent paths each country has adopted with regard to SfA, which draws attention to the concept of path dependency and the assumption that 'policy will change as a result of past experience or new information' (Houlihan, 2007: 18). If it is accepted that socio-economic and cultural history creates policy
predispositions then it is likely that these will be reinforced and compounded by the accretion of policies. Furthermore, the significance of the policy environment at the time when sport emerged as a political issue is also relevant. In the case of Australia and Finland, two quite distinct political environments existed during the initial period of sport policy development which it is argued, shaped the direction of future sport policy. It would, therefore appear, that the influence of each country's historical and political context, heritage of institutions and collective social values have contributed to the steady and consistent path of elite sport development in Australia and SfA in Finland (see, Green & Collins 2008, in print).

Adult-lifelong participation as policy

Australia
Since 1980 the Australian federal government has consistently expressed a desire to increase levels of sport participation amongst all Australians (Australian Government, 1992; Australian Sports Commission, 2002; Australian Sports Commission, 2005). Despite these consistent exhortations, policy implementation has failed to reflect the rhetoric. While failure to actively support SfA has impacted negatively on Australia's ability to achieve ALLP what is unclear is whether the lack of action was driven by an absence of interest in increasing levels of sport participation or a lack of instruments or resources available to the federal government to achieve this goal. Several factors would indicate the latter.

As discussed in Chapter 4, there has been consistent disparity in the levels of funding between the two goals of elite sporting success and increased levels of sport participation, despite calls for the federal government to provide greater commitment and resourcing to community sport (Australian Sports Commission, 1999; Oakley, 1999). Consistently low levels of resourcing have been accompanied by a dominant elite sport development discourse, supported by government and which, despite little supporting evidence, has managed to hold emotive resonance with the sporting culture of Australia. In more recent times the discourse surrounding the continued support for elite
sporting success (the 'trickle down' contention) has shifted to include the need for sustained investment in elite sport if Australia is to maintain its position as an elite sporting 'super-power' (Brandis, 2007). Therefore, while resourcing has been justified and allocated for elite sporting success, the ability or desire of the federal government to allocate resources to grassroots sport has not met with the same level of commitment.

The ambiguous objectives of the federal government have led to a number of tensions, which have inhibited the advancement of policies directed at ALLP. First, the lack of a consistent rationale for supporting grassroots sport has becoming increasingly evident. While NGBs and government officials promote grassroots sport as part of a development pathway for elite athletes, increasingly the ASC is also using sport participation programmes to address health concerns and rising levels of obesity. This has led to fragmented rather than integrated programmes aimed at increasing ALLP. To the detriment of ALLP, many of the participation programmes that have been developed, including the Targeted Sport Participation Growth (TSPG) and the Active After-school Community (AASc) programme, have focused upon youth, and to a lesser degree disabled and Indigenous peoples, with a noticeable absence of programmes or interventions aimed at adults generally.

The increasing prevalence of sport as a tool to address rising obesity levels and declining levels of physical activity also signals a growing sport-health nexus. This poses an interesting conundrum for the ASC, which has focused upon the promotion of organised sport rather than physical activity. It would appear that the Commonwealth government has found it difficult to decide how to handle the problem of physical inactivity and whether national governing bodies should play a role, or, whether they should remain focused on increasing levels of (elite) sporting activity. However, the emerging influence of the 'health crisis' and the resources that are becoming increasingly available to address this issue, may shift federal government sport policy away from its customary focus on traditional sporting activities towards physical activity and groups other than youth.
While structural barriers, such as the Constitution, have inhibited the extent of federal government intervention at state level, the federal government has clearly indicated that it is at state and local level that the issue of increased sport participation should be addressed. Furthermore, it may be considered that while the Constitution inhibits the extent to which the Federal government intervenes, this does not restrict a range of processes such as subsidies for community facilities, financial incentives or *quid pro quo* programmes aimed at encouraging grassroots programmes. Federal government's lack of commitment in supporting SfA was reinforced in the on-going debate with regard to the provision of sporting facilities – disagreement as to whether this should be a federal or state responsibility remains. This confusion also draws attention to constitutional grey areas and the possibility that constitutional ambiguity can be used to deny responsibility for particular area or weaknesses performance (see, Department of Parliamentary Services, 2006).

A lack of incentives from, or guidance by, the federal government to state or local government with regard to increasing levels of sport participation has contributed to divergent objectives between the different tiers of government. Without any clear direction, incentive or encouragement by the federal government both the focus and extent of investment at state and local government level has been discretionary. At times, the absence of a national strategy has led to conflicting or divergent policies between the tiers of government - despite recognition of an integrated government approach in the 1970s. The lack of action indicates that the fostering of sport participation has been an area of sport policy that has been down-graded by government and pushed to state and local governments to pursue, but only if they feel so inclined. In pushing responsibility to the sub-government level with little coordination or guidance from federal government, there appears to be a policy muddle with regard to an integrated approach to programmes and, in turn, the identification of the policies that are considered best suited to achieve these aims.

NGBs were identified by the federal government as key organisations with regard to increasing participation levels in their respective sports. However,
again federal government provided little incentive or encouragement for NGBs to invest in ALLP. Further marginalisation of ALLP was evident through the lack of concrete targets for NGBs and the absence of sanctions should any objectives not be achieved with regard to increasing levels of participation in national programmes. The introduction of programmes such as TSPG were of relatively short duration and failed to embed sustained change with regard to increasing participation. Uncertainty, regarding the goals of the TSPG signalled the confusion and doubt surrounding the goals of SfA programmes. While it was claimed that NGBs had achieved the targeted club membership numbers (Australian Sports Commission, 2007a), a senior ASC official stated that the TSPG ‘was based around programme membership not club membership’ (Interview: 25 September 2006).

The continued resourcing, support and focus on elite sport development has been to the detriment of grassroots sport and has resulted in the declining levels of autonomy for NGBs, which are reliant on ASC funding. While it is difficult to establish the level of funding allocated to NGBs for promoting grassroots sport, what is clear is that the heavy emphasis placed upon elite sport objectives has created an environment in which it is difficult for NGBs to focus upon grassroots sport. However, for NGBs such as tennis, which are not as reliant upon ASC funding, and, therefore, under less pressure to achieve ASC objectives, there was a much stronger emphasis placed upon developing grassroots sport. This highlights the critical role that resourcing plays in directing the policies of NGBs and the heavy reliance of many NGBs on government funding regardless of whether this conflicts with their own interests.

The absence of a strong lobby group for grassroots sport has not only allowed continued investment in elite sport to go largely unchallenged but has also made any shifts in policy direction increasingly difficult. Despite recent attempts by the Confederation of Australian Sports (CAS) to re-establish a ‘voice for sport’ the strength of the elite sport lobby and the reliance of NGBs upon federal government funding have made efforts to rebuild a lobby group challenging. Furthermore, the network of relationships established between the
ASC and NGBs has impacted on the need for such a lobby group to exist in the view of some NGBs. As explained by a senior NGB official:

we knock on the Minister's door and he gives us a great hearing and he loves our athletes... the way you get extra benefits in this environment is to have really good relationship with the bureaucrats over at the Commission because they do know where the money is and they will find it for you if they think you have a worthwhile programme (Interview: A senior NGB official, 27 September 2006).

Additionally, the federal government's decision not to provide financial support (a contrast to Finland) to CAS further hindered not only the establishment of an effective lobby group, but has also made any challenges to the dominant elite sport development coalition difficult.

At state level, the Victorian government has taken the opportunity to use not only sport but also recreation and physical activity as a tool to strengthen communities through a range of programmes. In the case of the Victorian state government the instrumental use of sport is clearly related to advancing community development and encouraging healthy lifestyles across a range of groups in the community, including adults. No longer is sport considered a distinct focus of policy but rather it is incorporated within the wider field of physical activity with the aim of achieving broad social benefits such as healthy lifestyles and social cohesion. Perhaps surprising is the lack of cohesion or integration between state and local government despite recognition of the crucial role that is played by local government in the provision of facilities and programmes. Despite this it would appear that sport plays an important role in the broader social objectives of the Victorian government. The recent restructure, where sport and recreation was placed under the Department for Victorian Communities and the development of the Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan confirms the broader objectives of sport (Department for Victorian Communities, 2005). The wide range of objectives and interests at state level contrast with the narrower objectives of federal government goals.
At local government level, there appears considerable variation with regard to the approach taken to sport policy. This was reflected in Boroondara and Whitehorse (both local government councils) with parochial politics playing a considerable part. The parochial nature of local politics influenced not only the focus of sport policy but also the ability to effect change. A key factor in the City of Boroondara was the ability of traditional sports (rugby, cricket, Australian Rules and hockey) to gain access to, and influence over, policy making, often to the detriment of non-traditional or new sports, which frequently have higher levels of participation. As a result, effecting change in sport policy has been problematic with non-traditional or new sports having difficulty in accessing resources and the decision making process. This raises a paradox. While local government politics is increasingly driven by the demands of the community, and leading to greater diversity with regard to priorities in relation to increasing participation levels, it is traditional sporting interests that have access to the decision making process and are able to influence the direction and allocation of resources. With little direction or assistance from state or federal government, the focus of sport policy at the local level was shown to be varied both in quantity and quality in Boroondara and Whitehorse City.

**Finland**

The emergence of sport as a tool for social policy during the late 1960s indicated the influence of the socio-economic and cultural foundation of Finland on the development of sport policy. Successive Finnish governments have been consistent in their approach with regard to the role of national and local government in promoting SfA. A key role for government was the development of an extensive network of sport facilities, which was regarded as a key prerequisite for the success of SfA. Since the 1960s, there has been little evidence that elite sport development has been considered an area of national policy development, rather it has been an area that has been actively avoided, which has in turn further enhanced the significance of SfA.

The level of government intervention with regard to influencing the direction of Finnish sport policy has oscillated between a hands-off approach and one of
direct intervention, however, a common theme has been the desire of government to ensure the autonomy of volunteer organisations. Despite this, the influence of government on the direction of NGBs and local government has been significant. The establishment of a legislative framework, the adoption of sport as part of social policy, the prioritisation of funding for community-based facilities and the establishment of national SfA programmes, reinforced to NGBs and local government that SfA was to be prioritised. Furthermore, the establishment and funding of the Finnish Sports Federation (SLU) by government ensured that NGBs and other sporting organisations were able to provide a united and influential voice through which to lobby government and shape the direction of sport policy. As the influence of the SLU has grown, a key goal has been to constantly reinforce to government the benefits of sport participation. The level of funding provided to the Finnish Sports Federation (approximately 40 per cent of their operational budget) further indicates that the government considers it necessary for sports organisations to have a voice through which they can express concerns and raise issues that affect sport.

The introduction of processes such as Management by Results provided a further example of the way in which government was able to influence, rather than dictate, the activities of NGBs. At a national level, the process of allocating funding to NGBs has been characterised by consultation and discussion between the government and sports organisations (Finnish Sports Federation and domain organisation) indicating a corporatist type relationship and highlighting the partnership approach that has been adopted with regard to achieving high levels of participation in sport. Not only has the Finnish government influenced the direction of sport policy through formal mechanisms as mentioned above, but the apparent lack of direct intervention (such as planning dictates, setting of performance targets or punitive sanctions) by the government has also been mitigated by a network of close relationships and an extensive consultative process, which have served to reinforce and support the dominant SfA ideology.
The significance of NGBs and municipalities in delivering Finnish sport policy is contrasted with the marginalisation of the education system as part of the sport policy system. There was little evidence that the education system was seen or considered, as an integral part of delivering the goals and objectives of the Finnish sport policy goals. Because of this the sport policy subsystem is relatively easily defined and has been confined to a relatively small group of actors. Responsibility for the implementation of Finnish sport policy has primarily rested with NGBs, domain organisation and municipalities. Subsequently, there has been only marginal development of the state apparatus to deliver and develop sport policy. As a result, a relationship of mutual reliance has developed between the government, NGBs, DOs and to a lesser extent municipalities. In return for government support, Finnish NGBs and DOs implement policies that are aligned with the beliefs and values of the Finnish government. It is through funding and a close network of relationships that government has been further able to influence NGBs and to a lesser extent municipalities.

Another significant factor was the structural reform of 1993. The structural change was supported by government and, amongst other changes, led to the formation of an umbrella organisation which provides a 'voice for sport', the Finnish Sports Federation. As noted above, this provided NGBs with an ability to address issues which cut across all sporting groups, again providing a unity and cohesion that was not evident in New Zealand or Australia. The formation of the domain organisation and their role in the Management by Results process further encouraged the development of close working relationships and the need for NGBs to work together to achieve their own organisational goals.

While NGBs have retained responsibility for developing elite athletes within their respective sports, this has been alongside, rather than at the expense of, grassroots sport. The need to balance the three areas of youth, SfA and elite sport within their organisations emerged as a growing concern of NGBs, as explained by a senior NGB official 'we need all these three parts, youth sport, elite sport and leisure sports [SfA] for all of them [NGBs], to survive better'
The importance and influence of a dense relationship network and resource dependency appears to have been influential in shaping this balanced approach by NGBs.

The level of government intervention, and interaction, with regard to municipalities has been considerably less than that with NGBs. Nevertheless, through legislation, government has ensured that municipalities are responsible for providing community-based facilities. Therefore, while it may be considered that the government has adopted a less interventionist approach to municipalities with regard to influencing sport policy, the legislative framework and dominant discourse of SfA has meant that the central values evident at national level are also reflected at local government level. The consistently held beliefs with regard to SfA is a feature of the Finnish sport system and has contributed to policy at national and sub-government level which is closely aligned with regard to the goals sought. Nevertheless, the focus of municipalities is upon meeting the needs of their community and, therefore, focuses upon all age groups including adults.

Finally, despite having close relationships with sport clubs at a local level, municipalities have little direct relationship with governing bodies. This would indicate that the network of relationships operates at two distinct levels, national and local level, with little vertical integration. However, despite this apparent separation between local and national level organisations, the commonly held values and beliefs of SfA appear to have facilitated a consistency in approach, which has resulted in Finland being a country that has come close to achieving ALLP.

**New Zealand**

The last 15 years have witnessed a rapid rise in the level of investment and salience of sport to the New Zealand government. The organisational complexity of the sport sector combined with a lack of confidence in sporting organisations' ability to rectify perceived short comings of the sector was a catalyst for the government to shift its arm-lengths approach with regard to sport to one of direct intervention. As with Australia and Finland, this resulted in
the formation of a new organisation the crown entity SPARC. The effect of the organisational change accompanied with a rapid increase in investment, enabled government to adopt a dominant role in shaping the direction of sport policy in New Zealand. While the mandate of SPARC, which includes sport and recreation, has resulted in programmes being extended to include physical activity and nutrition, there has been an absence of policies or funding directed at ALLP despite this being an aspiration of SPARC. Rather SfA related policies have been heavily targeted towards youth and the physically inactive with a major driver concern regarding the increasing levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity. Support for sport and recreation has also achieved a high level of cross-party support. In part this is due to the instrumental use of sport to assist in achieving government related outcomes.

At the other end of the continuum, however, SPARC has also focused upon achieving elite sport development. This widening of objectives has led to a lacuna with regard to policies aimed specifically at increasing levels of adult sport participation. Government intervention with regard to sport has, therefore, been specifically, and overtly, targeted at developing national identity through success at the elite level and the targeting of at-risk groups, such as the inactive through physical activity programmes. Despite this and given the relative recency of SPARC, it is difficult to assess the impact of recent government policies and the level of commitment to increasing sport participation. Contributing to this has been the lack of government initiated research, which identifies the levels of sport participation. While life-long participation has been acknowledged as a goal, the absence of a SfA policy raises questions as to whether this is a deliberate omissions or rather the result of needing to focus on other priority areas, which will enable a stronger organisational environment in which SfA policies can be adopted.

Government intervention in sport has focused upon exercising influence, initially through the imposition of improved management systems particularly on NGBs but also Regional Sport Trusts in return for support and funding; the emphasis placed on improved management practices led to planning dictates, especially for NGBs and to a lesser extent RSTs. This included the need to
adopt new governance structures along with business plans, planning documents as well as the setting of specific performance targets. However, the emphasis that was placed upon accountability with regard to elite sport development was not mirrored with regard to achieving increased levels of participation. SPARC failed to allocate targets for NGBs with regard to increasing levels of participation in their respective sport - a stark contrast to the performance targets set for elite sport and the specific organisational requirements such as the need for strategic plans should NGBs want government funding. Furthermore, funding allocated for grassroots sport was not clearly defined and was incorporated within resourcing that could be allocated to a range of organisational activities. The effect of this has been to signal to NGBs and club members, that grassroots sport has become a secondary concern for government, as explained by a senior NGB official who commented that, SPARC 'is the major funder of the elite side of our business and other sports, but to the grassroots person they [mean nothing and] are not giving them anything' (Interview: 27 October 2006).

The importance of RSTs in the implementation of national participation programmes has been a feature of SPARC's operation. That government has chosen to implement policy through independent organisations, rather than local government also signals the difficulty in coordinating and influencing local government as ‘managing local government is like herding cats as they are their own little democracies all over the country so how we communicate and align will take real commitment’ (Interview: A senior local government official, 11 October 2006). The pushing of responsibility for the delivery and implementation of national programmes to RSTs/municipality level has not only led to increased reliance by RSTs on SPARC funding, but at times has also led to tensions between the objectives of the two organisations. The influence of SPARC on RST activities is also evident with the focus of RSTs shifting from their traditional role of promoting sport participation to including a range of other activities which includes physical activity. Increased levels of funding (doubling in the last five years) and increasing recognition of RSTs as key partners with regard to increasing levels of sport participation may signal the gradual marginalisation of NGBs as the key agencies for grassroots sport,
particularly those NGBs that are heavily funded by government. While RSTs were tasked with increasing activity levels this was again hampered by the longstanding problem regarding a lack of data in respect of participation levels.

Since 2002, NGBs have become increasingly reliant on government funding resulting in a declining level of autonomy. As part of the changes, there has been a shift away from the kitchen table approach of NGBs to one that has emphasised business processes (see, Stothart, 2000). The level of commitment to grassroots sport appears varied amongst NGBs. While there is little evidence that SPARC has actively encouraged NGBs to address grassroots sport, organisations such as Swimming New Zealand have targets in relation to achieving increased participation levels albeit largely because of their own desire rather than of exhortations by government. The apparent lack of interest by national government in grassroots sport has, therefore, not deterred all NGBs from pursuing increased participation as part of their overall strategy. In somewhat of a paradox, the withdrawal of funding from Athletics New Zealand by the government for failing to impact upon grassroots athletics did indicate that SPARC was prepared to take action if NGBs were unable to effect change at grassroots level. However, while SPARC indicated a willingness to directly intervene in the management of NGBs should they be unable to achieve elite sport objectives (see, Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2005) this type of intervention was not considered with regard to increasing levels of participation within NGBs.

The focus of local government sport policy has traditionally been dominated by the management and provision of sporting facilities. This was accompanied by an emphasis on ensuring effective management practices were put in place, rather than by achieving increased levels of participation. Government intervention in local government with regard to increasing sport participation has been marginal, effectively leaving the level of local government activity and the focus at their discretion. The strong focus of local government on a user-pays approach during the 1980s and 1990s has, however, lingered with Dunedin and Wellington City Councils both focused on maximising the usage of facilities. However, the shift towards more welfare related objectives, such as
building social capital and working in partnership with third sector agencies as a means of empowering the community and improving social outcomes, was also emerging. For Wellington City Council, the shift to 'building strong safe and healthy communities for a better quality of life' (Wellington City Council, 2006) through the provision of sporting facilities reflects this shift in thinking.

Theoretical insights

In Chapter 2, three theories of the state were reviewed and considered for their usefulness as acting as a lens through which to study Australia, Finland and New Zealand. In particular the theories of the state were concerned with uncovering the different power configurations and how these might impact upon or be reflected in the meso-level analysis of this chapter. It is here that the parliamentary support given to various interest groups and the structure of government impact upon the macro-level. Green (2005), in his analysis of elite sport development in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom argued that macro-level theory is instructive in explaining and understanding both the membership of meso-level coalitions or groupings as well as policy outcomes, two factors central to this study.

Macro-level theoretical in-sights in Australia, Finland and New Zealand

At the macro-level, the over-lapping assumptions underlying neo­pluralism/elitism and corporatism (interest group mediation) approaches were considered to hold the greatest utility for this study at the abstract level. It is the level of support given to various groupings, which is of greatest concern, in particular the level of support provided to NGBs, national level sporting bodies (e.g. CAS and RSTs) and also sub-level government – and the level of support given to policies directed towards ALLP. Such an analysis raises issues, which concern power relations and the structure/agency debate. It is, therefore, prudent to reconsider the argument in Chapter 3 concerning power relationships and the point that power should remain the object of empirical investigation. It was suggested that Lukes' three-fold concept of power appeared a credible development as power was conceived on the ability of
actors not only to directly influence the actions of others but also to redefine the parameters of what is socially, economically and politically possible. Power, defined in this latter way emphasises power relations, whereby actors shape structures, organisations and institutions so that the parameters of future action are altered.

Foucault provided an alternative non-state centred concept of power, which it was also suggested may be a credible lens through which to consider power. Foucault’s concept of power, which departed from the traditional state centred theory, did not deny that global forms of power may exist but sensitised the researcher to consider alternative sources. As discussed in Chapter 3, Foucault drew attention to the way in which power works through social relations and the power of discourse in shaping social practices. This concept of power, therefore, draws attention to how social discourse may shape the way in which actors perceive situations and may explain the cohesion and unity of social practices. While discourse analysis was not undertaken as part of this research, this may be an approach that could be fruitfully pursued in future studies. Both Lukes and Foucault, therefore, draw attention to the indirect form of power and the way in which power is mediated by, and represented in, structures. Defining power in this way reinforces this study’s critical realist assumptions outlined in Chapter 3 where ‘all human activity takes place within the context provided by a set or pre-existing social structures’ (Lewis, 2000: 250).

**Australia**

What was evident in Australia was the emergence of policy dictates demonstrated through the increased need for NGBs to establish enhanced governance structures, develop planning documents and achieve performance goals in relation to elite sport development. What is of particular note with Australia, is the emphasis placed upon elite sport development in a narrow range of frequently low participation Olympic sports, which has had the effect of creating a dominant ideology centred upon the development of elite sport, frequently at the expense of grassroots sport development. Since the early 1980s, there has been comparatively low levels of federal resourcing directed
at grassroots sport combined with minimal encouragement or tangible support by federal government to state or local government for increased levels of sport participation. In contrast with the elite sport development planning dictates, there is an absence of performance goals and minimal sanctions for SfA programmes which fail to achieve their aspired outcomes. As a result of this the power of elite sport interest groups has developed whereby other interest groups have been sidelined — most notably adult grassroots sport. While the allocation of resources is often associated with the ability to influence, there are often more subtle ways of influencing the direction of actors as identified by a senior government official who explained that, ‘our capacity to directly influence is different [with various sports] as there are different levels of influence and negotiation that are not reflected in the service level agreement’ (Interview: 26 September 2006).

It is here that the concept of latent conflict is raised, that is where there is a ‘contradiction between the interests of those exercising [power] and the real interests of those they exclude’ (Lukes, 2005: 28). However, as discussed in Chapter 3, empirical difficulties make identifying when there is latent conflict extremely challenging. Nevertheless, this does raise awareness that it is not only through resourcing that government is able to influence NGBs towards achieving goals which may not necessarily be in their best interests. While Swimming Australia stated that ‘their core business [elite sport] takes up so much of their resources’ (Interview: 27 September 2006) a desire to also address grassroots sport was also expressed. However, this lack of action with regard to SfA may be considered against the NGBs best interests as ‘the government will come up with bits and pieces to do that but nothing will be as effective as sport driving that [increased participation] and the issue for sport in this country is that it is with the policy makers [not NGBs ]’ (Interview: A senior NGB, 27 September 2006). This raises the issue of ‘willing compliance’. That is whether NGBs are acting in accordance with wider pattern of control, which includes the shaping of agendas and the influencing of peoples’ desires and preferences (see Shapiro, 2003), or whether NGBs are willingly complying with governmental objectives that have now become normalised ways of behaviour. As discussed in Chapter 3, this raises the issue of hegemonic power and the
third face of power (Lukes, 1974, 2005) and presents a troublesome dilemma, for as Lukes argued ‘power is at its most effective when it is least observable to both participants and observers – power’s self concealing quality’ (Kearns 2007: 274). While it is not possible to disentangle this paradox, nevertheless, it may be argued that it is the interests of SfA, rather than elite sport development, that have been sidelined by the shaping (either knowingly or unknowingly) of NGB’s preferences.

The imbalance of power has been reproduced over time through both the action (and inaction) of NGBs. As a result this imbalance in power is reinforced through bureaucratic management systems and controls, which effectively rewards appropriate behaviour (supporting elite sport) while offering little reward for behaviour aimed at increasing levels of participation. However, this is not to argue that the behaviour of NGBs, in particular, is solely determined by these structures, rather from a critical realist perspective that past structures shape the context in which current discursive action takes place, which in turn conditions the social structures.

New Zealand
In contrast with Australia, the level of support provided by the New Zealand government to different interest groups is more difficult to identify. Since the establishment of SPARC, there has been a rapid increase in planning dictates with the focus primarily directed towards achieving elite sport development. Within NGBs an imbalance of power has been created with elite sport development being prioritised and little reward or recognition provided for NGBs that achieve high or increasing levels of sport participation. It has been through planning dictates that government has been able to shape the action and agendas of NGBs. As discussed above, the concept of willing compliance is also raised with regard to the action of NGBs in New Zealand. While the emphasis for NGBs was acknowledged as elite sport development, the importance of grassroots sport was, nevertheless, evident as explained by a senior NGB official, who stated that our ‘emphasis ... and the majority of our budget is high performance, there’s no doubt about it ... but I still think that the
best mission statement that SPARC have got is you know, the "most active nation" (Interview: A senior NGB official).

However, in concert with NGBs focusing upon elite sport development, there has been increased government funding directed to physical activity and health related programmes. Surprisingly, there has been the willingness to adopt physical activity programmes without a strong evidence base as explained by a senior government official, 'not all the initiatives [promoting physical activity] are evidence-based and we are conscious that we must monitor and evaluate what we're doing. We did not think it prudent, however, to wait and see what works before trying some strategies' (Personal communication, 31 August 2007). It can, therefore, be hypothesised that discourse surrounding physical activity and the accompanying obesity crisis has resulted in grassroots sport becoming redefined as part of a wider physical activity interest group. It is here that Foucault's contention that through discourse social practices can be guided and what can be both perceived and understood can be shaped. As outlined in Chapter 3, the power of discourse also extends to obscuring or eliminating particular discourses. In the case of New Zealand, it may be argued that discourse surrounding physical activity and health has excluded grassroots sport as a legitimate area of focus while prioritising the role of youth and excluding adults as a legitimate area of concern. For example, extensive publicity campaigns, such as Mission On, have not only shaped the social context in which RSTs and local government operate but have also contributed to the way in which grassroots sport is perceived and the extent to which increased levels of sport participation are prioritised. Grassroots sport is increasingly seen as part of physical activity rather than as a distinct policy concern. This was evident in the changing role of Sport Otago (RST) where it was explained that there was:

a heavy sport focus [in the 1980s] when recreation or physical activity was never part of the camber. So the work was with regional sports organisations at a competitive level, at that stage it was the early days of sport medicine, sports science, there was no academy of sports, and so there was quite a market there. The early 1990s through to the mid- to late-90s it was a bit more of a physical
activity focus we started getting involved in community walking groups and getting people active and working with your senior and your rest home games and your masters games and your have-a-go type of things and community exercise groups and then I would suggest in the last 4 or 5 years we started to get into this [physical activity] sort of market because of obesity, the health market, the supposed percentage of people that are overweight or obese in the country, the health issues that are starting to occur (Interview: 17 October 2006).

These changes raise issues with respect to power relationships in the New Zealand sport policy sector. Policy commitments do not occur in isolation but emerge from a wider set of norms, values and beliefs systems (Daugbjerg & Marsh, 1998; Green, 2005). The need to consider social structures sensitises us to power relations that are hidden within the sport policy debate. As Lewis argued, 'Macro-social structures exert a causal influence because of the course of action that people choose to pursue is conditioned by the distribution of vested interests and resources embodied in antecedent social structures (2000: 265). From this it can, therefore, be taken that people are influenced to take a particular course of action. For NGBs in New Zealand, this is to focus upon elite sport development, while for RSTs there is an emphasis on addressing increased levels of physical and health related activity – which may or may not include sporting activity. Furthermore, there was the requirement by government for RSTs to increase participation, however, not in the area of grassroots (or adult) sport for 'they [SPARC] have said [to] focus on youth [and on] physical activity' (Interview: A senior RST official, 17 October 2006). This raises the temporal aspect of the structure-agency debate, or as Lewis argued 'pre-existing social structures make a difference to the course of events in the social world by influencing the action that people choose to take' (2000: 258).

It is the critical realist assumptions that assist in uncovering structures that while unobservable, nevertheless, require investigation as 'but for social structures certain physical human actions would not be performed' (Bhaskar 1989: 39). While SPARC's policy is devoid of any significant focus on grassroots sport, the emphasis on elite sport and physical activity signals the influence of people who hold positions of authority, particularly within the political system. Of particular importance is their ability to promote their
preferred interpretation of policy; that is, that grassroots sport is not as important as elite sport development and physical activity and health, and to impose values and beliefs upon those who are subordinate or reliant upon them. For example, the almost binary approach to elite sport and physical activity and the significance of people in positions of power was highlighted by the then Minister of Sport and Recreation, Trevor Mallard when explaining that ‘we [New Zealanders] value winning performances in sport and recreation, and that it’s important to keep physically active day to day’ (Mallard, 2005). It can, therefore, be argued that it is possible for that the state to ‘set limits on peoples interpretative activities which ensure that public discourse is dominated by narratives and meanings which serve its own ends’ (Lewis, 2000: 262).

**Finland**

In contrast with both Australia and New Zealand, there has been a conspicuous lack of planning dictates from government upon NGBs and other sporting organisations, either in regard to SfA or elite sport development. In a clear departure from Australia and New Zealand, Finnish sporting organisations have not been required to achieve performance targets or meet other organisational requirements – rather sporting organisations have been considered as separate and independent voluntary organisations, which should retain their autonomy without government interference:

> The whole idea in our civil society is the idea of autonomy, even though a little of a paradox that the state is subsidising [sporting] volunteer activity we are trying to maintain a partnership but still let them have their own autonomy (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2005)

While NGBs (and other sporting organisations) have been able to retain their autonomy, nevertheless, the role of NGBs in delivering sport to society has also been formally recognised. The legitimisation of sporting organisations by government was directly identified through legislation, where it was stated that ‘sport provision shall mainly be the responsibility of sports organisations’ (Sports Act 1998). Furthermore, both the SLU and DOs work with government to establish funding allocations. This draws attention to power relations
associated with elitism. As postulated in Chapter 2, this government/group relation, where groups are 'faced with limited competition and are legitimised by the state' (Williamson, in Smith, 1993: 31), indicates a corporatist type arrangement. This collaborative relationship is further strengthened by the role of sporting organisations in delivering the social outcomes of the government. As a result, the relationship between government and NGBs is:

more like a partnership... the idea is that it is a kind of partnership. It is not a centralised system any more. It is not where the political system is the centre of our society. That has dissolved... if the political system wants to, you know, maintain its legitimacy, if it wants to still have the sports culture as its partner then it has to try and figure what the other one wants, their values, and through dialogue find-out if you have common interests. And of course we [government and sport] do have common interests (Interview: A senior government official, 2 June 2005).

The involvement of sporting organisations in developing sport policy draws attention to Lukes' second face of power, where power is exercised through the exclusion of certain participants, and issues, from agenda setting and decision making. An obvious result of the exclusion of certain issues from the agenda is that actors may then be prevented from taking particular forms of action (Gaventa, 1980). It is, therefore, the interests of government and sporting organisations that have given SfA precedence over elite sport development.

It is here that it is necessary to consider the ability of actors to influence the actions of others. Drawing on third face of power, it may be argued that the shift of NGBs from a dominant focus on competitive sport to one where SfA is prioritised may indicate the ability of government to shape actions by 'influencing, shaping and determining' an actor's wants (Lukes, 2005: 27). It has been through the introduction of national and sub-government level legislation, SfA-focused national programmes and the prioritisation of funding for facilities aimed at community needs that a social context has been created in which SfA was prioritised and elite sport development was marginalised.
However, it is here that the empirical difficulties in studying power are exposed. In contrast to Lukes’ top-down concept of power, Foucault’s concept of power also holds certain resonance. As highlighted in Chapter 5, the introduction of legislation was argued to be a formalisation of practices that were already established in society. The introduction of legislation and the accompanying legitimisation of SfA may, therefore, be argued to merely reflect practices at the micro-level. This resonates with Foucault’s concept of power where power is bottom-up, diffuse and decentralised. If this is the case, Finnish sport offers an interesting conundrum, as the bottom-up power has manifested itself in a top-down centralised, highly visible mechanism. This hypothetical dialectic relationship between structure and agency supports the critical realist assumptions of this study, that the ’pattern of vested interests laid down by antecedent social structures disposes people to act in particular ways but it does not compel them to do so’ (Lewis, 2000: 259)

Meso-level theoretical frameworks
Four meso-level frameworks were set out in Chapter 2 for analysing the policy process in Australia, Finland and New Zealand. This final section considers the utility of these frameworks for helping to understand the development of ALLP as an area of sport policy focus. It is by considering the sport policy system through a lens consisting of a set of simplifying pre-suppositions that the researcher is likely to limit internal inconsistencies, ambiguities, erroneous assumptions and invalid propositions that are inherent in using an ad hoc style. As discussed earlier, policy networks and the advocacy coalition framework were considered to hold the most potential; however, to suggest that one framework may offer a complete picture of the policy process may also be wishful thinking with regard to examining such a complex and amorphous area.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the policy network approach might offer the greatest utility for offering potential insights into the policy process in Finland, while the ACF might offer the greatest efficacy in exploring the policy process in Australia and New Zealand. While the value of these two frameworks has been alluded to in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the intention here is to provide some reflections on the usefulness of the two approaches and the insights that each
framework has offered. That is not to disregard the 'Multiple Streams' approach as one, which holds no utility through which to consider the policy process but rather its value is limited given the insights provided by both policy networks and ACF.

The first point to make is that both frameworks are useful in helping characterise the complexity, fluidity and fragmented and multi-layered aspect of policy making. Before proceeding it is necessary to add a caveat regarding the different origins of, and terminologies employed in, these approaches which has caused some confusion and misunderstanding (Coleman & Perl, 1999). For example Rhodes' definition of a policy community stands in contrast to that employed by Wilks and Wright (see Rhodes, 1988 and Wilks and Wright, 1987). However, as noted by Atkinson and Coleman this 'should not be allowed to overshadow the fact that the concepts...have assisted public policy studies' (1992: 162).

In Australia and New Zealand, the sport development subsystems are composed of significant actors operating at different levels of government and in quasi-governmental agencies. In both countries, academic analysts and journalists have also contributed to the debate on sport policy but to varying degrees. Despite this there does remain some difficulty in defining the subsystem boundaries. Sabatier and Weible addressed this by suggesting a 'focus on the substantive and geographic scope of institutions that structure interaction' (2007: 193). As with Zafonte and Sabatier's study of the automotive pollution control system in the United States, similar comparisons in defining the sport development subsystem may be drawn with regard to Australia and New Zealand. In attempting to establish whether an automotive pollution control subsystem existed, Zafonte and Sabatier considered a number of factors including the existence of: separate legislation; a large sub-bureau within the US EPA; a distinct set of interest groups; a quite distinct research community; and, a quite different policy community (Sabatier & Weible, 2007).

It may, therefore, be argued that the existence of legislation, including the Australian Sports Commission Act (1989) and the Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act (2002) Act, which defines the role of the government in the policy
subsystem, the existence of different interest groups including elite sport development, grassroots sport and the emerging health-sport nexus, the establishment of the ASC and SPARC and an emerging research community contribute to being able to define sport development as a policy subsystem.

The ACF’s assumption is that the subsystem is made up of competing coalitions which are based upon deep core beliefs that are almost immutable. Furthermore, the ACF contends that it is reasonable to assume that, at this deep core level, beliefs remain relatively stable. While this may be argued for the elite sport development coalition, as will be discussed below, there is greater difficulty in defining the deep core beliefs of the Sfa/grassroots coalition in both New Zealand and Australia. This raises the notion of discourse communities which were identified in Harriet Bulkeley’s research on climate change in Australia. In contrast to the ACF, Bulkeley introduced the notion of discourse coalitions, rather than advocacy coalitions, where ‘discourse coalitions are based upon shared terms and concepts through which meaning is assigned to social and physical processes and the nature of the policy problems is constructed’ (Hajer 1996: 247).

In her criticism of the ACF, Bulkeley (2000) argued that it offered only a limited account of the processes of learning and interaction between and within coalitions in policy networks. The criticism is based upon the contention that the ACF:

fails to grasp the interaction between actors within policy coalitions by conceptualising discourse as a means through which learning is communicated rather than as a medium through which ‘actors...create the world’ (Hajer 1993: 44, original emphasis, Bulkeley 2000: 733).

A discourse coalition, therefore, comprises sets of storylines which actors adhere to and articulate and coalition practices are consistent with the storylines. However, a shared understanding of policy problems does not necessarily mean a shared world view. Bulkeley’s argument provides an insight, which may be a useful addition to the ACF as an alternative
understanding of the policy process, the ways in which policy problems are forged through the policy process and the crucial role of discourse constructions of particular issues in enabling and constraining policy change. Such an approach may have utility in both the Australian and New Zealand context.

It has been suggested above that the ACF provides the greatest utility in considering the Australian sport subsystem. Drawing on the earlier discussion on the ACF (see Chapter 2), it is argued that within the Australian sport subsystem, there is evidence of dominant, less dominant and emerging coalitions (see Figure 7.1). The SfA/Grassroots coalition would appear to be a weak coalition that has been unable to increase its level of influence or challenge the dominance of the elite sport development coalition. At the deep core level, it may be hypothesised that the SfA/grassroots coalition has common beliefs, that sport should be accessible to all regardless of ability and that participation in sport is a fundamental right for all citizens. However, it is at the next level that there appears to be a lack of agreement as to whether participation in sport is a component of public health, a means of economic development, a tool to be used in community development or an end in itself.

**Figure 7.1 Australian sport development policy subsystem and advocacy coalitions**

![Diagram showing policy subsystem with different advocacy coalitions](image-url)

Adapted from Bulkeley (2000: 732)
Policy core beliefs revolve around causal perceptions and fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999: 133).

It is with regard to NGBs that the relative influence of material self-interests compared with policy core beliefs needs to be explored. As explained by a senior NGB official, dependence on government funding had required a focus on elite sport development while limiting the capacity of NGBs to focus on "the things we would like to do [develop grassroots sport]" (Interview 27th September 2006). The focus of NGBs upon elite sport development may, therefore, not reflect their core policy beliefs. Rather, NGBs may be more motivated by economic self interest (or survival) rather than an ideological position that supports elite sport development at the expense of grassroots sport. This potentially challenges the ACF assumption that core beliefs are immutable as actors may be prepared to trade some core policy beliefs for strategic short term interests (see Nohrstedt, 2005).

It is disagreement at the policy core belief level that Sabatier and Weible (2005) contend may lead to sub-divisions within a coalition or the creation of another coalition. This may provide a useful insight into the emerging sport-health nexus and whether it may be a sub-division of the SfA/grassroots coalition or alternatively an emerging coalition within its own right. However, within the Australian sport subsystem there has been well defined separation between sport and physical activity through the allocation of resources and beliefs regarding the benefits, this separation was explained by a senior ASC official:

"If you look at physical activity vs. sport from a health point of view...now sport is much more likely to deliver [health benefits] than physical activity, which might be intense, but sport is intense in terms of training for it and the like. We don't, from a policy perspective, have problems with structured physical activity - we think it is important" (Interview: 28 September 2006).

It is here that the ACF has been unable to offer clarity as to how to disentangle this complex issue. With regard to embryonic coalitions, there appears to be a
lacuna in the ACF framework as to how or why coalitions develop or merge together to form a single coalition. In other words what makes (or motivates) actors with similar policy core beliefs actually coordinate their behaviour within coalitions? This implies that there may need to be negotiation and compromise with regard to identifying a policy core belief.

However, it may be argued that the temporal aspect applied by the ACF with regard to identifying policy learning may also be applied with regard to the identification of new, emerging or nested coalitions as, with time, deep core beliefs will emerge and become more stable (or not). However, as evident in the Australian subsystem, the dominance of the elite sport coalition has restricted the ability of the SfA coalition to challenge or gain dominance. Difficulty in defining the SfA coalition raises questions around the nebulous nature of SfA and that, without a clear direction or purpose, this (weak) coalition has struggled to build either consensus or influence in the sport policy process. This raises once again the difficulty in defining coalitions, in particular weak or emerging coalitions, and the mapping of deep core beliefs.

In contrast to the SfA coalition, the dominant elite sport development coalition would appear to have deep core (normative level) beliefs that have remained relatively stable over a considerable period of time and are somewhat easier to define. It could be hypothesised that elite sport coalition advocates would emphasis individual autonomy and the striving for achievement. In other words, this places more emphasis on the individual rather than groups in society. At the next level, policy core beliefs, it may be argued that the elite sport coalition has framed the problem according to the allocation of resources. In other words the elite sport coalition would favour an environment in which elite performance is privileged. This was evident in the rationale for supporting grassroots sport, which was frequently based on the assumption that the more athletes participating at grassroots level the more likely that elite athletes will emerge. In other words the support of SfA was contingent upon the way in which it could contribute to the continued success of elite sport rather than as an end in itself. As alluded to above, the issue of resourcing is a central tenet of the ACF as coalitions have always been depicted as having policy beliefs and resources.
In considering the types of resources that coalitions may use to try and influence the policy making process two would appear to be of particular relevance (see, Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 203-204). First, the weakness of the SfA coalition has been impacted by the lack of ‘participants who regularly seek to influence policy’ (Sabatier & Weible 2007: 192). This has been exacerbated by the absence of ‘skilful leadership’ or an effective lobby group such as Confederation of Australian Sport, which can create an attractive vision for a coalition and is able to strategically use and attract resources to the coalition (see, Sabatier & Weible 2007). It is here that the actions of the competing elite sport coalition have stymied attempts for the development of leadership within the SfA coalition, thereby reducing its effectiveness.

The second area of where the SfA coalition has struggled to accumulate resources is with regard to information, a central aspect to policy learning. For ‘information regarding the problem severity and causes and the costs and benefits of policy alternatives is an important resources for a coalition’ (Sabatier & Weible 2007: 203). While it may be argued that there have been several reports, which have raised the need for greater priority to be attached to increasing levels of sport participation, and thereby strengthening the SfA coalition, the number and frequency has been low when compared to reports and information supporting elite sport development. Furthermore, as outlined in Chapter 4, the additional problem was the difficulty of accurately assessing sport participation levels in Australia due to the absence of robust longitudinal data. The absence of such data impacts upon a coalition’s ability to ‘win political battles against opponents’ (2007: 203).

In presenting a typology of political resources, the ACF has provided a useful list from which to consider the ability of coalitions to influence public policy. It may be argued that the SfA coalition has been unable to develop or accumulate resources such as a) formal legal authority to make policy decisions, b) public opinion support, c) mobilisation of professional organisations, or d) financial resources (see, Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 210-202). Unfortunately, Sabatier and Weible do not provide a discussion of the
relative importance and interdependency of these resources/factors in effecting change, or maintaining the status quo, in the policy subsystem.

Finally, the impact of changes, which are exogenous to the subsystem, which are more likely to change over a decade or so, are considered a critical prerequisite to major policy change within the ACF. Increasing government and health sector concerns regarding growing levels of obesity and the associated health implications have had a considerable impact upon the sport development system. It is through the increased allocation of resources to address this issue that the sport-health nexus is considered to be of growing importance. As was discussed by a senior ASC official, greater funding for grassroots sport was increasingly provided to address increasing obesity levels and declining levels of physical activity, rather than as a way to provide pathways or high performance (Interview: 26 September 2006). This point raises a characteristic of SfA policy, its general weakness and variable salience to federal government. In brief, sport policy is no longer being designed for sport itself but rather for wider policy-related concerns in a policy sector (health) that is far more securely established.

Within the New Zealand sport policy subsystem, there was evidence of a weak SfA coalition, but a strong elite sport and physical activity/health coalition (see Figure 7.2). However, consistent with Australia, has been the challenge of categorising coalition membership and the mapping of belief systems. While there was evidence of a strong SfA coalition up until the late 1990s, the establishment of SPARC and the growing emphasis placed upon addressing rising levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity, particularly in relation to youth, appears to have diminished the strength of the SfA coalition while being instrumental in the emergence of the physical activity/health coalition.
Difficulty in defining the SfA coalition membership has also made the mapping of the core belief system problematic. In contrast to the emerging sport-health nexus in Australia, the growing salience of health as an area of government interest appears to have had a negative effect on the strength of the SfA coalition. While at the deep core policy level, it may be hypothesised that the SfA/grassroots coalition has similar beliefs as in Australia - that sport should be accessible to all and that participation in sport is a fundamental right of all citizens - it is at the policy core belief level that there appears to be divergence.

Given the weakness of the SfA coalition, it is somewhat difficult to map confidently the fundamental policy positions. It is perhaps not surprising that the overall seriousness of the problem, decreasing levels of sport participation, is not considered by government or NGBs to be of a top priority. The dilution of SfA as an area of concern was explained by a senior NGB official who stated that 'our focus at the moment is the implementation and the structure, governance area. But hot on its heels we want to be producing policies that strengthen our clubs and strengthen the membership level' (Interview: 4...
October 2006). It may, therefore, be suggested that there is a shared understanding or belief that addressing SfA was not a serious issue and that other factors were of greater importance at this time, which included the implementation of planning dictates from government, which supported elite sport development.

A feature of the ACF is its focus on policy change over time. It is here that the ACF may prove useful in explaining the downgrading of SfA as an area of policy focus and the emergence of physical activity/health. The ACF argues that a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for major policy change is significant perturbations external to the policy subsystem:

Significant perturbations include changes in socio-economic conditions, regime change, outputs from other subsystems or disaster. These external shocks can shift agendas, focus public attention, and attract the attention of key decision-making sovereign (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 198-199).

Following the logic of the ACF, it may be argued that the increasing awareness of rising levels of obesity and associated health risks have shifted the agenda of government with regard to sport. In other words, the agenda has shifted from one where government would facilitate equal opportunities for participation in sport and leisure by all New Zealanders, to one where achieving the goal of being the most active nation would be measured by levels of physical activity. That sport, or rather the sport subsystem, is used to address issues from other subsystems highlights the malleability of sport, the instrumental use of sport to achieve government goals, and the permeability of the sport sub-system.

Finally, the original ACF hypothesised that stable system parameters (which are extremely difficult to change) and external events (which are more likely to change over a decade or so) affect the constraints and opportunities of actors within the subsystem. In later additions to the ACF a new variable was introduced, which would mediate between the stable system parameters and the subsystem. The coalition opportunity structures are enduring features of a polity that affects the resources and constraints of subsystem actors. Of
particular importance is the openness of the political system and the degree of consensus needed for major policy changes (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). This is a useful and instructive addition to the ACF as it draws attention to the importance of macro-level and its impact upon policy making. It may be argued that given the 'Westminster style' system of government in New Zealand that there would tend to be weak norms of compromise and relatively restricted norms of participation. Thus, following this logic, there would be less pressure for compromise and the need for consensus in the New Zealand system, which would require less negotiated agreement for major policy change.

In summary the ACF has proved useful in helping analyse the complex dynamics involved in the sport policy subsystems of Australia and New Zealand. However, Bulkeley's discourse coalition approach may provide a useful addition to the ACF as it provides a corrective to the somewhat rational approach of the ACF and incorporates aspects of the somewhat unplanned and complex irrational nature of policy making. A useful addition to the ACF may be an explicit discussion on the concept of 'power'. Not only would this provide useful insights into the behaviour of coalitions but would also provide a useful framework with which to link the meso-level concept of the ACF with macro theories of the state. While power relationships were alluded to in the recent addition of coalition opportunity structures to the ACF, more detailed consideration would only further enhance the explanatory ability of the ACF.

While a number of commonalities are found between both the policy network approach and the ACF, it is the policy network approach that offers a useful lens through which to view Finnish sport policy. Marsh and Rhodes' typology is based upon a theory of power-dependence, which is based along four dimensions – membership, integration, resources and power. Using Rhodes' typology (see Table 2.1), it would appear that Finnish sport reflects characteristics that are consistent with a policy community. In contrast with New Zealand and Australia, there was no evidence of competing coalitions, a key aspect of the ACF, which further supports the policy network as a useful lens through which to consider Finnish sport policy. The apparent consensus with regard to the prioritisation of grassroots sport as an area of sport policy
focus suggests that the network approach may also assist in explaining the high level of policy stability that has existed over the last 35 years. What is unclear, however, is whether the existence of such a dominant policy network excludes the ‘voice’ of competing coalitions or whether there is a genuine agreed consensus on the direction of Finnish sport policy. This raises issues of power, which is discussed below.

**Membership**

As highlighted in the previous section, membership of Finnish sport policy subsystem comprises a relatively limited number of participants. The core participants comprise government officials at state and sub-government level, actors in domain organisation, the Finnish Sports Federation and NGBs. However, while there are other organisations, such as church groups and schools that also provide sporting activities, it is a narrow range of organisations which are afforded access to the policy making process, and have been recognised through the formal mechanism of legislation. As Rhodes stressed, a reason why policy networks are so important is the fact that ‘they decide which issues will be included and excluded from the policy arena’ (1997: 34). While it is unclear if other groups are actually excluded, it would appear that it is difficult for them to gain access to the policy process. This is partly due to the close network of relationships and the limited number of actors involved within the sport policy subsystem, which enables ‘outside’ groups or actors to be easily excluded from the policy making process. As argued by Richardson (2000) having access to the policy making process, allows organisations/actors to frame the policy agenda thereby setting the direction of policy.

In general, it may be considered that the government has closely controlled the policy agenda through the both the legislative and resourcing criteria and the introduction of the ‘Management by Results’ process. This mobilisation of bias in the decision making process may be reflective of the two-dimensional face of power (see, Bachrach & Baratz, 1970) as the bias was visible in the decision making stage. For example, the overt nature of government prioritisation of funding for community facilities, both consciously and unconsciously, created barriers to the development of elite sport. It also appeared that any ideological
position that did not support SfA values would be suppressed or marginalised both in terms of resourcing and also in discussions on policy options.

Further supporting the notion of a policy network is the professional interest of the network. In the case of Finland a large number of NGBs and other sporting organisation belong to the Finnish Sports Federation. Similar to Marsh and Rhodes' study of agriculture, where there was both economic and professional interests within the policy network, a similar case may be made for Finnish sport. With the establishment of the SLU, Finnish sport created an umbrella organisation and while it may be argued that it does not act as a governing body, its role as a coordinating organisation, which represents a range of community members, presents a united voice through which influence can be gained.

*Integration*

As indicated in Chapter 5, the organisations (and actors) in policy-making have remained consistent over a considerable period of time, despite the structural change of 1993. A feature of the Finnish sport policy system has been the web of close personal and professional relationships between different organisations and between sporting organisations and politicians. Board membership frequently consists of not only members from different organisations, but also politicians, indicating the characteristics of a close policy network (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). Furthermore, it is not uncommon for actors to have worked within the Finnish sport policy system for a number of years, either within one organisation or moving between different organisations within the sport policy sector. However, while horizontal integration was evident between national organisations, there was a lack of vertical integration between national and local organisations. While it may be argued that this may lead to the emergence of different values across the policy network (as in Australia), this has not been the case in Finland.

Amongst the web of members, there was also evidence of a high degree of consensus. At all levels and across a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations, there was confirmation of a consistent set of
values and beliefs centred upon a SfA ideology. As argued by Smith (1993), it is this common commitment to an ideology, which also determines the community's world view. This common ideology reinforced certain ideas, including the need for caution with regard to elite sport due to the negative aspects such as doping and violence, thereby justifying continued support for SfA. The high degree of consensus and support for SfA was further strengthened by the process of extensive consultation, which may assist in the settling of any disagreements, thereby lessening the potential for conflict and tension.

The frequency of interaction between NGBs, DOs, SLU and government was particularly high with consultation and frequent meetings to discuss issues. The extent of consultation between organisations at a national level was considerable, demonstrated by a two year consultation period for the Finnish Sports Federation to achieve consensus on their organisational strategy. The gaining of agreement in this way is a feature of the Finnish sport policy system. While this may reduce the likelihood of conflict, it also raises issues of power. Extensive consultation may also reinforce particular beliefs and values resulting in what Lukes referred to as 'context shaping'. In other words, the act of consultation may reinforce the already dominant ideology of SfA while potentially excluding alternative perspectives or policy options. However, while extensive consultation was evident across organisations at a national level, the same level of interaction was not as apparent between national and sub-government despite sharing common beliefs and values with regard to the prioritisation of grassroots sport.

Resource dependency amongst organisations and other actors within the policy subsystem was also evident, primarily at national level. This was enhanced through the structural change where DOs and NGBs along with the Finnish Sports Federation needed to work together to achieve organisational goals. Resource interdependencies between actors in the policy community involved the sharing of educational resources, the development of programmes aimed at increasing levels of participation in sport and physical activity and the frequent sharing of knowledge and expertise. As discussed earlier, the network
of relationships is dense and frequently based on the exchange of resources which includes the exchange of information and the ability to deliver particular outcomes (such as programmes and activities aimed at increasing levels of sport participation). The structural change increased the need for resources dependency as organisations were no longer separated according to political ideology and resourcing was increasingly directed to organisations that were able to achieve increased levels of participation (measured through the Management by Results process). This exchange of resources and reliance between organisations to achieve their outcomes has also contributed to a relatively equal balance of power between the actors involved.

Sharing of resources and high level of interdependency between government and other policy community actors suggests that power is shared amongst participants. As such there appears to be no organisation(s), which dominate(s) the policy process. As Marsh and Rhodes contend organisations or interest groups can only have truly privileged positions in government policy when they have economical or informational advantage. It may be argued that the SLU and domain organisations hold a privileged position with government as part of consultation and the MBR process. However, this potential imbalance of power is mitigated through both the strong network of relationship and high levels of integration.

In summary, the policy network approach has been a useful tool through which to consider the Finnish sport policy subsystem. It appears there is strong evidence to support the existence of a policy community, which may provide some explanation as to the high level of policy continuity with regard to SfA in Finland. All three countries have had varying degrees of success in achieving ALLP despite consistent exhortations of achieving high levels of sport participation. In Finland a consistent and deeply-rooted approach has been identified, which has resulted in SfA taking priority over other potential demands such as elite sport development. Clear government support for SfA and the recognition of sport as part of social policy have facilitated an environment in which NGBs and other sporting organisations maintain a strong role in the shaping of sport policy. In contrast it may be argued that the role of
government in Australia and New Zealand has been one of control with sport being used as malleable tool to achieve, at times shifting, government priorities. However, the emergence of the sport-health nexus in Australia and the physical/activity coalition in New Zealand suggests that there may be an opportunity for SfA to gain a stronger foothold as an area of sport policy focus.
## Appendix 3.1 - Systematic Review

### Australia

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<td>9 March 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Finnish Athletics</td>
<td>7 March 2006</td>
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<td>Position</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Director, LIKES</td>
<td>31 May 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Division, Sports department, City of Helsinki</td>
<td>6 March 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Advisor, City of Kauniainen</td>
<td>6 March 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finnish Ski Association</td>
<td>29 March, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Advisor, Ministry of Education</td>
<td>2 June, 2005</td>
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<td>Finnish Olympic Committee</td>
<td>7 March 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager Cross-Country Skiing</td>
<td>7 March 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO Young Finland</td>
<td>8 March 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Executive SPARC</td>
<td>25 October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister of Sport and Recreation</td>
<td>3 October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Manager Research, Planning and Policy SPARC</td>
<td>16 October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Advisor High Performance Manager SPARC</td>
<td>27 October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO Tennis New Zealand</td>
<td>3 October 2006</td>
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<td>CEO Athletics New Zealand</td>
<td>27 October 2006</td>
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<td>CEO’s Forum</td>
<td>14 October 2006</td>
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<td>24 October 2006</td>
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<td>CEO Wellington Sport Trust</td>
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<td>CEO, Sport Otago</td>
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<td>Wellington City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager Recreation centres &amp; Community Halls, WCC</td>
<td>10 October 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager, Programme &amp; Marketing Recreation, WCC</td>
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<td>Community &amp; Recreation Adviser Services, DCC</td>
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<td>Community &amp; Recreation Adviser Services, DC</td>
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Appendix 5.1
COMPASS Report: Sports Participation Groups

Group 1 Competitive, Organised, Intensive

(i) Practice of sports ≥ 120 times per year annually
AND (ii) Playing at a competitive level in at least one sport
AND (iii) Member of a sport club

Group 2 Intensive

(i) Annual frequency of participation ≥ 120 times per year
AND (ii) Either not playing at a competitive level in any sport
OR (iii) Not a member of a club
OR Neither (ii) nor (iii)

Group 3 Regular, competitive and/or organised

(i) Annual frequency of participation ≥ 60 and<120
AND Either (ii) Playing at a competitive level in at least one sport
OR (iii) Member of a sports club
OR Both (i) and (iii)

Group 4 Regular Recreational

(i) Annual frequency of participation ≥ 60 and<120
AND (ii) Not a member of a sports club
AND (iii) Not playing competitively in any sport

Group 5 Irregular
(i) Annual frequency of participation ≥ 12 and<60

Group 6 Occasional
(i) Annual frequency or participation ≥1 and<12

Group 7 Non-participants
(i) No recorded participation over the last 12 month
Appendix 6.1

Functions of SPARC Section 8 Sports and Recreation New Zealand Act (2002)

a. Develop and implement national policies and strategies for physical recreation and sport:
b. Allocate funds to organisation and regional bodies in line with its policies and strategies:
c. Promote and advocates the importance of participation in physical activity by all New Zealanders for their health and well-being:
d. Promote and disseminate research relevant to physical recreation and sport:
e. Provide advice to the Minister on issues relating to physical education and sport:
f. Promote and support the development and implementation of physical recreation and sport in a way that is culturally appropriate to Māori:
g. Encourage participation in physical recreation and sport by Pacific peoples, women, older New Zealanders and people with disabilities:
h. Recognise the role of physical recreation and sport in the rehabilitation of people with disabilities:
i. Facilitate the resolution of disputes between persons or organisations involved in recreation and sport:
j. Work with schools, regional, central and local government and physical recreation and sports organisations to ensure the maintenance and development of the physical and organisation infrastructure for physical recreation and sport:
k. Work with health, education and other agencies to promote greater participation in physical recreation and sport through policy development, advocacy and support in line with the objectives of the New Zealand health strategy:
l. Provide advice an support for organisations working in physical recreation and sport at national, regional, and local levels:
m. Facilitate coordination between national, regional, and local physical recreation and sport organisation:

n. Represent the Government's policy interests in physical recreation and sport internationally.
References


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