Young people’s experience of football: a grounded theory

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF FOOTBALL:
A GROUNDED THEORY

By

David James Stirling Piggott

A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the award of:

Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

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“Knowledge is an adventure of ideas”

- Sir Karl Popper
ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to generate a substantive grounded theory to explain a variety of young people’s experiences of football within and external to FA Charter Standard Clubs and Schools. A modified grounded theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) was selected following an ethical commitment to ‘listen to young people’s voices’. This methodology was underpinned by critical realist ontological assumptions (Sayer, 2000) and reformulated according to Popperian epistemology (Popper, 1972; 1981). Ten mini-ethnographies were conducted in football clubs and schools in England over a period of 12 months. Data were generated through focussed group interviews with young people (aged 8-18), and participant observation captured in field notes.

Over three increasingly deductive iterations (or ‘vintages’) of data collection and analysis, a substantive theory of socialisation processes in youth football was created. This abstract theory hypothesised that young people’s experiences may be conceptualised as partially individualised responses to external influences, expressed as desires and concerns that may act reciprocally on the social context. More specific hypotheses (or models) were formulated and ‘mapped over’ the abstract theory.

The relationship between stress, enjoyment and learning in youth football is explored in the first of these models, focussing specifically on the role of significant adults. Coach behaviour and its impact on the youth football environment is the subject of the second model, which describes an ‘ideal type’ football programme. Female experiences are the subject of the third section of the discussion which focuses on ‘first contact’ with football (particularly male domination in mixed football) and subsequent socialisation experiences. Here it is conjectured that the development of friendships and identity specific to football may increase the propensity to participate. The final model conceptualises socialisation processes for young players from black and minority ethnic communities. The problems of ‘culture barriers’ and institutional racism are explored before considering the role youth football might play in the wider ‘integration debate’.

Finally, some recommendations for policy change and for future research are offered. Here it is suggested that policy changes are monitored and evaluated with critical sociological studies focussing on young people’s experiences of coaching and parenting and hegemonic power relations in female and multicultural football respectively.

KEYWORDS: Young people; grounded theory; critical realism; Popperian epistemology; football experiences; enjoyment; learning.
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>Vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>Vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

1.1. Aims and Objectives of the Thesis 2
1.2. Background: The Emergence of ‘Kitemarks’ 3
1.3. Re-conceptualising Children as Legal Subjects 7
1.4. Qualitative Vs. Quantitative Approaches 10
1.5. Grounded Theory: A Very Short Introduction 12
1.6. Ethical Policy Evaluation Research 13

**Chapter 2: Sensitising Concepts**

2.1. Theoretical Sensitivity 22
2.2. Theorising Children and Childhood 28
2.3. Young People, Sport and Leisure 33
2.4. Issues in Social and Sport Policy for Young People 36
2.5. The Wider Sport Policy Context: A Rough Sketch 40
2.6. Locating this Research 47
2.7. Locating the Researcher 49

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

3.1. Introduction to the Methodology 52
3.2. Central Concepts in the Philosophy of (Social) Science 53
3.2.1. Ontology: The Nature of the Social World 54
3.2.2. Epistemology: Generating Knowledge about the World 58
3.2.3. From Epistemology to Methodology and Methods 62
3.3. Grounded Theory 67
3.3.1. The ‘Discovery’ 67
3.3.2. Divergence 70
3.3.3. The Constructivist Revision 73
3.3.4. Common Ground 76
3.4.1. Critical Realism: Stratified Ontology 79
3.4.2. Critical Realism, the Structure-Agency Debate and Causality 82
3.4.3. Grounded Theory as a Critical Realist Methodology 85
3.4.4. Critical Realism and Epistemology 88
3.4.4.1. Karl Popper’s Evolutionary Epistemology 89
3.4.4.2. Towards a Popperian Grounded Theory 94
3.4.5. Synthesising Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology 98
3.4.6. From Philosophy to Practice 99
# List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Title</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Classical Epistemological Theories</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Selected Epistemological Terminology</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. A Review of Common Philosophical Positions in the Social Sciences</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Glaser Vs. Strauss: Philosophy and Technique</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. The Constructivist Revision of GT: An Overview</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. Quality Assurance Strategies in Social Research</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Summary of Interviews by Vintage</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Concept Generation and Relationships: An Example</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Summary of Issues and Central Questions (First Vintage)</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1. Tree Node: External Influences</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2. Tree Node: Personality Traits</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3. Tree Node: Responses and Results</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4. Tree Node: Desires and Concerns</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5. The Evolution of Ideas by Vintage</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1. Stress and Enjoyment in Youth Football</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2. Coaching and Learning in Youth Football</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3. Into, Through and Out of Female Football</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4. Multicultural Youth Football</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 8</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1. The Evolution of Main Hypotheses by Vintage</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Title</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. The Hierarchical Structure of the CSS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. A Typical School Sport Partnership (SSP) or ‘Cluster’</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. The Pervasiveness of LTAD in Youth Sport Policy</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. LTAD at the Heart of the Single Delivery System for Sport</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. The 4-Stage Process of Socialisation Into, Through and Out of Sport</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Common Methods in the Social Sciences</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Interrelationship Between the Building Blocks of Social Science</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Critical Realism’s Stratified Ontology</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Structure and Agency in Straussian Grounded theory</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. The Logic of Critical Realist Discovery</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. Evolutionary Epistemology</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7. Retroduction and Evolutionary Epistemology</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8. Critical Realism, Evolutionary Epistemology and Grounded Theory</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9. Basic Stages in Grounded Theory</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10. Data Collection Methods and Adjuncts by Vintage</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11. The Logical Coherence of the Methodological System</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. The Model Explorer Window</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Close-up View of the Model Explorer</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. The Document Browsing and Coding Screen</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Factors Affecting Young People’s Passage through Football</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. The Revised 4-Category Classification</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Creating Higher-order Categories and Sub-categories</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1. Socialisation Processes in Youth Football</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2. Youth Football Careers: A Heuristic</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3. Stress and Enjoyment in Youth Football</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4. Introductions to Female Football</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5. Female Football: Staying In and Dropping Out</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6. Coaching and Learning in Youth Football</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7. Multicultural Youth Football</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1. Schematic of the Sources and Consequences of Sport Enjoyment</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2. Mixed Views Concerning Motivation Orientations</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

Five years ago I began writing a thesis with the clear and simple (perhaps naive) objective of conducting substantive research that would inform youth football policy in England. More specifically, my goal was to evaluate the impact of the FA’s Charter Standard Scheme, a ‘kite mark’ for clubs and schools, and make recommendations for policy change. However, due to the essentially malleable character of a ‘policy evaluation’, the question of “how to go about this?” was the first of many new problems to inevitably emerge over the course of the research. In trying to answer this fundamental question, I generated two related problems that gave the research its central focus: first, what are the central features of young people’s experiences of football in clubs and schools? (the substantive problem); and second, what is the best way to understand, grasp or conceptualise these experiences? (the methodological problem). Finding solutions to these problems is, in short, what the thesis is about.

The substantive problem emerged in the first year of study as I began to learn more about youth sport policy and to read some of the related research. Briefly put, I found that there was a paucity of research on the ‘impacts’ of youth sport policy (though plenty of headline ‘outcomes’), and that there was a growing concern – indeed, a legal obligation – to reflect the views of young people when evaluating policy they are subject to. Hence, I developed a rough justification for the study that ran something like the following: this policy we are evaluating aims to improve conditions in youth football; this being the case, the young people who are subject to this policy should be consulted regarding its effectiveness; I can’t achieve a genuine consultation if I impose a priori questions on the research; hence, a grounded theory methodology, with its ‘open minded’ approach seems appropriate. It was in struggling with the substantive problem, then, that the methodological problem emerged.

One of my subsequent aims has been to refine this justification and show that the research approach taken here – i.e. a modified grounded theory – is built on sound ethical and logical foundations. Again, this has generated further problems, the most serious of which is the problem of induction. I first encountered this problem when reading Peter Medawar’s Induction and Intuition in Scientific Thought, which, although I wasn’t aware of it at the time, was built almost entirely on Popperian arguments. This was therefore my first encounter with Popper – one that would lead to a prolonged engagement with the vast body of Popper’s work. The extent of Popper’s influence on this thesis is considerable (which will become clear), particularly so in two main respects: first, his illumination of the problem of induction forced me to engage with grounded theory in a fundamentally critical fashion; second, his solution to the problem of induction – i.e. his theory of critical rationalism – helped me to revise the logic of grounded theory and ultimately conduct research that was explicitly logically consistent. Further influences have been drawn from his moral and political philosophy and his early ideas on the psychology of learning.

A further and related problem has been to reconcile the revised Popper-informed grounded theory methodology with the ontological assumptions of critical realism. In order to explicate a sound philosophical foundation for the methodology, ontology cannot be overlooked. As Dennett (2003) and Munz (1985) have suggested, all research presupposes ontology, and making these assumptions
transparent is a difficult, yet necessary, task. The synthesis of ontology, epistemology, methodology and ethics then, presented a formidable problem in a number of ways; and it is for this reason that the methodology chapter of the thesis is larger than might normally be expected.

Two further points need to be made in this preface: the first concerning style and the second concerning structure. With respect to style, I have tried to remain faithful throughout to the words of the Victorian writer, Mathew Arnold, who quipped: “Have something to say and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret to style.” In addition to the general aim, I have also attempted to remain philosophically consistent with style (rather than simply consistent). More specifically, I have adopted a first-person narrative in those places where I felt it was important to convey the idea that I was actively interpreting the voices of my research participants (data collection and analysis chapters). To have done otherwise — that is, to have retained an objective, ‘scientific’, third-person style — would have been both misleading and inconsistent with my fundamental philosophical assumptions.

With respect to structure, this thesis departs radically from the standard format. This is necessary because of the grounded theory methodology which dictates that a full literature review must be delayed until after data collection and analysis has begun. As such, the thesis begins with an extended introduction which aims to set out the rationale behind the choice of methodology (in addition to the usual material). Chapter 2 introduces the concept of theoretical sensitivity before reviewing some of the broad fields of literature pertinent to the study (theories of childhood and adolescence, youth sport policy, youth sport experiences). Chapter 3 sets out the methodology of the study in detail, beginning with a general discussion of concepts in the philosophy of science before entering more specific sections on critical realism, Popper’s critical rationalism (or evolutionary epistemology), grounded theory and methods appropriate to childhood research. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 recount the data collection and analysis phase of the research. I have entitled them the first, second and third ‘vintage’ respectively, borrowing Francis Bacon’s metaphor, in an attempt to convey the idea of continuous and never-ending refinement. These chapters are written as a continuous and chronological narrative since the grounded theory methodology led me to carry out these tasks of data collection, analysis, sampling and theorising almost simultaneously. To have broken these processes down into discrete chapters in the conventional fashion would have been both misleading and confusing.

Chapter 7 — the ‘discussion’ chapter — expands the four main hypotheses set out at the end of the third vintage. They are examined in the light of relevant extant literature and similarities and differences to existing theories are explored. I conclude the thesis with a chapter entitled ‘summary comments’ (as opposed to ‘conclusions’) to reflect the open-ended nature of the research product. I have also allowed myself to make some recommendations: for policy change and for future research. These recommendations, I hope, will provide the FA with something concrete to act upon, thus fulfilling the initial goal of this research: developing policy recommendations faithful to the ideas of those who are subject to it.

Lincoln, Lincolnshire, September 2008

D.J.S.P.
CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

"The whole point of a 'social science'... is to explore the opportunities for, and likely consequences of, intentional moral action. Without science, morality is blind; but without morality, science is useless, pointless, and paralytic."

- Richard Olson
CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims and Objectives of the Thesis.

The purpose of this study is to use a grounded theory approach to develop a substantive theory that explains a variety of young people's experiences of association football\(^1\) in England. More specifically, the study will focus on the experiences of young people of varying age, sex and ability both within, and external to, the FA's Charter Standard Scheme (CSS). Young people in both clubs and schools will be subject to data collection and analysis techniques derived from those first set out in the grounded theory methodology of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The main objective of the thesis, therefore, is to generate explanatory models with two related functions: a) to increase understanding of youth football; and b) to help make predications about how changing the football environment via policy will impact on those who are subject to it.

Due to the 'inductive'\(^2\) nature of the research approach, the identification of specific research questions will be avoided in an effort to remain open-minded (but not empty-headed). As Glaser (1992) asserts: "The initial stages of grounded theory demand that the researcher enter the field with an 'area' in mind rather than a 'problem'". This idea is reinforced with specific reference to researching young people by Morrow and Richards (1996) who implicitly advocate a grounded theory style approach:

...having a general idea about the topic under investigation, rather than a set of scientific, positivistic questions that need an adult-framed answer, may be useful at the pilot stage (and beyond) of any research with children.

Beneath this broad over-arching theme, however, a set of more specific issues pertaining to some of the major issues in youth football (and perhaps youth sport in general) are clearly addressed:

\(^1\) I shall simply use the term 'football' when referring to association football from this point on as opposed to the common North American vernacular 'soccer'.

\(^2\) The problem of induction is confronted and circumvented in later chapters as discussions on methodological issues are developed (see especially sections 2.1 and 3.4).
• Participants' experiences of coaching and coaches (teaching and teachers) within football clubs and schools.
• The problem of cessation of football participation (or 'drop-out') at various ages and the underlying motivations attributed to this phenomenon.
• The perceptions of football opportunities afforded to participants of different age, gender and cultural background.
• The mechanisms that restrain and/or enable young people's passage from school to club football (in the present political environment of school-club links and lifelong participation).

These more specific issues reflect the major policy agendas that exist within youth football in England at the present time (see The FA's football development strategy, 2001-2006). Considering the partly applied nature of this research – i.e. the need to report findings to the FA – they will guide the project in a practical sense so that conclusions have relevance to policy makers and practitioners. It is important to note that this does not preclude additional issues of importance from emerging (this point is discussed at length throughout chapter 2).

1.2. Background: The Emergence of ‘Kite Marks’.
Against a backdrop of child protection issues (e.g. Protection of Children Act, 1999; Children Act, 1989 and 2004), quality assurance schemes in youth sport have become commonplace over the last 5-6 years. So-called 'kite mark' schemes are seen as a seal of quality and safety, identifying and encouraging good practice in youth sport.

This changing landscape in youth sport in the UK is perhaps best highlighted by the implementation of Sport England's Sportsmark, Activemark and Clubmark schemes in 1998, and 2002 respectively. These 'cross sport quality marks' are dedicated to providing a 'safe, effective and child-friendly environment' (Sport England, 2002). With reference to youth sport in

3 Sportsmark concerned secondary schools and Activemark concerned primary schools.
Flanders, De Knop et al. (1999) support the inference that quality labels are of particular use to young people and parents, stating: “Quality labels... enable young people (and their parents) to evaluate the quality of the activities provided by sports clubs”. Indeed, this concept appears to be the driving force behind the recent appearance of such schemes in England. Moffett (in Sport England, 2002) highlights the rationale for the Clubmark scheme: “This is a very important programme that will enable parents, teachers and children to select the relevant sports club in their area with real confidence.”

The legacy of these Sport England ‘kite mark’ schemes was to spawn various incarnations of their agenda across the major sports in the country. The basic categories of assessment set out by the Sportsmark and Clubmark schemes are:

- Duty of care and safety.
- Quality of coaching and competition.
- Fairness of opportunity.
- Effective management.

The mandate of schools and clubs within these schemes should therefore be to uphold minimum levels of competence in each of the specified categories. According to the recent policy guidelines – as set out in Gameplan (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002) and The National Framework for Sport (Sport England, 2004) – all National Governing Bodies (NGBs) who wish to receive public funding must either adopt or adapt the Clubmark/Sportsmark framework. English sports that have successfully implement a Clubmark-style scheme are Athletics with clubs:future; Netball with CAPS (Club Action Planning Scheme); Rugby Union with Seal of Approval; Swimming with Swim 21; Tennis with Club Vision and Football with the Charter Standard Scheme (CSS).
Currently with three major strands (clubs, schools and holiday courses\(^4\)), the CSS is the FA's variation on Sport England's theme. Launched in 1999 and 2001 respectively, the Charter Standard Schools and Clubs schemes are a major step toward securing a prosperous future for grassroots football in England (TheFA.com, 2006). Both clubs and schools schemes operate under the supervision of the FA's development department, whose mission statement can be viewed in appendix A. The major thrust of the mission statement is to increase the participation, quality and enjoyment of football.

Adam Crozier, then Chief Executive of the FA (2003), emphasised the expected impact of the CSS after its launch:

> Clubs who become Charter Standard will be taking part in a genuine grassroots revolution. Every club should be aiming to meet the Charter Standard.

Steve Parkin, former National game director (in The FA, 2003), extends the emphasis on increasing 'opportunities for all' stating that:

> Clubs will get all the help they need from The FA and their local County FA to meet the requirements. The aim is to raise standards across the country, not to exclude anyone.

Since the conception of the CSS, it has been modified and stratified to reward good practice and develop a hierarchical structure through which schools and clubs can move as they develop their football provision. Currently, the Charter Standard Clubs Scheme has three award levels: Club, Development Club and Community Club, whereas the Charter Standard Schools Scheme has five: Primary, Primary development, Secondary, Secondary development and Special school. Figure 1.1 (below) represents the hierarchical structure of the CSS and the intended direction of the flow of players into and within it.

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\(^4\) Holiday courses will be ignored in this discussion since they are not subject to the evaluation and comprise a relatively tiny part of the CSS in general.
The ultimate, long-term aim of the FA is to award all schools and clubs with the Charter Standard (though at the time of writing approximately 10% of clubs and 25% of schools possessed CS status). The scheme is to be reviewed and re-launched in summer 2007 with the FA’s new strategic plan (this hasn’t yet occurred at the time of writing).

Undoubtedly, the CSS and others like it are dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of sporting opportunities for young people. However, in one the few academic reviews of such schemes, De Knop et al. (1999) stress that a concerted effort is required to involve, amongst others, young people in an approach to youth sport development that can combat current threats to participation. High dropout rate at the ages of 14-15, a lack of qualified coaches, competition between different providers, growing value attached to talented players as a commodity, and a decrease in the number of volunteers, are all cited as common problems that need to be overcome (De Knop et al., 1999; De Knop and De Martelaer, 2001).
1.3. Re-conceptualising Children as Legal Subjects.

Legislative developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s have signalled a move toward listening to the voices of children in decision-making processes that concern them. The Children Act 1989 – a direct product of the British government's ratification of the UN convention on the rights of the child in 1989 – represented a move away from parental duties toward parental responsibilities (Morrow and Richards, 1996). Mahon et al. (1996) highlight the significance of a shift from children being the passive objects of parental rights to becoming legal subjects in their own right. Further outcomes of the UN convention stipulated that children should have rights to participation; that they be consulted, have access to information, freedom of speech and opinion; and to have the right to challenge decisions made on their behalf (article 12). Subsequent legislation such as the Child Support Act 1991 and the Criminal Justice Act 1991 indicated continued dedication on behalf of the government toward recognising children's rights.

More recently, the DfES published the green paper ‘Every child matters’ (DfES, 2003) which led to the development of the Children Act (House of Lords, 2004)5. The green paper makes clear the ‘need to involve young people and listen to their views’. It also sets out proposals for a new ‘Children’s Commissioner’ to act as an independent champion for children (which constitutes part 1 of the Children Act, 2004). Additionally, the green paper identifies five outcomes that mattered most to young people after extensive consultation. Of particular interest for this research are the first four outcomes young people wished to see:

- **Being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- **Staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect
- **Enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

5 The Children 'Bill' was revised in June 2004 after lobbying from SkillsActive and the Children's Play Council to include more specific language regarding children's entitlement to play, recreation and leisure, reflecting children's list of priorities following consultation.
• **Making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour

It has been argued elsewhere (Long and Sanderson, 2001) that sport can have a positive influence on health, skill development and developing community spirit, whilst child protection has become a central concern in sport recently, with the UK leading international efforts since the mid-1990s (Brackenridge et al., 2004). In this sense, sport may well play an important role in the future implementation of policy that seeks to practice what the children preach (as recommended in 'Every child matters', 2003). Also, in a reciprocal relationship, sporting organisations would be forced to listen to young people when developing or refining their own services.

A further reflection of the government's new drive to include young people in decision making processes is the revised cabinet office 'Charter Mark' recommendations. This public service quality mark, described as 'a tool to help public sector organisations focus on and improve customer service' (The Cabinet Office, 2004), has been in operation since 1993, but has since been re-launched in 2003. A major motivation behind the re-launch is the idea that public organisations begin to consult children and young people more effectively. As such, 'Save the Children' was commissioned to produce a guide to consulting young people, detailing why it is important and how to do so effectively (Fajerman et al., 2004). Although it is too early to tell whether these legislative 'push factors' are beginning to make the 'ideal a reality' (Fajerman et al., 2004), the most recent youth green paper, Youth Matters (2005), continues to outline policy (e.g. Opportunity Cards and Opportunity Funds) that clearly 'listens to' and benefits young people.

Perhaps a reflection of this legal shift in the early part of the last decade, sociological research involving children in the 1990s also experienced dramatic change. Traditionally, the study of children and childhood has focused on their movement into adulthood, a process commonly referred to as 'socialisation'. Denzin (1977) characterised socialisation as 'the process through which children learn to conform to social norms', in other words, the
process of becoming an adult. James et al. (1998: 23) characterise this approach as ‘transitional theorising’ where the major concern is not attached to what the child naturally is, rather with the demands of society on the child. In this sense, society shapes the individual. This much-employed concept of socialisation understands society in terms of its ability to reproduce itself over time; essentially, how one generation transmits its culture successfully to the next (Prout and James, 1997). In this process led view of society, children are, of course, central. Ritchie and Kollar (1964: 117) explain the position of children in a socialisation approach:

...this term (socialisation) implies that children acquire the culture of the human groupings in which they find themselves. Children are not to be viewed as individuals fully equipped to participate in a complex adult world, but as beings who have the potential for being slowly brought into contact with human beings.

Classical socialisation studies of childhood therefore view children as incomplete, without the skills required to live in an adult world. To see children as incomplete, lacking in social skills, and in transition toward the eventual goal of adulthood is to undermine their current life worlds, skills and culture. Such studies would therefore tend to analyse the process through which children adapt to adult norms, without necessarily seeking their opinions and perspectives. The central problem here is brought sharply into focus by James et al. (1998: 25):

Any research following from such a model cannot attend to the everyday world of children, or their skills in interaction and world-view, except in terms of generalising a diagnosis for remedial action.

However, over the past decade, research on children and childhood has begun to locate children at the centre of study, to seek their views and perspectives, and to regard children as social actors in their own right. In part a response to the critique of positivism in the social sciences, the ‘new social studies of childhood’ (Barker and Weller, 2003) place children’s agency in society at the heart of their approach. Morrow (1999) supports this ‘sea change’ in social studies of childhood, acknowledging the growing recognition
that children's views can and should be sought on a range of issues that affect them.

With reference to the proposed aims of this research, the significance of this shift from socialisation approaches toward a more child-centred, agency orientated approach, is marked. In order to carry out meaningful research with children and, ultimately, to develop a grounded theory of their experiences of football, demands that their experiences and perceptions of football are elucidated (this short argument is extended and strengthened significantly in section 1.6 below).

1.4. Qualitative Vs. Quantitative Approaches.

In 1996, research by White and Rowe indicated that few data sources existed to enable assessment of participation rates in sport by young people in England. Additionally, they go on to state that previous studies have been based on small, unrepresentative sample sizes, providing isolated snapshots rather than reliable data over time. Since then, however, large-scale survey studies documenting children's participation in sport have become relatively common (Sport England and MORI, 1994, 1999, 2003). Such research provides a broad yet useful overview of the changing trends apparent within youth sport in England over a period of time.

Largely descriptive, statistical data documenting, for example: membership of sports clubs, time spent playing sport in school, most popular sports in schools, and access to facilities (Sport England, 2003) are both interesting and useful to policy makers in youth sport. However, the explanatory power and range of such data is limited and should be questioned. For example, Sport England (2002) conclude that "young people are more inclined to participate in sport now than they were eight years ago", citing figures of 8.1 hours per week in 2002, compared to 7.5 hours per week in 1994. Whilst this is undoubtedly significant data, it fails to explain why children are more inclined to participate in sport now than they were previously. Wright et al. (2003) constructively criticise the use of such methods:
these studies raise significant questions which cannot be answered by the methodologies so far employed. For instance, they cannot provide information about the place and significance of physical activity in young people’s lives...[and] they provide few insights into the place of physical activity in relation to other forms of leisure in young people’s lives.

De Knop and De Martelaer (2001) support this assertion stating: “participation data are no indication of the quality of experiences enjoyed by participants”. They go on to add that both quantitative and qualitative data are necessary in an effective evaluation of youth sport provision. In such an analysis, core qualitative questions such as, ‘What are the individual experiences and expectations of (non)participants in youth sport?’ and ‘How is the quality of this experience managed?’ become central (De Knop and De Martelaer, 2001).

MacPhail et al. (2003a) agree that there is a need for the sporting experiences of children to be studied in a community sport programme context. In their ethnographic study of young people in a community athletics club, they highlight the growing need for qualitative research:

...we know very little about the nature of children’s experiences of junior sport outside of schools and the extent to which each of these goals might be pursued and attained in specific and local settings. Nor do we know whether innovations in policy, modified activities and coach education have made an impact on junior sport or school sport practices.

In addition, they argue that little attention has been paid to the social and cultural aspects of young people’s experiences of sport. MacPhail et al. (2003a) conclude by predicting that children’s experiences in adult-organised, community-based sport settings may become a focus of increasing importance for researchers and policy makers in the decade ahead.

Although it is clear that qualitative methods are beginning to make their way into the social studies of childhood and, more specifically, youth sport (Groves and Laws, 2000; Wright et al., 2003; McGuire and Collins, 1998), the balance of research still rests with quantitative methods such as large-scale surveys. It
is within this qualitative void then, that the proposed research aims to reside, and make some initial, tentative steps toward filling.

1.5. Grounded Theory: A Very Short Introduction.

Grounded Theory (GT) is a general methodology commonly employed in the social sciences by those wishing to free themselves from theoretical dogma. Textbooks commonly describe GT as an ‘inductive method’ where the researcher conducts data collection and analysis simultaneously. The goal is to generate a substantive theory that explains a given phenomena. This is achieved by abstracting data into concepts, then concepts into higher-order categories. A process of making ‘constant comparisons’ between data and emerging concepts leads to the generation of the final ‘substantive’ theory.

A short history of GT, accompanied by an extended discussion of its philosophical roots, is taken up later in this thesis (see section 3.3). As such, it is not necessary to enter into details here. The important point to make is that GT is a methodological choice, and one that limits the use of theory, either to structure the research, or from which to derive research questions or hypotheses. The aim is rather to remain open, as far as possible, to the ideas and opinions of one’s research participants. In doing so, grounded theorists believe they are accessing the real world of their subject, not simply imposing a priori theory on it, as they might accuse others of doing.

Dey (1999) has suggested that ‘there are as many grounded theories as there are grounded theorists’, a point of particular relevance in this context. It is common for researchers to adopt either a Glaserian or Straussian approach according to which of the two founding authors they side with. However, as we shall see (see section 3.3.2), the choice is not so simple and must be considered carefully. As such, the approach taken in this thesis is perhaps unique, and takes ideas from Glaser (1978, 1992), Strauss (1998), Charmaz (2000; 2003) and a number of other non-grounded theorists.

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6 The problems associated with the use of the word ‘inductive’ are explained fully in sections 2.1 and 3.3 particularly.
For example, Charmaz (2000) offers the most robust method regarding her philosophical assumptions (though there are still some problems with terminology), but Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe a number of practical techniques for 'doing' GT. It is therefore possible to adopt a range of Strauss and Corbin (1998) techniques whilst staying aware of Charmaz's (2000) philosophical warnings (in addition to those of Popper, 1972). Further complementary ideas have been taken from Bacon (1620) and Whewell (1847), both of whom expounded a strikingly similar methodology, albeit some time in the past.

The approach taken here could therefore be described as a synthesis of sorts, in which three iterations – or 'vintages' (Bacon's term) – of data collection and analysis led to the generation of a substantive theory of youth football in England. That is not to claim this particular version of GT is the correct or best variation on the theme. Rather, it will be claimed this version is philosophically consistent (see the lengthy arguments set out in section 3.4) and allowed the voices of the research participants to surface and steer the research.

Regardless of its philosophical integrity, the fact remains, as was noted earlier, that GT is a choice. It is the aim of the following chapter to justify this choice and suggest why GT is particularly suitable to study young people's experiences of football in England. Before this, however, it is perhaps of greater importance to justify the selection of this guiding question, from which the adoption of GT naturally follows.

1.6. 'Ethical' Policy Evaluation Research.

The decision to follow Grounded Theory (GT) methodology is not an arbitrary one and can be justified with an ethical argument. But before entering into this, some contextual information may help clarify the changing status of children and young people in today's society. Following this, it is possible to suggest, if only in the briefest outline, an ethical theory that will help frame the

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7 Snyder (1999) comments on the Bacon-Whewell methodology and, in particular, the association of the term 'inductive' with the two methods. Of further note, considering future discussions, she also remarks on the commonly held links between the philosophy (or epistemology) of Whewell and Popper.
specific details of the arguments set forth in future methodological discussions.

The UN convention on the rights of the child took place in 1989 and was quickly ratified by the UK government (Children Act, 1989). A number of authors studying the sociology of children and childhood (e.g. James et al., 1998; Morrow, 1999; Morrow and Richards, 1996) suggest that this marked the beginning of a process that questioned the rights of young people in modern society, ultimately leading to the recognition of children as citizens in their own right (see section 1.3). In government policy over the past 15 years, one can observe a clear move toward recognising children's rights in a number of areas, including, for instance, education and sport. Following a number of consultations before and after the publication of the major green paper, Every Child Matters (2003), the Children Act (1989) was revised in 2004, leading to the creation of a 'Children’s Commissioner': an “independent champion for the views and interests of children and young people” (DfES, 2005: 37).

Much of this activity in the early part of the new century was provoked by perceived – and highly publicised – failures on the part of local services dealing with children (e.g. social services, police, NHS, schools). In the foreword to Every Child Matters (2003), the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, cited examples of specific failures, making clear the agenda for policy change: ‘to prevent children falling through the cracks that appear between services for children’. Increased unity and communication between such services, coupled with the recognition of children as valid citizens with rights and opinions that need to be listened to, has thus become the formula driving change in service provision for young people. Most recently, in the green paper ‘Youth Matters’ (DfES, 2005), we learn that young people should be empowered with the assistance and understanding of integrated services; and that sport, in particular – with the 2012 Olympics in London – can play a major role in achieving this aim.
What this all amounts to then, is a ground-swell of popular, academic and political opinion marking a significant change in the way children and young people are viewed as citizens in society. Legislation such as the Children Act (2004) goes so far as to suggest that: "...persons exercising functions or engaged in activities affecting children [should] take account of their views and interests". Clearly, such a mandate has serious implications for a number of organisations; and particularly those involved in evaluating services that affect children (which, it could be reasonably argued, includes all services). Of course, the scheme that is subject to this policy evaluation (the FA’s Charter Standard Scheme) can hardly avoid such a classification, and, as such, it is only right that the methodological implications are carefully considered.

Following from this legal – and thus ethical – position one is led, if only in a rather crude manner, to a limited number of methodological 'solutions'. Limited, that is, in the sense that if one wishes to take account of the views and interests of children, one must, in the first instance, listen to them. Logically, this implies sitting down and talking to them and doing so in a manner that will not lead them (considering the inevitable power imbalance) along a path dictated by the researcher. So, following these ethical considerations, one is led to the broad conclusion that any methodology wishing to listen to children must be sensitive⁸ and involve the use of interviews, as opposed to questionnaires (or other numerical methods). As outlined later in the thesis (see section 3.3), GT meets these requirements rather neatly. However, in order to fully explicate the moral dimension of this research, the relationship between the ontological, epistemological and ethical positions taken up here should be considered.

These matters will be discussed with reference to research design in future chapters (see sections 3.2 and 3.8), but it is possible to say enough here to present something of an outline. Starting with ontology, or beliefs on the nature of reality, Downward (2005) notes that any policy evaluation research

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⁸ I use the term 'sensitive' here in place of the more common, yet problematic, term 'inductive'. In future chapters (see, for example, sections 2.1 and 3.4.4) we will see why the term is problematic and why 'sensitive' is a more appropriate alternative in this case.
presupposes a realist theory (this point is also made at some length by Pawson and Tilley, 2005). That is, policy is real, and has real consequences for those who are subject to it. It exists independently of individual interpretations of it. Policy, in other words, is not simply an infinite plurality of discourses, as a relativist (or constructivist) might assume. As Downward (2005) reasons:

...policy objectives... are structured entities comprising internally related positions and governed in various degrees by rules, norms and trust in which obligations to act persist. In this sense whether defined in terms of customers and sports centre service providers or... policy funding and implementation bodies... the processes involved are not reducible to the unique individual per se but can be viewed as comprising persistent relationships that transcend the specific individual's experience and which are constituted in relation to other objects. In this respect, relationships and processes must, by this argument, exist independently of specific individual consciousness, that is, have a realist basis.

The question, then, is whether to adopt a naïve or critical realist position. Without wishing to enter into a full rationale (for one will be given later)⁹, it is sufficient to say here that the critical position will be taken up in this research. In short, the critical realist assumes the existence of a reality 'out there', independent of our interpretation; but they also accept that different people will interpret that reality in contrasting ways, and that it is the task of the researcher to make sense of these sometimes conflicting interpretations (i.e. to identify causal mechanisms driving phenomena).

In light of this, and to illustrate what critical realism means with reference to ethics, classical examples of opposing ethical theories – namely, realist (or essentialist) ethics and relativist (or nominalist) ethics – will be reviewed. In ancient Greek philosophy, the two great exponents of these two diametrically opposed positions were, respectively, Plato and Protagoras¹⁰. Initially addressing the latter, the pre-Socratic sophist, Protagoras, believed that "man is the measure of all things, of things that they are and of things that

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⁹ Critical realist assumptions are explicated in detail later in the thesis (see section 3.4. Critical Realism: Stratified Ontology).

¹⁰ Due to the limited scope and intended aims of this thesis, it is not possible to discuss these theories in any adequate detail here. Rather, the intention is to present a short (and therefore inadequate) synopsis of their basic positions concerning broad ethical theories.
are not that they are not" (cited in Russell, 1946/2004: 83). In this, he implies that there are no absolute moral benchmarks; no ethical touchstones for telling right from wrong or good from bad. He suggested instead that "whatever in any city is regarded as just and admirable is just and admirable in that city for as long as it is thought to be so" (cited in Vardy and Grosch, 1999: 10). Hence, there is no reality where moral theory is concerned, just culturally relative norms that change with the whims of the inhabitants of any social group (state, religion, class etc). Protagoras can thus be regarded a moral relativist of sorts.

In sharp contradistinction, Plato held that all change and social progress should be arrested; his political doctrine, as expounded in the Republic, following from his belief in natural laws maintaining a strict class hierarchy or caste system (Popper, 1945/1969a: 86-119). Plato's moral philosophy is essentially dogmatic: he suggests the existence of immutable moral laws from which all moral behaviour follows. Thus, in Plato's essentialist ethics, the ruling class (or the wise) rule, the warrior class fight and maintain civil peace, and the underclass work to produce for the rest of the population. Despite the popularity of Plato's ideas in modern times, this system was condemned and labelled totalitarian by Popper (1945/1969a) and also came under considerable fire from another modern, liberal free-thinker, Bertrand Russell (1946/2004: 108-156).

In summary, Protagoras and Plato represent two opposing arguments regarding ethics: the first scientific and liberal in character; the second dogmatic and totalitarian. Of course, this is only the roughest of sketches, but it serves the purpose of defining the difference between realist and relativist ethical theories.

What then of a critical realist ethical theory? As discussed already, critical realism assumes a middle position in this ontological dichotomy. It is only logical, then, that a critical realist should assume, in the first instance, absolute standards, or inherited laws, against which to delineate right from wrong (or good from bad). This is the realist position. However, the critical
realist must go further. Like Protagoras, they should also assume that people will interpret such laws differently. Ultimately, if sufficient conflict in interpretation were to arise, it would be assumed that the law would be changed or modified in line with 'public (or political) opinion'.

An example may help to illustrate this point. A critical realist assumes that laws (i.e. statutes) exist independently of our interpretation; they are real structures that both constrain and enable human actions (although laws are, of course, human inventions). Hence, the Children Act (2004) is a real structure, but can be interpreted differently by individuals and organisations. A children's charity, for instance, might interpret the law quite literally and base much marketing and advertising on what it says. A private health club, on the other hand, might be only vaguely aware of the legislation and present little or no opportunities for young members to offer feedback on the services they provide. If organisations were to consistently ignore such legislation, it should be expected, after high profile cases of negligence, lobbying and consultation, that political pressure might build causing a change in the law governing these issues.

At an epistemological level, this process seems to mirror the system of Popper (1972; 1981), and this position will be advanced in future chapters (see section 3.4.4). In essence, it can be referred to as a modern scientific, politically liberal way of moving forward. Russell (1946; 1959) identifies two broad contrasting traditions with respect to politics and epistemology: the first dogmatic and rationalist (Russell notes Hobbes and Hegel as notorious examples); and the second liberal and empiricist (Hume and Locke and given as examples here). It is to the second tradition we have been referring, in which moral ideas are advanced and overthrown according to public (and, in an open, democratic state, political) opinion. This, in a nutshell, is the ethical and political theory Popper (1945/1969a and b) advances against Plato's.

11 Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (2000) claim that just such a process did occur in the 1990s after the UK ratified the UN convention on the rights of the child. The UN examining committee concluded in 1995 that article 12 of the convention – the right of children to express views on matters that affect them – was not being addressed adequately in legislation or in practice. This led to the publication of a number of green papers, after extensive consultation, and the revision of the Children Act in 2004.
'totalitarian' Republic and Marx's communism. If it is accepted that such a theory of ethics (and politics) agrees, in principle, with the critical realist ontology, the practical implications for this study must be considered.

In keeping with Olson's (1990) remarks in the epigraph to this chapter, it is held that Popper's notion of scientific (and ethical/political) progress is consistent with both critical realist assumptions and ethical character of the subject of study. Or, to put it simply, modern notions of children's place in society has changed such that we must attempt to listen to their voices when assessing services directed at them. Without considering such ethical matters, science, as Olson implies, would be pointless (i.e. the study would be of no relevance to the population sample). Equally, in conducting such a scientific investigation, it is hoped that morality – that is, the rights afforded to children – may no longer be blind, but steered by the opinions and ideas systematically collected from young people. In this way one could say that Nichols (2005), a critical realist evaluating youth sport policy, clearly misses the point when he suggests: "...my own value judgements on what is a problem must accord with those of policy makers". Rather, any judgements on what constitutes a problem must accord with those who are subject to policy i.e. young people. To paraphrase Popper (1945/1969a: 113), 'what we need and what we want is to moralise research and to research morals'. Only in this way can we continue to build a just and fair society where all citizens have the power to influence their own futures12.

The fundamental characteristics of GT are entirely in keeping with such an ethical/political/epistemological theory. The overriding goal of any grounded theorist is to fight-off theoretical dogma as far as possible; to avoid indoctrination; to listen to the ideas of participants; to step back and reflect on such ideas, gaining distance from them before submitting their reflections to further criticism. In its very nature then, GT is a methodology of piecemeal

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12 Olson's maxim (1990) shares much with Popper's (1945/1969a: 157) notion of piecemeal social engineering, which he contrasts with Plato's utopian social engineering. The piecemeal engineer attends to immediate problems in society, as opposed to the utopian engineer who decides first on a utopian end, then works toward its realisation (whatever the cost to human well-being).
social engineering (Popper, 1945/1969a: 157-160) and thus entirely suitable for application in the context of this study.

To summarise the central – or global – ideas and arguments running through this introduction, the following passage from Popper (1978) encapsulates, rather elegantly, the message of the previous pages. The passage concerns the limits of science, thus recapitulating both the goals and boundaries of this thesis.

It is important to realise that science does not make assertions about ultimate questions – about the riddles of existence, or about man's task in this world. This has often been well understood. But some great scientists, and many lesser ones, have misunderstood the situation. The fact that science cannot make any pronouncement about ethical principles has been misinterpreted as indicating that there are no such principles while in fact the search for truth presupposes ethics.
CHAPTER 2:
SENSITISING CONCEPTS

"Empty-headedness is not the same as open-mindedness".

- Harry Wolcott
CHAPTER 2:
SENSITISING CONCEPTS

2.1. Theoretical Sensitivity.
The idea of 'theoretical sensitivity' was first espoused in The Discovery of
Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) but has since received more
comprehensive treatment from Glaser and Strauss (and their students) in their
simply, this idea of 'theoretical sensitivity' has been extended by grounded
theorists as a response to the major criticism of the methodology: that
induction is paradoxical; or in some cases held to be logically impossible (cf.
Popper, 1959; 1972). This epistemological debate shall be undertaken in due
course, but it is a worthwhile task to first examine the classic grounded theory
response in detail here as a background to future chapters.

The original text (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 46) presents a somewhat cryptic
explanation of theoretical sensitivity:

Once started, it is forever in continual development. It is developed over as
many years as the sociologist thinks in theoretical terms about what he
knows, and as he queries many different theories on such questions as "what
does the theory do? How is it conceived? What is its general position? What
kinds of models does it use?"

They continue to add two further characteristics: a) it involves the personal
and temperamental bent of the sociologist; b) it involves the sociologist's14
ability to have theoretical insight into his area of research combined with the
ability to make something of his insights (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 46).
Furthermore, they issue a warning to the researcher who lacks theoretical
sensitivity, stating that 'the researcher who commits themselves exclusively to
a preconceived theory will become doctrinaire and will no longer be able to
"see around" their pet theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 46). With such an

13 The 1967 text dedicates less than two pages to theoretical sensitivity under the chapter on theoretical
sampling. A major criticism of the methodology thereafter - the question of how one begins grounded
theory research - grew from the lack of detail regarding theoretical sensitivity and its continued influence
on any grounded theory study.
14 Although they use the term 'sociologist' to refer to the researcher here, both authors accept that
grounded theory methodology has spread beyond the confines of sociology in later writings.
elusive explanation in the original text, it is easy to see why the concept of theoretical sensitivity needed further explanation.

Glaser obliged with an extended explanation in his monograph entitled *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978). Within this text, the implication is that (in a very general sense) the researcher should be familiar with the body of work that surrounds the proposed area of study. Early in his monograph, Glaser states that the mandate of the researcher is to remain open to what is actually happening without first having ideas filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases (Glaser, 1978: 3). However, with specific reference to the grounded theory method, he goes on to add that:

*Sensitivity is necessarily increased by being steeped in the literature that deals with both the kinds of variables and their associated general ideas that will be used. Thus the analyst's sensitivity, while predominantly of a single field and an area or two within it, is surely not so limited (1978: 3).*

In later work, Glaser (1992: 27) also makes clear the implication that sensitivity is a *personal attribute* of the researcher; it is their *ability* to give conceptual insight, understanding and meaning to their substantive data. Throughout his exposition of theoretical sensitivity, Glaser (1992) refers to the abilities and attributes of the researcher, thus fostering the impression that theoretical sensitivity is not something one can learn or develop. Offering little comfort to the neophyte researcher, Glaser (1992: 28) identifies further factors that may increase sensitivity before adding a telling caveat:

*Professional experience, personal experience and in-depth knowledge of the data in the area under study truly help in the substantive sensitivity necessary to generate categories and properties, provided the researcher has conceptual ability.* (Emphasis added).

Under Glaser's intimidating definition of the term, the researcher has no way of knowing whether they possess this near mystical *ability* of theoretical sensitivity, and are given little help in going about developing it (if this is even possible). Fortunately, other grounded theory authors are more pragmatic and less dogmatic when offering up their explanations of theoretical sensitivity (or whatever term they substitute in its place).
Strauss and Corbin (1998: 47-48) note that 'sensitivity' is developed through a familiarity with the literature, professional experience and personal experience. They further concede that 'the theories we carry within our heads inform our research in multiple ways, even if we use them quite un-self-consciously'. Getting to the heart of the concept, they conclude: “the issue is not whether to use existing knowledge, but how” (p. 48). In this sense then, knowledge of the substantive area combined with an attempt on behalf of the researcher to be as objective as possible when looking at data help prepare the analyst in developing a grounded theory. They refer to this as a 'comparative base' against which meanings given by others can be measured enabling greater understanding of their explanations.

In a concise overview of the grounded theory method, Charmaz (1990) avers that the researcher must already have a firm grounding in sociological concepts without being wedded to them. This 'delicate balance', as Charmaz puts it, between possessing grounding in a discipline and allowing that grounding to guide the research is central to the grounded theory approach. One might imagine a set of scales where the two sides are labelled 'objectivity' and 'knowledge'. The aim of the researcher is therefore to maintain balance between the two; commitment to either side would result in becoming either doctrinaire (on the side of knowledge), or impossibly naïve (on the side of objectivity).

In a more recent explication of grounded theory methodology, Charmaz (1995; 2003) provides more practical advice on theoretical sensitivity referring to what Blumer (1969) called 'sensitising concepts': certain research interests or a set of general concepts that will alert the researcher to look for certain issues and processes in the data. Charmaz explains how these sensitising concepts allow her to find 'points of departure' to form interview questions, to look at data, to listen to interviewees, and to think analytically about the data. Additionally, she notes that sensitising concepts provide a place to start, not

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15 In Blumer's concept of science, 'sensitising concepts' were necessary to develop understanding of unique cases - what he called 'sympathetic introspection'. For Blumer then, sensitivity was a combination of 'a natural gift of insight; a broad knowledge of facts; an understanding of social culture; and the practice of sympathetic introspection with varied cultural groups'.
end, adding that a thorough foundation in a discipline can provide such concepts. However, in conclusion, she adds the caveat that ‘every grounded theory researcher should remain as open as possible to new views during the research’ (Charmaz, 2003).

A summarising word on this matter might go to Piantanida et al. (2004) due to their ‘constructivist ‘position; one that this research proposes to share (although not strictly sharing this terminology). After initial fears that prior knowledge in an area would ‘contaminate’ the study, Piantanida et al. (2004) came to understand that the alternative to achieving an unattainable virgin state of mind is to ‘account for subjectivity’; to manage it and get it under control. They note that under an interpretive (or constructivist) logic, theoretical sensitivity is not viewed as a methodological technique or strategy, but rather as a way of ‘being’ in the enquiry, a state of mind that strives to be as fully attentive as possible to the phenomenon one wants to understand.

To finally clarify what is understood here by the term ‘theoretical sensitivity’, it is possible to draw on an example from one of the most important scientific works in history: Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. At the time *Origin* was first published (1859), the consensus opinion among naturalists and scientists was that all life was the divine creation of God, and that the individual characteristics of species were fixed over time. It is difficult for us to understand how dominant a theory this was in the nineteenth century; to have suggested to the contrary would have been considered heresy\(^{16}\). Nevertheless, Darwin did publish his thesis (to mixed reaction) and it is has since become a cornerstone of philosophical, scientific and, indeed, everyday thought.

The important point in all this is that Darwin was troubled by a number of facts that appeared at odds with the dominant theory in his field. Unlike other naturalists, who were aware of the same facts but inclined to overlook them rather than be labelled a heretic, Darwin sought to reconcile these many

\(^{16}\) Indeed, this is perhaps the major reason why Darwin suspended the publication of his thesis until his hand was forced, even though it he had arrived at his conclusions twenty years earlier.
anomalies with a new theory that would also account for geological evidence of an earth much older than was commonly believed. This general indoctrination of naturalists was brilliantly summed up by T. H. Huxley, when, upon reading Origin exclaimed: ‘How extremely stupid not to have thought of that!’ In other words, scientists of the time were so enchanted with the creation theory that they were blinded to the many contrary facts that lay clearly before them.

Darwin’s theory was later held up as a great triumph of the inductive scientific method (most notably by J. S. Mill) as he claimed to have come upon it whilst making observations on his voyage aboard the H.M.S. Beagle. Although he did make many of his supporting observations on this voyage, the truth of the matter is that many of the ideas central to his theory had been espoused (albeit whispered) sometime before. Even Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus, had published some tentative ideas on the subject long before the voyage of the Beagle17. In this sense then, Darwin cannot have had and ‘empty head’ when making his observations but, to be sure, he had an ‘open mind’, for he was able to cast off the pervasive theory of creation that so dominated the thoughts of those before him.

Although many still claim Darwin’s method to be the most notorious example of the inductive sciences at work, he himself made his thoughts on the philosophy of scientific method very clear in a letter he sent to a friend in 186118:

> About thirty years ago there was much talk that geologists ought only to observe and not theorise; and I well remember someone saying that at this rate a man might as well go into a gravel-pit and count the pebbles and describe the colours. How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service.

17 The clearest ideas on evolution published before Darwin were those of Herbert Spencer who made general claims for the theory – without supporting evidence – in the Leader between 1851 and 1854, almost ten years before the publication of Origin.
In the current context then, Darwin certainly had 'theoretical sensitivity': he had ideas against which to compare the data he collected, but was also able to remain open to the meaning of the data without allowing the dominant theory of the age to obscure his thoughts.

Having made this point clear, a further question is forced to the surface: how might the existing sociological (and psychological) literature be included in a thesis? Both Glaser (1992) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) offer extended comment, reaching consensus over the issue of conducting a full literature review from the outset. Glaser (1992: 31) states that 'the dictum of grounded theory is: there is a need NOT to review any of the literature in the substantive area under study'. This is brought about by a concern not to contaminate, be constrained by, inhibit, stifle or otherwise impede the researcher's efforts to generate categories. Expressing similar concerns, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 49) instruct the researcher not to review all of the literature in the field beforehand in fear that 'they may become so steeped in the literature that they may be constrained or even stifled by it'.

However, as Glaser (1992: 32) notes, this stance is part of the methodology only in the beginning. Once data are gathered, codes begin to emerge and categories become saturated, the researcher can turn to literature in the substantive area to relate it to their theory in a variety of ways. Glaser (1992: 33) also states that there will be plenty of time during the grounded theory process to integrate this literature, particularly during sorting and writing: "it will always be there...it does not go away!" Glaser is also quick to point out that connections occurring between theory and the literature do not provide verified or unverified hypotheses: "his [sic] job is to generate, not verify" (1992: 33). Strauss and Corbin (1998: 50-52) differ slightly on this point. Whilst also contending that literature may be used to compare concepts and stimulate questions during the research process, they suggest that at the writing stage, literature can be used confirm or highlight disparity with research. Here, Strauss and Corbin (1998) appear to be making a case for the verification of grounded theory through comparison with literature at the end of a study; an idea that Glaser (1992) vehemently rejects.
The emerging differences between the founding authors, such as that outlined above, are discussed in depth in later chapters (see section 3.2.2. Divergence). However, it is sufficient to state here (without wishing to reach deeper into complex methodological issues at this point) that a comprehensive review of literature will be undertaken as core concepts are generated. In this sense, rather than being set aside as a discrete section, literature will inform the emerging theory throughout the data collection and analysis stage of the research (see Figure 3.9 in section 3.5.1) thus enabling a richer enquiry (Layder, 1998; Charmaz, 2000).

The role of this chapter will therefore be to outline broad literature themes as opposed to conducting a full review. It first tackles some of the major concepts in the sociology of childhood, beginning with a brief discussion of the evolution from functionalist, socialisation approaches toward more interpretive or constructivist formulations of what constitutes childhood. Four interrelated theories of children and childhood are presented and examined before a brief analysis of recent empirical studies concerning young people in sport and physical education. The chapter concludes by discussing leading issues in youth sport policy before suggesting where the current research might be placed with reference to the broad literature themes identified here.

2.2. Theorising Children and Childhood.

Social studies of childhood have evolved radically over the past decade. Often referred to as ‘new social studies of childhood’ (Barker & Weller, 2003; Pole et al., 1999) or the ‘child centred paradigm’ (Morgan et al., 2002), current theorising on children and childhood owes much to the work of a small group of European sociologists (Allison James, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout (1997; 1998; also Jenks, 1996), Berry Mayall (1994), Jens Qvortrup (1994) and Pia Christensen and Allison James, (2000), amongst others). The work of these authors is consensual in an approach that places children’s agency at the centre of studying their social worlds. The growing need to conceptualise children as individual actors is summarised by James et al. (1998: 199):
any analysis of childhood must rigorously attempt to open up the boundaries that have been placed around the experience, whether such boundaries are commonsensical, sociological, educational, psychological, medical, or biological in type. In this way it becomes increasingly possible to actually topicalize 'the child' for social theory... In this sense, then, we argue that childhood is fundamentally wedded to a central concern of social theory.

The 'boundaries' they refer to here are those erected by traditional positivist views of children as social objects, confined by their lack of skills in the adult world (the view adopted in socialisation approaches to childhood). Any future study of children or childhood should, in their view, 'topicalize' the child, that is, place them at the centre of research by analysing their experiences, perceptions, life-worlds and culture, as opposed to external factors that, in traditional views, serve to shape or mould them into adults.

Rather than propose a single, dominant 'new' theory of childhood, James et al. (1998) pose the question: is it ever possible (or desirable) to speak about childhood as a unitary concept? In posing this question they raise issues of cultural relativism in cross-cultural (and cross-societal) comparison. They note that in many countries, children are not used as a primary unit of analysis and the methodological difficulties of sampling, data quality and coding pose great problems in comparative work. Therefore, to conceptualise children in such a holistic fashion serves only to undermine the plurality of childhood (gender, ethnicity, religion, social class etc.) in the 'post-modern' era. Alternatively, they present four separate yet interrelated approaches to the study of childhood based on the earlier theorising of Jenks (1996: 4-22) who refers to the 'savage' child, the 'natural' child and the 'social' child. James et al. (1998) refine and extend these ideas and present the socially constructed, tribal, minority group and social structural child.

The first approach – the socially constructed child – characterises childhood as an unlimited plurality. Taking from the post-modern idea of 'multiple realities', children are unspecifiable as an ideal type i.e. there is no universal child with which to engage (James et al., 1998: 27). In response to the work of social philosophers and historians such as Aries and Foucault in the 1960s
and 70s, who claimed that childhood is socially constructed, constituted in discourse, Prout and James (1997) note that:

*If this is so then there can be no such object as the real child (or any variant on this theme such as the 'authentic experience of childhood'). Instead we must content ourselves with the analysis of how different discursive practices produce different childhoods, each and all of which are 'real' within their own regime of truth.*

In addition to the more abstract philosophical notions of childhood, earlier empirical studies have had an impact on theorising children in this way. Walkerdine’s (1984) work on the nursery school demonstrated how classroom activities such as ‘playing hospitals’ insert children into discursively constituted positions such as ‘doctor’, ‘patient’ and ‘nurse’, already suffuse with relations of power and gender. Walkerdine (1984) also illustrates how children are able to shift between discourses with relative ease as games and roles change.

Contemporary researchers – particularly in the field of gender studies – draw on this idea of the ‘socially constructed child’. Boyle et al. (2003) and Messner (2000), like Walkerdine (1984), highlight the ease with which young people are able to switch roles (particularly gendered roles) in their games and play. Messner (2000) interestingly draws on a single moment of observation at an opening ceremony of a junior soccer season to demonstrate how children ‘do gender’ or carry out ‘gendered performances’. In their study of recess (playtime) in America, Boyle et al. (2003) also observed fluid gendered identities and permeable barriers, as children, especially boys, were happy to play football and fighting games at one moment, then ‘crossover’ and play skipping games with girls the next.

The second approach, the ‘tribal child’, is perhaps analogous with a cultural studies approach from ‘mainstream’ sociology. Here, children’s worlds are *real* places that demand to be understood in children’s own terms, that is, their own language. The world of the schoolyard, youth club and gang are examples of such places that need to be understood in this approach.
Perhaps drawing on what Jenks (1996) calls the ‘savage’ child, children in this approach are viewed, somewhat primitively, in a similar way to the early anthropologists saw the savages of their studies: different on a scale of human advancement and therefore worthy of study.

In early anthropological work, Eisenstadt (1956) identified youth subcultures as the means by which future adult familial and occupational roles could be both ‘held at bay’ and rehearsed in safety thus provided a platform for further exploration of this area. One early example of empirical work utilising this approach is from Opie and Opie (1959) who conducted exhaustive ethnographies of playground games and folklore. In a typical passage they explain their vision of childhood:

_The scraps of lore which children learn from each other are at once more real, more immediately serviceable, and vastly more entertaining to them than anything which they learn from adults._

Prout and James (1997) have criticised the Opies’ approach stating that it presents a picture of childhood as ‘a world apart’, linked to adult culture only as ‘a sort of anachronistic attic containing the abandoned lumber of previous times’. Instead, James et al. (1998: 29) claim that, in this context, children’s worlds are not unaffected by adult worlds, but rather artificially insulated from them.

More recent empirical studies have overcome such criticisms by making links to, and comparisons with, adult culture. One recent example in the realm of sport and leisure is from Beal (1996) who conducted a critical ethnography of male skateboarding subculture. Combining feminist and critical sociological perspectives, Beal is successful in an analysis that tackles non-hegemonic forms of masculinity and gender relations within the subculture of skateboarding.

The minority group child draws parallels with early feminist approaches to study where the goal of the researcher is to challenge uneven power relations between adults and children (as opposed to men and women). Indeed,
Hardman (1973) compared her early work on the anthropology of children to the study of women arguing that both women and children might be called ‘muted groups’\(^{19}\), that is, unperceived or elusive groups. After a survey of childhood in North American sociology, Ambert (1986) hints at patriarchal structures obscuring the study of children and childhood:

> Children’s relative absence is rooted in the same factors which excluded attention to women (and gender): that is, a male-dominated sociology that does not give worth to child care and still less to the activities of children themselves.

James et al. (1998: 31), however, have indicated that such an approach carries with it inherent weaknesses. In this sense, children can become a group for-itself rather than in-itself, i.e. politicised uniformity defies the plurality within the group.

In the final approach, and perhaps the most pragmatic – the social structural child – children are a formative component of all social structures. From this approach, children are not pathological, capricious or incomplete (as they are perhaps seen in more traditional approaches) rather, a body of social actors with equal needs and rights (James et al., 1998). Pioneering work in this mould was conducted in the sociology of schooling in the late 1960s and early 70s (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Young, 1971, in Prout and James, 1997). In such studies, the focus became the interactions between actors (mainly teachers and pupils) in concrete educational settings, which were at first classrooms but soon extended to other contexts in the lives of pupils. As such, children were transformed from the objects of educational systems to active participants, and from this perspective sprung a new genre of empirical studies which described and analysed pupils’ cultures and experiences (Prout and James, 1997).

The ‘social structural’ child, then, has universal characteristics, which are related to the structure of society in general and not simply subject to the

\(^{19}\) Carolin and Milner (1999) interestingly note that the word infant means ‘wordless’, without speech, yet every infant is born with a voice and the urge to communicate.
changing nature of discourses about children. James et al. (1998: 32) argue that the advantage of such an approach enables comparison with other groups in society as children are viewed as equals. Morrow and Richards (1996) embrace this type of approach, suggesting that seeing children as equals has important implications for the methods used in studying them.

It is proposed that while these four separate approaches constitute different platforms from which to explore sites of contemporary childhood, they are uniform in their concern for seeing children as social actors (James et al., 1998). This is evident in the following statement:

...there is a requirement for studies which foreground their (children's) agency in social action: the life worlds of childhood, the daily lived experience of children, their experiences and understandings, their interactions with each other and with adults of various kinds (James et al., 1998: 138).

Morrow (1999) adds weight to this claim arguing that children should be seen as research subjects who are social actors in their own right, but with the added proviso that children may possess different competencies and may be more skilled in other forms of communication. Morrow (1999) adds that if we are going to listen to children, we are going to have to be innovative about doing so in a way that is meaningful to the participants themselves. This is certainly an interesting point, deserving of further attention, which it will receive in later sections (3.5. Methods and 3.7.2. Conducting Ethical Research with Young People). However, it is becoming clear that contemporary social studies involving children should view them as social actors with the right to a participatory voice (Barker and Weller, 2003; Groves and laws, 2000; Morgan et al., 2002; Pole et al., 1999). Such a 'paradigm shift' is evidenced by recent research into a diverse range of youth related issues.

2.3. Young People, Sport and Leisure.

Over the past five years, a fruitful body of research has grown around the sport and leisure experiences of young people. Generally conducted from a 'social constructivist' ontological position (that is, focusing on young people's
agency within the social world), much of this research explores their varying range of phenomenon from the point of view of children and adolescents.

Sport and physical activity commonly provide a vehicle or lens through which an exploration of gender and gendered identities can be initiated. Boyle et al. (2003) constructed a grounded theory of gender identities in the school playground, using participation in particular sporting and leisure activities as a means of suggesting a certain identity. However, predominantly utilising participant observation, there was very little direct contact with children throughout the study. As such, children's views were less elicited than observed and interpreted by the researchers. In a more direct fashion, Dowling-Naess (2001) examined the 'crisis of masculinity' and the construction of masculine identities amongst young men using in-depth and group interviews. Drawing on the 'narrative analysis' work of Andrew Sparkes (2003), she makes explicit her 'critical-interpretivist' position that she uses to fulfil her objective of 'raising young athletes' awareness of gender issues through examining their subjective experiences' (Dowling-Naess, 2001). Also using sport as a window on masculine identities, Gard and Meyenn (2000) invite secondary school boys to discuss their experiences of contact sports. Once again, an explicit effort is made to place, in this case, young men at the centre of research reflecting a 'social constructivist' position where young people are seen as responsible for constructing and re-constructing their identities and life worlds.

In their study of ethnicity and racism in school sport, McGuire and Collins (1998) analyse the experiences of Asian heritage boys in sport and physical education in an attempt to investigate the position of sport and PE within the Asian community. Again using data collection techniques such as participant observation and interviews, they charge themselves with 'scrutinising the nature of experiences (in PE) that are distributed through the curriculum' (McGuire and Collins, 1998). Social class and leisure is the subject of a study by Outley and Floyd (2002). They interviewed African American children in the context of family and neighbourhood in an attempt to discover whether poverty had an impact on leisure behaviour.
In a more general context, a number of recent studies focus simply on the sport and leisure experiences of young people. Groves and Laws (2000) commit themselves to analysing children's experiences of physical education 'in terms defined by them'. They are passionate in their approach to including children in the research process, and, using diaries, group interviews and observation, they are successful in what they term 'giving the child voice' in educational research. In a similar vein of study, Wright et al. (2003) attempt to understand the leisure experiences of young people in relation to other aspects of their lives. However, assuming a more 'structural' position than in aforementioned studies, Wright et al. (2003) draw attention to structures such as gender, ethnicity and class in the context of examining the meanings young people construct around sport. They indicate that this move is made in an attempt to 'avoid focusing solely on the local and ignoring structural relations amongst practices' and that such an analysis will allow:

...recognition of the ways in which individual choices are constrained by social structures, but also attend to the specific place and significance that physical activity has in the lives of the young people interviewed (Wright et al., 2003).

In addition to the more qualitative approaches favoured in the research above, quantitative measurements have also been used in the study of youth sport to varying degrees. Psychological research has often focused on socialisation influences on young people's motivation in sport.

Allen (2003) administered 4 different psychometric, self-report style questionnaires to 100 high school girls in an attempt to understand young people's social motivations for taking part in sport. Assessing factors such as perceived belonging, task and ego orientations and perceived physical ability enabled Allen (2003) to conclude that social motivation constructs added to an explanation of adolescents' interest in sport. The influences of situational factors such as friendship quality, group dynamics, and parental and coaching behaviours on the social motivation process are recommended areas for further study.
In support, Brustad (1992) notes that further efforts should be made to understand parental and peer influences on the psychological characteristics of sport participation. However, he also suggests that longitudinal and qualitative research methods might lend a greater depth of understanding to the socialisation process.

Further examples of the utilisation of quantitative methods in youth sport research range from the employment of the Children’s Attitudes Toward Physical Activity (CAPTA) inventory (Patterson and Faucette, 1990), to demographic questionnaires used to sample cases for interview (Wright et al., 2003). In the case of the former, the researchers assess children’s attitudes towards specialist and non-specialist PE teachers, again using a self-report questionnaire. In conclusion, they recommend (once again) that qualitative analyses such as interviews would enable researchers to clarify children’s perceptions. In the latter example, Wright et al. (2003) developed a questionnaire specifically for use in collecting demographic data that would later aid the identification of individuals to participate in interviews. Further study in this case entailed interviews and focus groups with young people, which were, in turn, used to select specific individuals to partake in a longitudinal study over 5 years.

A brief review of empirical research therefore leads to the preliminary conclusion that contemporary social research with young people should, at least in some way, attempt to seek out their own perspectives, experiences and views of a particular phenomenon. The inclusion of quantitative methods, and in what capacity (as a dominant tool or in service of qualitative approaches), may depend on the specific research question and aims of the study.

2.4. Issues in Social and Sport Policy for Young People.
There appears to be growing concern surrounding the development of policies concerning children and, despite the legislative developments of the early 1990s, children and young people appear to have little influence over policies
made on their behalf. During the UN summit on social development (1995), a leading children's organisation remarked:

*Children become the subjects to policies made without reference to them...The resulting developments are likely to be unfriendly to children, leaving them without space to play and socialise (Save the Children Fund, 1995: 39).*

Their remarks are echoed by James *et al.* (1998: 135) who contend that:

*...in many cases the underlying rationale of policies (and related research) on children is, as we have seen, not focused on the present lives of children, nor are they party to the discussion. The concern is for their adult future.*

However, the empathic inclusion of children in policy making and policy research appears to be time consuming, methodologically complex and unrealistic to the unconcerned individual. Indeed, one of the few recent illustrations of social policy research that manages to capture the complexity of children’s lives in their localities was conducted in Nepal by Johnson *et al.* (1995). Over an eighteen month period, the researchers spent time observing, interviewing and listening to the songs of children in an attempt to understand their role in the household, their relationship with adults and how these relationships changed corresponding to socio-economic change. While Johnson *et al.* (1995) attempt to show a local understanding of children as complex persons they acknowledge that they are also caught up in dimensions of social and economic difference and are particularly influenced by ethnicity, wealth and gender. In summary, they suggest that:

*Legislation and policies must be sensitive to the issues of children’s roles and rights. They should also support and give space to the initiatives which empower children and their concerns. This needs to be done in a way which is sensitive to the changing physical and socio-economic environment (Johnson et al., 1995)*

The core problem here, then, is that the development of policies for children that do not attend to their worlds are likely to, in the words of Johnson *et al.* (1995), “strengthen the powerful at the expense of the weak”.


Switching focus from social policy to youth sport policy, Ogle (1997) – following a large-scale international study – provides a broad overview of the youth sport policy arena in Britain and Northern Ireland in the mid-1990s. Ogle explains that a shift in youth sport policy from curative to preventative is mainly due to the ineffectiveness of past policies such as those derived under the utopian ‘sport for all’ ideology of the social reformist governments (Bramham, 2001). Ogle (1997) notes that the target group approach (13-24 year-olds) of former policy, accompanied by a lack of commitment to partnerships, ultimately led to implementation that was both ineffective and inflexible. Additional problems were associated with poor implementation of policy developed at the national level but delivered at the local level. In this sense, Ogle (1997) claims that the lack of effective communication and partnerships made it difficult to turn policy into effective practice (also see Kay, 1996).

In contrast, Ogle (1997) claims that youth sport policy development in the mid-1990s (i.e. post-lottery) centres on 3 interrelated areas: a). strengthening PE and sport in schools; b). creating sustainable links between schools and community sport (e.g. school-club link programmes); and c). developing means where talented individuals can progress (this is following the 1995 conservative strategy document, Sport: raising the game). Furthermore, he notes that a commitment to local ownership and delivery of nationally conceived sport policy can be seen. In conclusion, Ogle (1997) identifies the ‘yawning chasm’ between youth and adult sport as the biggest challenge still facing the sport policy makers.

Similar concerns regarding the nature of policy development are evident elsewhere. In a case study of Flanders and the Netherlands, De Knop and De Martelaer (2001) – arguing that their case reflects a typical western European context – assess the quantity and quality of youth sport provision. Bringing together a number of smaller studies in a type of ‘meta-interpretation’, they attempt to draw together some recommendations for future policy and policy research. In conclusion, they recommend that ‘a reorientation of sports policy from quantity (e.g. sport for all) towards quality can be supported’, a point
reinforced by Ogle (1997) who also recommends the more frequent measurement of the 'quality' of participation. Raising the quality of coaches/leaders, creating a motivational climate and improving the youth orientation of youth sport are mentioned as techniques to promote quality.

This last point – improving the youth orientation of youth sport – is certainly of interest in the context of this research as it implies that policy should include young people in the development process. Indeed, they note that future research should attempt to ask the crucial question, 'are attitudes and behaviours of the target group changed as a result of policy measures?' (De Knop and De Martelaer, 2001). It might therefore be questioned as to whether such research should (or could) be conducted without eliciting the experiences of the young people subject to that policy (see chapter 1.6 'Ethical' Policy Evaluation Research).

Earlier research from De Knop et al. (1999) considered the role of four major developments (i.e. demographic, socio-economic, socio-psychological, sport-related) in youth participation in organised sport. Arguing that youth involvement does not take place in a social vacuum, influences on how young people become involved and remain involved in organised sport are discussed. Anticipating their later work, findings suggest that quality evaluation and management are key factors in the future success of organised sport. Moreover, in their concluding remarks, De Knop et al. (1999) note that 'it is necessary for the needs and requirements of young people to be satisfied by those organising activities'. In other words, for young people to be granted a participatory voice in the decision making (policy making) process.

In recent policy development research, innovatively using young people as researchers, MacPhail et al. (2003b), like De Knop et al. (1999), also make a persuasive case in favour of 'listening to young people's voices', claiming:
It is vital that young people's views toward facilitating participation in sport are taken into account by politicians and policy-makers in order to provide a climate and conditions that meet young people’s needs.

MacPhail et al. (2003b) also review recent policy papers and surveys in youth sport in Britain, outlining some of the major barriers and reasons for non-participation in sport. Lack of enjoyment, parental and coach pressure, lack of time, no friends attending the sport, few opportunities and a need for greater encouragement are identified as common reasons for non-participation and drop-out. In conclusion, they summarise comments from over 600 young people across the country making recommendations for future development of youth sport policy. They note that the climate needs to be ‘inclusive and task orientated'; competitions should cater for a wide range of abilities and disabilities, as should camps and festivals. Furthermore, they suggest that more time be dedicated to sport in schools along with offering activities that spill over into the community.

2.5. The Wider Sport Policy Context: A Rough Sketch.

The British government is already addressing these latter issues, having extended its Public Service Agreement target of ‘2 hours quality PE per week’ to 75% of 5-16 year olds in 2006 (and 85% by 2008) (DfES/DCMS, 2004). The recently inaugurated PE Schools Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) scheme (DfES/DCMS, 2003), it is claimed, is having a positive impact on increasing sport provision in schools and in forging links between school and community sport (DfES/DCMS, 2004; Ofsted, 2005).

With a projected total investment of around £1.5bn over 5 years (2003-2008), the PESSCL scheme is the most significant sport policy ever conceived by a British government (Penney and Evans, 2005). The PESSCL scheme followed quickly after two comprehensive strategy documents, A Sporting Future for All (DCMS, 2000) and Gameplan (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002), demonstrating the Labour government’s commitment to sport. This

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20 That is, when contrasted to the previous Conservative government’s relative lack of interest and investment in sport and leisure (1979-1997). In fact, the only document produced in this time was Sport: raising the game (1995) which, according to Green (2006), had a predictable elite sport focus. The
commitment, however, is clearly not focussed on sport 'for sport's sake'; rather, it is a commitment to use sport as a tool to tackle more pressing political objectives such as childhood obesity, crime and delinquency, and academic attainment (Flintoff, 2003). This much is clear both in Gameplan (2002) and the PESSCL strategy document (DfES/DCMS, 2003). In fact, of the ten broad aims set out at the start of the latter document, eight make no reference to 'sport' at all.

The PESSCL scheme then, is the overarching strategy steering youth sport and PE policy in the UK at present. The central aims of the scheme – increasing time spent in PE; developing school-club links; fostering and developing talented youngsters; increasing competitive opportunities – are clearly derived from the New Labour ideological concepts of 'joined-up thinking' (that is, across departments – e.g. DCMS, DfES, DoH – and between sector providers e.g. public and voluntary sectors) and 'social inclusion' (Henry, 2001; Buckler and Dolowitz, 2000). Indeed, the present government’s commitment to 'social-liberal' values (as outlined, for example, by Rawls, 1971) is well demonstrated by the PESSCL scheme and its nine constituent work strands such as 'school sport partnerships', 'gifted and talented' and 'sporting playgrounds'.

Increasing access to PE for all young people and developing life-long participation through effective club links are noble objectives, but it is not yet clear how effective the scheme actually is in practice (i.e. no academic reviews have been published). Indeed, the recent Ofsted report (2005) claimed that only 2 in 5 clusters (see figure 2.1 below) had “established good links”, and that teaching and assessment was rated as “poor” on average.

Thatcher government (1979-1991) was also blamed for the deterioration of public leisure facilities following the widely despised CCT legislation (Henry, 2001: 72-86; Hylton et al., 2001: 25-36).
Figure 2.1. A Typical School Sport Partnership (SSP) or ‘Cluster’.

Since research is ongoing and, as yet, unpublished (with the exception of Flintoff, 2003), it is difficult to know if Ofsted’s findings (2005) are representative and, if so, the reasons why implementation has been problematic. Such concerns lie beyond the scope of this research, though it is necessary to note at this point that the Charter Standard Scheme (CSS) is embedded deep within the PESSCL framework (see figure 2.1 above). For this reason, the success of the CSS depends heavily on those working in SSPs (especially PDMs) and the degree to which they can forge successful links between clubs and schools. Indeed, from early questionnaire data (see appendix B) it is clear to see that many teachers and club administrators (in football) have problems both in defining and creating school-club links.

Whatever the initial problems the PESSCL scheme experiences, few would argue that it is not a significant improvement on sport policy of the past. Green (2006) has recently reviewed sport policy documents from the 1960s to the present day with the aim of delineating the current status of the ‘sport for all’ ethos that was popular in the 1970s. Green (2006) concludes that an analysis
of recent sport strategies (i.e. Gameplan) reveals a peculiar two-fold focus on:
a) promoting the active citizen (especially young people); and b) a no-
compromise approach to winning medals at major championships. This
follows from the division of responsibilities for mass and elite sport between
Sport England and UK Sport respectively in 1997. Of particular interest here is
Green’s (2006) interpretation of Gameplan as a ‘social investment’ strategy
aimed at shaping the ‘active citizen’ of the future. Drawing on Lister (2003),
Green (2006) suggests that the current policy focus risks valuing young
people ‘merely as ciphers for future economic prosperity, with the well-being
of children overshadowed’.

Similar concerns have been raised elsewhere (cf. MacPhail and Kirk, 2006)
with specific reference to the recent and widespread adoption of the Long
Term Athlete Development (or LTAD) strategy\(^{21}\). Since the publication of
Gameplan (2002), Sport England and UK Sport have encouraged NGBs to
adopt the LTAD model as a template for player and athlete development at all
levels. If governing bodies wish to receive public funding, they must now
develop a Whole Sport Plan (WSP) clearly articulating their aims, strategy and
spending policies. A central feature of any WSP is a player or athlete
development pathway, and the LTAD model has been unilaterally endorsed\(^{22}\).

Figures 2.2 and 2.3 (below) demonstrate the pervasiveness of the LTAD with
respect to national strategy and policy. Figure 2.1 is derived from Gameplan
(DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002: 127) and describes how schools, NGBs and
various delivery partners (UKSI network, CSPs, YST, parents etc.) are to be
responsible for facilitating young people’s progress through the now familiar
LTAD stages (FUNdamentals, Learning to Train, Training to Train, Training to
Compete, Training to Win). Figure 2.2 is derived from The Framework for
Sport in England (Sport England, 2004) and demonstrates the extent to which

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\(^{21}\) Along with many other NGBs, the FA has recently adapted the principles of the LTAD to develop their
own player development framework: Long Term Player Development (see Simmons, 2006).
\(^{22}\) This was correct at the time of the research fieldwork, though at the time of publication only 13 sports
have formally adopted (or adapted) the LTAD – now Long Term Participant Development – framework in
their WSPs. The change from “Athlete” to “Participant” is significant in that the emphasis in now on
retention of performers rather than elite development specifically.
the so-called ‘single delivery mechanism’ for sport (especially the PESSCL scheme) is again dominated by LTAD principles.

Figure 2.2. The Pervasiveness of LTAD in Youth Sport Policy (from DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002: 127).

Figure 2.3. LTAD at the Heart of the Single Delivery System for Sport (from Sport England, 2004: 18).
Initially a double-Olympic macro-cycle training plan for Canadian skiers, the LTAD has been successfully branded and exported by founding author, Istvan Balyi. However, with the exception of a handful of short papers by Balyi (sometimes with colleagues e.g. Balyi and Hamilton, 2004), published in practitioner journals and magazines, no critical information on the programme exists\(^\text{23}\). This, in itself, is cause for concern given the present popularity of LTAD in the national policy context. Some of the few authors to comment critically on LTAD are MacPhail and Kirk (2006) who suggest that it is too narrow and rigid to provide a realistic model for most young sports people. Indeed, they claim that Côté and Hay's (2002) description of a 4-stage process of socialisation (see figure 2.4 below) provides a more valid (in that is grounded in empirical findings) and realistic method of conceptualising the complex process of socialisation into, through and out of sport.

Côté and Hay's (2002) description of the socialisation process suggests that young people can and do drop out of sport at all stages; that some people may 'jump' stages altogether, or move 'backwards' between stages (as with young swimmers who drop out then return as elite adult triathletes). Hence, MacPhail and Kirk (2006) claim that this is a more flexible and realistic heuristic device – as compared to the linear, one-way LTAD framework – researchers might use to better understand the socialisation process. It is also clear that by assuming all young people can (or should) be ushered through the same staged process (4 or 6 stages depending on the sport), the LTAD framework – the fulcrum around which British sport policy is proposed to be balanced – treats young people ‘merely as ciphers’ for elite success and potentially overshadows their individual wellbeing (Lister, 2003; Green, 2006; Kirk and MacPhail, 2006).

\(^{23}\) Again, this information was accurate at the time the fieldwork commenced, though sportscoachUK have subsequently revised LTPD principles in line with the new UK Coaching Framework (UKCF) (April, 2008). At the time of publication, 31 sports had adopted the UKCC framework, thus integrating modified LTPD principles into their formal coach education certificates ("specific action 2" in the UK Coaching System section of the UKCF.
Figure 2.4. The 4-Stage Process of Socialisation Into, Through and Out of Sport (adapted from Côté and Hay, 2002).

It appears, then, that current national youth sport policies such as the Sportsmark (Activemark) and Clubmark schemes, and the PESSCL scheme (Houlihan, 2000; Flintoff, 2003) are aimed squarely at redressing some of the common barriers to continued participation through creating effective, local delivery partnerships and promoting links between school and community sport (MacPhail et al., 2003b). In addition, Houlihan (2000) claims that whilst SSPs (i.e. the PESSCL scheme) may have a positive impact on regeneration in both schools and the wider community, they will have limited impact on elite sport development.

In summary, the Youth Sport Trust, with its TOPs schemes have helped to improve the delivery of quality sport at primary level (3-9 years) (Ogle, 1997; Bramham, 2001), whilst the aforementioned Sportsmark and Clubmark schemes (of which the CSS is a variant) are assuring basic levels of competence in a wider sense throughout the entire youth sport environment (though the percentage of accredited schools and clubs is still relatively
small). The PESSCL scheme is providing the cohesive glue (with PDMs and SSCos acting as architects), ensuring effective delivery partnerships are formed between all parties and policies (Houlihan, 2000; Flintoff, 2003). The UK Sports Institute complete the crowd of complementary, and sometimes competing, youth sport agencies, identifying and developing elite young sportsmen and women through schemes such as Gifted and Talented (for 11-16 year-olds), TASS (or Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, for full-time students in FE or HE) and the World Class Pathway (a 3-stage investment system for talented, potential and performance athletes).

2.6. Locating This Research.

After a brief review of the broad themes of literature under which the proposed research might reside, a sturdier location can be suggested. With reference to the 'new social studies of childhood', it is proposed that the research might follow in a similar path to that forged by the likes of Pole et al. (1999), Groves and Laws (2000), Wright et al. (2003) and MacPhail et al. (2003b). At the core of the approach adopted by these authors is the necessity to see children as individual social actors with a central role in the research process. It is hoped that the proposed study might add to this growing body of research with young people. Indeed, Prout and James (1997) openly call for empirical work to complement theoretical work conducted elsewhere:

Well conducted empirical studies...are essential counterparts to theoretical work... We believe that the sociology of childhood in particular needs many more studies which open up hitherto neglected topics – children and work, politics, health, food and so on.

It is argued here that another hitherto neglected topic – children and sport (or more specifically football) – could be added to this list of empirical studies that might help 'pry the sociology of childhood away from the stereotyped topics of the family and schooling' (Prout and James, 1997).

Furthermore, Wright et al. (2003) make explicit their move back toward the inclusion of structural factors in their analysis of young people's physical activity experiences. In this respect they share the view of Layder (1993;
that confining research to the local neglects aspects of setting and context and that structural or ‘macro’ aspects of society must play a more central role in analysis. Indeed, with specific reference to grounded theory, Layder warns that theories run the risk of being relegated to the status of ‘respected little islands’ of knowledge, separated from established theories and explanations in sociology (Layder, 1993: 44).

Perhaps on a more abstract, theoretical level, the work of Jenks (1996), Prout and James (1997) and James et al. (1998) offers a potential framework from which to study children and childhood. Although the explicit use of such theories as guiding frameworks contravenes traditional grounded theory methodology, they may serve to ‘sensitise’ the researcher (see next chapter) to sociological concepts in the particular field of study (Charmaz, 1990). More specifically, the four theories of ‘the child’ offered by James et al. (1998) draw from slightly different ontological and epistemological positions and in that sense may help raise the researcher’s awareness of competing concepts of children and childhood. And, whilst initially drawing on data to inform theory generation, once a substantive theory ‘emerges’, parallels may be drawn with established theories of childhood (or theories from any other discipline for that matter), therefore adding to the explanatory power and range of the ‘new’ substantive theory.

The limited review of youth sport policy and research presented in this chapter reveals a potential gap where young people’s views and opinions could be elicited to help inform policy. Whilst the aim of the proposed research is not to directly inform policy, it might legitimately claim to add to a body of research that, in sum, lends weight to the inclusion of children in policy development and policy research (this point was laboured in chapter 1.6. ‘Ethical’ Policy Evaluation Research). As De Knop and De Martelaer (2001) point out, the subjects of youth sport policy should be involved in the evaluation process so as to keep policy relevant to the needs and wishes of the intended

24 See Hammersley (2000) for a typology of social research. It is proposed that this research might be labelled as scientific, substantive under this typology, as opposed to practical, theoretical, dedicated or democratic.
beneficiaries. As the Charter Standard Scheme claims to be improving the quality of experiences for young footballers in England, it appears reasonable, and even necessary, to include those people centrally in the research process.

2.7. Locating the Researcher.
Since there is no such thing as an 'empty-headed' researcher (Wolcott, 2001), much depends, in grounded theory, on the degree of 'open-mindedness' one can achieve and the amount of 'theoretical sensitivity' one has. But how much sensitivity is enough? How much is too much? How do you know whether you have enough or not? Such questions are difficult to answer, but the following section aims to outline both the intellectual and practical sources of my 'theoretical sensitivity' as I prepared to enter the field.

In an academic capacity, I felt somewhat limited; inadequate even. That is to say, without a masters degree in specific branch of sport science, I had little confidence in my theoretical knowledge in sociology or psychology. I tried hard to catch up over the first year of the PhD, reading generally in social theory to develop my understanding of (neo)Marxism, figurational theory, symbolic interactionism, feminism and cultural studies. I also had the great benefit of weekly research seminars where I was able to discuss the use of these theories with my fellow research students as applied to different research projects. Despite this, and unlike most of my contemporaries, I had still felt no allegiance to a particular theory or way of thinking as I entered the field (unless, of course, one considers avoiding dogmatism a theoretical position in itself).

As noted in the previous sections, I had some sensitivity to a small collection of relevant yet abstract theories of childhood; I had a limited and general understanding of sociological theory; I had a broad grasp of the youth policy environment and some of the substantive literature on common problems in youth sport. However, I also had some personal, practical experiences that may have further increased my theoretical sensitivity.
As a 23-year-old, white, middle-class man with a degree in sports science and a penchant for team sports, my background, I suspect, was quiet conventional. In a practical context, I had participated in football and basketball from the age of 10, both in academic (school/college/university) and community contexts. My range of experience in coaching was also extensive (for my age), having worked with community outreach projects through the previous four summers, junior clubs, county squads and student teams. In these various capacities I had engaged with male and female performers, aged 6-23, from a range of socio-cultural backgrounds (e.g. from young south Asian girls with little sports experience from deprived inner-city slums, to white male adolescent basketball players from rural Lincolnshire).

Of particular relevance to this research was a season I spent as coach of a U16 football team (aged 18). Here I experienced all the difficulties of junior football management: communicating and developing rapport with adolescents; managing parents and their inflated expectations of their sons; refereeing games in hostile circumstances; trying to teach young people something about football; and trying to help some of the boys come to terms with their own broken dreams. This experience, in particular, helped to ground me in the reality of youth football and increased the empathy I had with the research participants I would engage with over the following year. This empathy, I believe, is essential for the collection of rich and detailed data and, crucially, it is not something one can learn from a book.

So, in summary, I felt genuinely open-minded as I prepared for fieldwork as I had little formal knowledge or higher training in sociology or psychology. The little knowledge I did have was sufficient, however, to allow me to pursue lines of questioning I knew were relevant to the literature on youth sport. In practical terms I was confident that I would be able to make a connection with the research participants given my experience of playing and coaching; I was just a little unsure about my ability to make sense, in theoretical terms, of what they had to say. I was, in short, excited to get my hands dirty, yet anxious about turning that experience into something of theoretical value.
CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

"Ask a scientist what he conceives his scientific method to be, and he will adopt an expression that is at once solemn and shifty-eyed: solemn, because he feels he ought to declare an opinion; shifty-eyed, because he is wondering how to conceal the fact that he has no opinion to declare."

- Sir Peter Medawar
CHAPTER 3:
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to the Methodology.
The decision to adopt grounded theory methodology in this study was made based on an ethical commitment, the details of which have already been discussed (see Chapter 1, esp. section 1.6). That is, the decision was logical, but didn’t necessarily follow from a sound philosophical – or ontological – base. Hence, in a back-to-front manner, methodological choices were made prior to any explicit ontological or epistemological commitments (though, of course, philosophical commitments were made implicitly or unconsciously). For this reason, grounded theory is discussed in depth before ontology and epistemology in this chapter. This may seem illogical, but the chapter is intended as a faithful account of when and how critical methodological decisions were made, not a sanitised, re-organised retrospective.

The chapter begins with a brief introductory section (3.2. Central Concepts in the Philosophy of (Social) Science) which aims to explain the meanings of ontology and epistemology and their logical relations with each other and also to methodology and methods. The section aspires to clarify terminology and meaning despite the fact that this is an almost impossible task given the variety (particularly between North American and European usage) and complexity of philosophical discussions around these concepts. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties, such an attempt is necessary, for, as the philosopher Daniel Dennett suggests, “there is no such thing as philosophy-free science; there is only science whose philosophical baggage is taken on board without examination” (Dennett, 1995: 21).

The following two sections (3.3 Grounded Theory and 3.4 Grounded Theory and Critical Realism: A Happy Marriage?) provide a comprehensive account of, and discussion on, the total methodology employed in this study. The section on grounded theory begins with a historical account of the genesis and ends with a discussion of the main question any grounded theorist should
expect to be asked: what grounds grounded theory? This discussion of the philosophical justification of the validity of the methodology serves as a point of departure into a discussion of the viability of critical realism as an organised set of ‘under labouring’ ontological concepts.

An epistemological void therefore appears between the ontology of critical realism and the methodology of grounded theory. Hence, the final part of these two main sections (3.3 and 3.4) introduces neo-Popperian ideas in an attempt to modify grounded theory in light of the major criticisms levelled at the methodology. Contrary to the beliefs of some critical realists (e.g. Sayer, 1984: 226-231) Popper’s later theories on evolutionary epistemology (1972, 1976, 1981) and those of his students (e.g. Lakatos, 1970; Munz, 1985) are compatible with critical realist ontological assumptions (at least in their early formulations). Moreover, by adopting evolutionary epistemology or critical rationalism, it is argued that weaknesses in both critical realism and grounded theory can be fruitfully addressed.

Following what is the heart of the methodology chapter three shorter sections follow: the first on methods (short because methods are treated in depth in the vintage chapters); the second on validity and reliability (or research quality); and the third on the micro-ethics of conducting research with young people. In the chapter summary an attempt is made to draw all the various threads of the chapter together, demonstrating the internal logic of the methodology from ontology and ‘governing ethics’ (Piggott, 2006) down to methods and ‘micro ethics’.

3.2. Central Concepts in the Philosophy of (Social) Science.
It has been argued (Grix, 2002) that the directional and logical relationship between the core concepts of social science (ontology, epistemology, methodology and method) need to be understood if students – and academics – are to engage in constructive dialogue and criticism of each others’ work. With reference to this logical and directional relationship, ontology is held to be the starting point of all research (Blaikie, 1993: 6), after which epistemological and methodological positions logically follow.

Ontological assumptions are metaphysical since they are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality. One's position, then, is identified by the answer to the question: what is the nature of social reality to be investigated? (Grix, 2002). This explanation of ontology is extended by Blaikie (1993: 6) who suggests that ontology refers to:

...the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality – claims about what exists, what it [social reality] looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other.

In other words, an ontological position is defined by the way in which a researcher construes the social world. It refers to the possible objects of knowledge, which are partially distinct from subjects (this point will be laboured in the later section on critical realism 3.4.1).

Historically not all scientifically-minded philosophers have been explicitly interested in ontological (or metaphysical) questions. In the seventeenth century, Leibniz and Spinoza debated the nature of reality, reaching independent yet similar responses to the mind-body problem (Stewart, 2006). Opposing the Cartesian dualism that had dominated before them, both Leibniz and Spinoza were monists, in that they believed both mind and body could be reduced to a single substance: in the case of Leibniz, this was 'monads'; in the case of Spinoza, it was 'God' (though not God in any classical theological sense since Spinoza was an atheist).

Around the same time, Bacon and Locke were establishing the philosophical theory of empiricism that was to be so influential, particularly in Britain, over the following 300 years. The broad difference between the continental and British philosophers was their interest in ontology: the continentals sought to found enquiry, from the top down so to speak, on purely rational grounds (i.e. by thinking about first principles and making logical deductions); whereas the British philosophers (through to Hume, Smith, Bentham and Mill) simply assumed the existence of a material reality independent of human thought.
and concerned themselves with a different question: how is knowledge of the world possible? (that is, an epistemological question) (Russell, 1946/2004).

Most sociologists, it is claimed, fall into the same category as Bacon and Locke in that they tend to ignore ontology, assuming rather than explaining the nature of the social world (Bhaskar, 1975; 1979; Joseph, 2002). In fact, all sociological theories – classical and modern – make ontological assumptions, though they are rarely rendered explicit. Take, for example, classical Marxism and the central dialectical doctrine of class conflict, revolution and socialism. Marx’s sociology assumes that social actors, of whatever class, are ‘caught in the net’ – that their actions are determined by the social and economic structures (i.e. class status) in which they find themselves. This status is, in turn, determined by economic forces operating beyond the control of social actors (hence ‘economic determinism’). What Marx failed to see was that, by making such claims, his prophetic political exhortations (e.g. ‘workers of the world unite’) are rendered impotent (Popper, 1945/1969b). That is to say, classical Marxism is self-contradictory or paradoxical. Any Marxist paying due attention to ontology would therefore recognise these problems and either give up the theory or, at worst, engage themselves in serious critical discussion of such problems.

Before moving on to discuss some of the problems with ontology, outlines of some of the main theories will be sketched. In response to the central question: what is the nature of the social world? different ontological theories can be advanced. In simple terms, two general positions exist: realism and constructivism (or relativism). Realists assume the existence of a world beyond and separate to human interpretation; that the world is real and does not change as ideas (or theories) about it change. Constructivists, (or relativists) on the other hand, hold that the world is, in fact, simply the reflection of human thoughts and ideas; that objective knowledge is impossible and that theories are only ever fanciful constructions (i.e. they are not even approximations of ‘the truth’ since truth is relative).
There are, of course, many variations or shades of grey between these two extremes. Indeed, it would be difficult to find philosophers or social researchers who held a view representing either pole (Munz, 1985; Blaikie, 1993; Magee, 1997; Dennett, 2003). Variations on realism include *naïve realism*, *critical realism* (to be discussed later), *hypothetical realism* (which follows from an acceptance of the ‘anthropic principle’, Munz, 1985) and *transcendental realism* (a post-Kantian variation). Further variations of realism include Popper’s 3-world ontology and the various post-structural and post-modern theories developed by a number of continental philosophers and sociologists over the past 50 years (for example, Foucault’s *power-knowledge* and Bourdieu’s *habitus*). Given the limited space available, only critical realism will be discussed at length in this study since it appears to be one of the most tenable and constructive ontological theories presently favoured by social researchers in the field (cf. Green, 2005; Marsh and Smith, 2001).

Clearly there is much more to be said in such a discussion, but space is limited here\(^25\). By way of transition, Munz (1985) offers some enlightening comments on the subject of ontology that may help move the discussion forward. First, Munz (1985) questions the fundamental premise of the necessity of holding – dogmatically – an ontological theory (as suggested, for example, by Bhaskar, 1975; 1979 and Sayer, 1984):

> The crux of the matter is that one cannot, in advance of having knowledge, say what knowledge is and then determine the royal road for getting there (p. 51; 54).

According to Munz (1985) then, by selecting a particular ontology one is forcibly committed to an epistemology – a way of generating knowledge – that is essentially dogmatic. On this view, there is often no rational reason for choosing one particular ontological theory over another (it is a metaphysical decision). The question that naturally follows then is: is there a position which avoids this problem? That is to say, is there such a thing as a *rational ontology*?

\(^{25}\) Ontology is discussed further and with specific reference to this study later in this chapter (3.4. Critical Realism and Grounded Theory: A Happy Marriage?).
Strictly speaking, the short answer is: no! However, in defining the meaning of 'rationality' Munz (1985: 51-55) suggests it must be something more than the process of achieving a certain pre-determined end (as with, say, empiricists who assume *a priori* that the world is 'sensible' then proceed to 'know it' by observation). Rationality, Munz (1985) avers, is a purely negative process of subjecting everything to criticism (even the definition of rationality itself). Drawing on Bartley's (1984) notion of 'pancritical rationalism' or 'panrationalism', Munz (1985) asserts that only through a commitment to criticising everything, including our own ontology, can we avoid falling into dogmatism. So rather than choosing (or developing) an ontological theory and sticking to it, researchers should adopt something akin to the Socratic attitude where they 'know how little they know' and question everything.

Having salvaged ontology to a degree, Munz (1985) argues for a variation of hypothetical realism – hypothetical because realism may be given up should effective criticism be offered – drawn from the acceptance of the 'anthropic principle'. From this position, an objective reality is assumed because we exist. That is to say, homosapiens has evolved in such a way that allows us to interact meaningfully with our external environment, especially large objects moving at slow speeds (Munz, 1985: 54-55). Moreover, we possess sophisticated observation apparatus evolved to a degree that enables a complex interaction between the environment and our nervous systems. Hence, an external objective reality can be inferred.

Implicit here too is a theory about the nature of the link between ontology and epistemology. Whatever form of realism one subscribes to (see above), the next question one confronts is: how can we know something about the social world? (the epistemological question). The answer to this question doesn’t necessarily follow simply from the answer to the ontological question (as suggested by Munz, 1985: 55); there is still a choice to be made. That is to say, either empiricism or rationalism could follow from the assumption of realism, either because reality is 'sensible' or because it is 'intuitive', respectively. In short, an epistemological theory must be consistent with an ontological theory, but must also be worked out carefully in itself. The next
sub-section will therefore switch the focus to epistemology and discuss some of the main positions commonly taken up by social researchers.

3.2.2. Epistemology: Generating Knowledge about the World.

Once an ontological theory has been adopted, the researcher’s task is to deduce (or choose) an epistemological theory. Various allusions to epistemology have already been made the preceding sections, but a more formal explanation can be offered. Blaikie (1993: 6-7) suggests that, in the social sciences, epistemology refers to:

...the claims or assumptions made about the ways in which it is possible to gain knowledge of... reality, whatever it is understood to be; claims about how what exists may be known... [It] is a theory of knowledge; it presents a view and a justification for what can be regarded as knowledge – what can be known, and what criteria such knowledge must satisfy in order to be called knowledge rather than beliefs.

The passage above, though necessarily opaque, suggests an epistemological theory must have certain characteristics: first, it should demarcate ‘knowledge’ from mere ‘belief’; second, it must state rules for defining the validity of data; third, it must contain rules regarding the logic of inquiry. These three characteristics can be defined through answers given to the following questions (note that the answers to a and b should provide the answer to c):

a. What types of data are considered valid with respect to generating knowledge about the social world?

b. What system of logic should be followed in order to generate valid knowledge about the social world?

c. In what respect is knowledge different (and superior) to belief? (or put more specifically, how is scientific knowledge different to non-scientific knowledge?)

As we have seen, the answers to these questions may be arrived at, to some degree, by careful inspection of one’s ontology and this task will be undertaken later. However, some of the classical epistemological positions can be explained here so as to provide a background to forthcoming discussions on the matter.
Before Kant (i.e. until the late eighteenth century), two epistemological positions prevailed among 'natural philosophers': empiricism – the British tradition of generating knowledge through observation and induction (examples would be Bacon, Locke, Hume and Mill); and rationalism (or idealism) – the continental tradition of generating knowledge through pure reason and deductive inference (examples would be Descartes, Leibniz and Hegel). Since Kant’s penetrating and revolutionary critiques (1781; 1786) and the work they inspired, debates in epistemology have been heated and are still ongoing. By way of summary, table 3.1 (below) outlines the probable responses of the classical epistemological theories to the three questions posed above.

**Table 3.1. Classical Epistemological Theories.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>a (valid data)</th>
<th>b (logic)</th>
<th>c (demarcation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empiricism</td>
<td>Sensory observations and direct experience.</td>
<td>Inductive i.e. moving from specific (series of observations) to general (theory).</td>
<td>Only knowledge derived inductively from experience is considered 'scientific'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalism</td>
<td>Pure thought based on reason and the capacity of the intellect.</td>
<td>Deductive i.e. moving from reasoned basic 'truths' to specific statements.</td>
<td>Real knowledge is arrived at through sound deductive logic from fundamental, irrefutable principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical rationalism</td>
<td>Thought (to generate hypotheses) followed by sound experimental observations.</td>
<td>Hypothetico-deductive (or 'abductive') i.e. problem – theory – experiment – new problem in light of experimental result.</td>
<td>Only theories that are, in principle, falsifiable or testable are scientific and 'knowledge' consists of, as yet, unfalsified theories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The further row added here labelled ‘critical rationalism’ presents a third epistemological theory representing a middle road between the two extremes of empiricism and rationalism. This theory, developed by Karl Popper (1959; 1972; 1981) and some of his students (Lakatos, 1970; Munz, 1985) will be discussed in detail later in this chapter; however, it is sufficient to say here that this is the position upheld by most practicing scientists today, implicitly or explicitly (Medawar, 1985; Magee, 1997), and more so in Europe than in North America (according to Hacohen [2002: 2] this is due to the dominant influence of Kuhn's ideas in the latter).
In the social sciences, the number of potential epistemological positions available to the researcher are far more numerous and, as a consequence, far more confusing than in the natural sciences. Table 3.2 (below) provides a brief sample of terms used to describe conflicting epistemological positions by a range of social researchers.

### Table 3.2. Selected Alternative Epistemological Terminology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Epistemological Dichotomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryman (2001); Grix (2002)</td>
<td>Positivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh and Smith (2001)</td>
<td>Interpretivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinson (1998)</td>
<td>Foundationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln and Guba (1982)</td>
<td>Anti-foundationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrell and Morgan (1979)</td>
<td>Essentialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Constructivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naturalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear to see from this table that the confusion over terminology has not been resolved with time. Some of the terms used refer to classical ontological positions rather than epistemologies (realist, essentialist) whilst others are simply synonyms (interpretivist, social constructivist) with no reasonable grounds for preferring one over another. Indeed, it seems “some social scientists are unable, and even unwilling, to speak a common language” (Popper, 1945/1969b: 222). A further criticism of the way in which social scientists have conceptualised epistemology concerns the degree to which they answer the three questions posed above. For example, whilst *positivism* – essentially the modern term for empiricism\(^{26}\) – contains a relatively comprehensive set of answers, *interpretivism* only provides an answer to question a.

This problem of defining meaning is a serious one. Hence, table 3.3 (below) aims to clearly explicate what is meant here when referring to different philosophical approaches to social enquiry.

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\(^{26}\) According to Hammersley (1989) there has been much confusion over the use of the term ‘positivism’ in sociological enquiry. Indeed Outhwaite (1987) offers three different interpretations, though they differ somewhat from the original meaning of the term positivism originally coined by Comte in the 1830s.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION (ADVOCATE)</th>
<th>ONTOLOGY</th>
<th>EPISTEMOLOGY</th>
<th>MAIN CRITICISM(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivism (e.g. the Vienna school)</td>
<td>Naive Realist, where the universe is ordered according to general laws; social reality is a complex of observed (or experienced) causal relations between events; causes are external to the individual.</td>
<td>Empiricist, where knowledge is derived from direct experience; laws emerge through the observation of empirical regularities (induction); also predictive and experimental.</td>
<td>There is no such thing as value free observation – all experience is theory laden; laws previously assumed to be 'true' have been falsified (e.g. Einstein's theory superseded Newton's).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Critical) Realism (e.g. Bhaskar)</td>
<td>Realist (stratified), where real, actual and empirical domains are recognised; transitive concepts describe intransitive structures; structure and agency are recursively related.</td>
<td>Retractive, a cyclical process where the researcher builds hypothetical models of mechanisms (necessary conditions) to explain (not predict) social phenomena.</td>
<td>Obscure terminology and over-complex rendering of social reality; the objectivity of the 'real' not adequately justified i.e. unobserved phenomena are problematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Rationalism (e.g. Popper)</td>
<td>Realist, where essential uniformities exist that can be expressed in statements of 'truth', defined as correspondence to the facts (see Popper, 1981: 44-60); truth is always provisional; 3-world (i.e. revised dualist, or pluralist) approach to mind-body problem.</td>
<td>Hypothetico-deductive, where theory precedes observation; a 'horizon of expectations' directs attempted falsifications (informed trial and error); non-falsified theories with greater verisimilitude and explanatory power are favoured (but never dogmatically).</td>
<td>Falsification never actually happens; single experimental results are rarely accepted as genuine falsifying instances (see Duhem-Quine thesis and 'protective' auxiliary hypotheses, for example in Lakatos, 1970: 181-188).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Theory (e.g. Habermas)</td>
<td>Constructivist, where individuals determine the objects of reality; objective observation is impossible; 'truth' is based on consensus, not on evidence (observational or experimental).</td>
<td>3 categories of inquiry: empirical-analytic (nomothetic); historical hermeneutic (ideographic); and critically oriented; each (or combinations) can be used dependent on disciplinary goals.</td>
<td>Distinction between natural and social sciences is unnecessary and misleading; consensus theory of truth leads to infinite regress (also not clearly defined how it is to be reached).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretivism (e.g. Weber, Simmel)</td>
<td>Constructivist, where social reality is the sum of the interactions of social actors; a complex of socially constructed meanings that are interpreted (differently) rather than 'real'.</td>
<td>Hermeneutic, where the researcher's goal is to grasp, interpret and reconstruct, in social-scientific language, the meanings of social life (assumes direct contact).</td>
<td>Impossible to determine progress since no regulative concepts (i.e. truth) are accepted; assumes social actors are competent and rational; ignores structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuration Theory (e.g. Giddens)</td>
<td>Interactionist, where social reality is (re)produced by social actors under conditions (mostly) outside their immediate control; concerned with the interrelations between human action and social institutions.</td>
<td>Quasi-hermeneutic, where immersion in the everyday world of social actors is necessary; lay accounts are transformed into technical concepts which are used to mediate contrasting frames of meaning.</td>
<td>Not supported by empirical research; offers nothing more than an ontological framework (no methodological guidelines have been presented).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The collection of classical and contemporary responses to ontological and epistemological questions offered by Blaikie (1993) is favoured here, though other classification systems have been offered. Lincoln and Guba’s (2000) well known and widely cited ‘paradigm’ typology, for example, is largely ignorant of the history of the philosophy of science, drawing instead on a Kuhnian interpretation of science. Hence, they deny the possibility of objective knowledge (via intersubjective criticism) by rejecting truth as a regulative concept, thereby rendering any knowledge generated entirely relative and incommensurable across ‘paradigms’ (Lakatos, 1970: 177-180). Since this interpretation of science as an irrational endeavour (or, put more bluntly, as ‘mob psychology’) has been successfully refuted (see Munz, 1985; Lakatos, 1970; Popper, 1981), no more will be said about it here. Instead, the consequences of these positions (i.e. those cited in table 3.3) for methodology and methods will be illuminated.

3.2.3. From Epistemology to Methodology and Methods.

Choosing one of these broad philosophical positions – or indeed, any position in-between – logically leads the researcher to employ a methodology that fits with their philosophical assumptions (Grix, 2002). Often confused and used interchangeable with methods, methodology is linked directly to epistemology in the sense that it refers, more specifically, to how one goes about acquiring the knowledge one believes to exist (Blaikie, 1993: 7). Methodology, then, can be understood as:

...the analysis of how research should or does proceed. It includes discussions of how theories are generated and tested – what kind of logic is used, what criteria they have to satisfy... and how particular theoretical perspectives can be related to particular research problems (Blaikie, 1993: 7).

So, whereas methods refer to the specific tools of data collection (ranging from the formal and structured to the informal and ‘fluid’) methodology is a more general concept that describes the logical process and procedures of social research. Methods in the social sciences are usually classified as either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the type of data one is attempting to collect (Bryman, 2001); that is, numbers in the case of the former and words
in the case of the latter. However, this rather simple classification breaks down as soon as one attempts to quantify (i.e. count) data that are normally considered qualitative (e.g. words in an interview transcript). Setting aside the labels for a moment, common methods in the social sciences can be classified by the degree of researcher interaction required (see figure 3.1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Researcher Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripted interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant obs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaled responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.1. Common Methods in the Social Sciences.**

The analysis of texts and documents is a further method not included in figure 3.1 because no direct interaction is required. This method is, of course, the core tool of historians and historically orientated sociologists (such as figurational sociologists), but it will not be utilised in this research due to the necessity to engage directly with the research participants (see section 1.6 for an ethical justification).

Considering the brief argument made above concerning the classification of methods, it should be noted that all but one of the methods listed in figure 3.1 (scaled questionnaires) could be regarded as either qualitative or quantitative. A researcher analysing a set of life-history interview transcripts might, for example, decide to count the number of occasions a certain person is mentioned; or a researcher analysing responses to closed questions in a questionnaire might decide to conduct a discourse analysis rather than a quantitative content analysis (as some psychologists are inclined to do).
Because both types of data are limited and because social research methods are flexible enough to generate all types of data (nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio), researchers have begun to conduct mixed-method studies in order to achieve both ‘breadth’ and ‘depth’ in their investigations (Sayer [2000] refers to ‘extensive’ and ‘intensive’ approaches). The exact order and interplay of methods is something rarely confronted in texts (for an exception see Bryman, 2001) although mixed-method research is often recommended. This subject will be taken up with a more explicit focus the use of methods later in this chapter (see section 3.5) and in the introductory sections of the first two vintage chapters (sections 4.3 and 5.2) that follow.

By way of summary, the logical relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods – the broad subject of discussion in the chapter so far – is illustrated in Figure 3.2 (below).

![Interrelationship between the Building Blocks of Social Research](image)

**Figure 3.2. Interrelationship between the Building Blocks of Social Research (Adapted from Grix, 2002 and Blaikie, 1993).**

Using this model as a guide, a brief example can be extended that should help illustrate the logical consequences of choosing a particular ontological theory. Suppose, for example, a researcher were committed to a constructivist ontology, where the social world is seen as a plurality of subjective
interpretations of individual social actors. This being the case, an interpretivist or hermeneutic epistemology would be adopted, where the researcher’s goal is to grasp the subjective meanings of social actors. In order to do this, it is likely that the methodology followed would be inductive and, perhaps, ethnographic, so as to access, in the most direct way, the meanings social actors ascribe to social phenomena avoiding a priori theoretical interpretations (Holloway and Todres, 2003). Finally, overt participant observation and in-depth interviews could be used to record social actors’ interpretations of events and reactions to particular phenomena.

This model, however, does not show the influence of the question one is asking, and the type of project one is undertaking on the methods chosen (Grix, 2002). It is with this point that Batterham (2002) takes particular issue. Taking the earlier example of the constructivist, Batterham suggests that such an inflexible philosophical position leads a researcher to an absolute requirement for ‘qualitative’ methods and that “there can be no mixing of research philosophies and methods to match particular research questions” (Batterham, 2002). Instead, it is suggested that one’s research question may critically inform the methods one uses to find an answer. In addition, he argues that relaxing the hard boundaries surrounding the contested philosophical positions may open the way for valuable mixed-method research whereby, for example, qualitative methods are used to follow-up questionnaire-based survey (Batterham, 2002).

Perhaps finding comfortable middle-ground between these two extreme views of philosophical rigidity (Grix, 2002) and question-led method (Batterham, 2002), others suggest that the two are, in fact, essentially related. Whilst acknowledging that the formulation of the question comes first in social research, Annells (1996) adds:

"...the actual formulation of the question arises from the researchers notions about the nature of reality, the relationship between the knower and what can be known, and how best to discover reality. Thus the selection of method can be viewed as also arising from the basic philosophical beliefs about the inquiry as held by the researcher."
In this sense, Annells (1996) indicates that the research question (or research ‘area’ in the case of grounded theory) is inevitably influenced by the researcher’s natural philosophical, or ontological, position. It also appears sensible at this point to suggest that basic pragmatism may also play a role in one’s choice of method. Time, resources (both human and financial), access to subjects and the type of research project will also guide the researcher’s choice of method. As Holloway and Todres (2003) concede: pragmatism is not a ‘methodological crime’.

With specific reference to the proposed research, both the sensitising question (what are the experiences of young footballers inside and outside the CSS?) and the philosophical position taken here (critical realism/critical rationalism) led to the investigation of a number of possible methodologies. According to Holloway and Todres (2003) and McKenna and Mutrie (2003), three of the most common approaches to social enquiry are phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory. Citing considerable overlap in terms of procedures and techniques, Holloway and Todres (2003) indicate that, whilst possessing subtle differences, all three approaches ‘attempt to capture the experiences and perspectives of the people whose lives, thoughts and feelings are being explored’27. However, of these three approaches only grounded theory is commonly underpinned by realist assumptions (though rarely explicitly as we shall see); and only grounded theory prescribes a set of procedures that follow a logic equivalent to the hypothetico-deductive (or retroductive) logic of critical rationalism.

For these reasons – in addition to those already presented in chapter 1.6 – grounded theory appears to be a logical methodological choice in this research. Moreover, the relative lack of established theory that explains the worlds and experiences of children and young people (Prout and James, 1997) indicates that new theories, rooted in empirical study, are needed to build a comprehensive explanation of how young people experience their social – and sporting – worlds.

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27 For a full discussion of the various ‘qualitative’ approaches, particularly their overlapping themes, different epistemological positions and internal consistencies, see Holloway and Todres (2003).
3.3. Grounded Theory.

"Those who have an excessive faith in their theories or in their ideas are not only poorly disposed to make discoveries, but they also make very poor observations."

- Claude Bernard

Considering the central importance of grounded theory (GT) in this research, it appears necessary to equip the reader with sufficient background information to follow the discussions and arguments presented in future chapters. What follows provides a broad foundation in GT: beginning with identification of its intellectual roots and early publications; moving through the major developments and controversies; and finally discussing its present status as a general qualitative methodology and the problems that remain.

3.3.1. The 'Discovery'.

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, two American sociologists dissatisfied with the way social research was being conducted at the time, first published The Discovery of Grounded Theory in 1967. This was a point in the history of sociology where the use of so-called 'positivist' (read: functionalist) theories dominated. Researchers were encouraged to exercise little imagination and the ultimate aim of social research was that of verifying existing grand theories such as Functionalism and Marxism (Charmaz, 2000). The publication of Discovery (as it is now commonly known) thus brought about something of a revolution in that it presented researchers with the tools and confidence to go out into the field and develop new substantive theories in formerly unexplored areas.

Glaser and Strauss wrote the book expounding their methodology shortly after the publication of their first collaborative research: Awareness of Dying (1965). Apparently, the number of people asking how they had gone about this landmark research compelled them to write a book explaining just how it had been achieved (Glaser, 1992). The resulting publication of Discovery had a distinctly polemic tone and set forth the core tenets of their general inductive
methodology. Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, the book was not devoid of flaws, some of which still plague the methodology today. One of the gravest of these flaws is the lack of engagement with the problem of induction, formerly encountered (though in different respects) first by Sir Francis Bacon and latterly by John Stuart Mill many years before them. This soon became a problem for those engaged in GT research so Glaser wrote an updated monograph, which he entitled *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978). This second book clearly outlined the concept that was the subject for its title in addition to demystifying some of the more complex ideas that were misunderstood by many of those who read *Discovery*.

As is often the case with such innovations, the ‘discovery’ of this new methodology was not so much a discovery as a drawing together of ideas and influences derived from the education of the two authors. Barney Glaser was educated at Columbia University under Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton to whom he explicitly attributes many of the technical aspects of GT—he claims to have adapted some of the key principles (Glaser, 1992). As such, his training as a sociologist was undertaken in a soft-positivist school (as Merton sometimes referred to himself). Conversely, Strauss studied sociology at the so-called Chicago school under the tutelage of Herbert Blumer and was heavily influenced by the work of John Dewey and G. H. Mead. This supplied GT with its interpretive, symbolic interactionist foundations, placing the focus of research on the experiences, interactions and meanings of the research participants (Hammersley, 1989).

Since its inception, GT has, necessarily, been developed and extended across such diverse fields as nursing, marketing, psychology, business and

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28 Those who still use passages and ideas from the original book to criticise GT do so wrongly. There have been a number of corrective books and papers dealing with the problems inherent in *Discovery*, sufficient to dispel most crude criticisms. In addition to this, one must also consider the atmosphere in which it was written and understand that the aim of the book was to expound something radically different to the norm, not necessarily to put forth a watertight philosophical and technical explanation of the methodology.

29 This concept will not be discussed here due to the extended attention directed to it in an earlier chapter (2.1. Theoretical Sensitivity).

30 Lazarsfeld was a well known leader of socialist student groups in Vienna during the interwar years and apparently clashed often with Popper who also participated in the movement as a young man (Hacohen, 2002: 7-79). It is entirely possible, therefore, that Lazarsfeld was acquainted with Popper’s epistemology when he fled to America after the Nazi invasion to begin life as a sociologist.
computing. However, this diversification and stretching has caused a number of cracks to appear in the formerly sturdy fabric of the methodology. Small misunderstandings and misinterpretations aside, the greatest crack has emerged between the two founding authors.

3.3.2. Divergence.

Glaser made the first explicit reference to the split between himself and Strauss in his book entitled *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs. Forcing* (1992). However, signs of divergence had been apparent for some time. In 1987, Strauss had published a book revising GT methodology; then, in 1990 he co-authored a book with Juliet Corbin – a former student – entitled *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*, a work which provoked Glaser into his not so creatively titled rebuttal of Strauss’ methodology. Glaser’s book (1992) reads as a condemnation of a methodology that he no longer recognises as GT: he refers to Strauss’ book as espousing ‘forced conceptual description’. He goes to great lengths in detailing the points of divergence between himself and Strauss to the extent of including a final chapter on ‘intellectual property’. At the heart of this one-sided argument31 lies a complex philosophical dispute concerning two interrelated ideas in GT: a) the logic of the methodology (Glaser claims it is purely inductive); and b) the extent to which data are interpreted by the researcher (Strauss engages with the so-called post-modern critique32, whereas Glaser does not).

The precise details of this divergence do not need to be reviewed here for they are numerous and can be easily summarised. Instead, some brief points can be made concerning the major points of contention between the two authors. Although Glaser’s critique is essentially valid (from the perspective of the original books), it is perhaps misplaced if one considers that Strauss’ aim is to reformulate the methodology for a student audience. The changes he and Corbin make, in addition to the techniques they introduce, are intended to make GT easier for neophyte researchers – an intention they reputedly fulfil.

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31 Some refer to it as one-sided because Strauss never really invited it nor engaged with it explicitly. Thus, it is a point of contention largely instigated and perpetuated by Glaser.

32 To be entirely accurate, the ‘post-modern critique’ in this context is simply an anti-realist revision of Popper’s critique of positivism first explicated in the 1930s.
Strauss and Corbin responded to Glaser, although not explicitly, in a chapter on GT in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) and again in the second edition of *Basics* published in 1998. Their retort reasons that the continued diversification of the methodology means that no one has ownership of it any longer, and that its development is subject to the wider debates ongoing in social science (one might say it is an artefact of Popper's world 3). This is an important point which will be revisited later; however, it is first necessary to consider where this divergence has left the methodology.

Stern (1994), a former student of Glaser, alludes to a situation where researchers are now forced to choose sides: to follow the Glaserian or Straussian method. If GT weren't already hard enough to understand in itself, this new dilemma further compounds matters because there are advantages and problems inherent in either method. Glaser’s method is simple and consistent, and mostly devoid of the technicalities Strauss and Corbin introduce; however, it is also philosophically flawed (see Bryant, 2003; and Thomas and James, 2006) due to a lack of engagement with contemporary debates in social science (for instance, Popper’s terminal critique of positivism and induction). On the other hand, Strauss’ method (as explicated in 1990 and 1998), whilst providing a detailed structure for students to follow, is rightly criticised for wandering too far from the original formulations, thus contravening the core tenet of GT: that of induction. In this sense, Strauss has been criticised for introducing too many unnecessary technical tools (such as the conditional matrix) to the methodology. The aim of these tools (or processes) is to force the researcher to ask excessive questions of the data in the early stages of research. Therefore, one might expect the researcher following Strauss’ method to lose touch with the ‘open-minded’ (but not inductive) approach. For brevity, table 3.4 (below) summarises the major differences between the two authors.

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33 Although it was co-authored by Strauss and Corbin, the second edition of *Basics* was published after Strauss’ death; therefore, the nature and extent of the Strauss’ contribution cannot be assessed accurately.
Table 3.4. Glaser Vs. Strauss: Philosophy and Technique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical position</td>
<td>Realist/positivist (empiricist).</td>
<td>Quasi-constructivist, but claims to be constructivist, interpretivist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory testing (inductive or deductive)</td>
<td>Claims pure induction: theory is not to be tested nor should hypotheses be verified against data. However, often makes confusing claims that infer the use of deductive principles.</td>
<td>Begin inductively but proceed with a flip-flop between deduction and induction. Hypotheses, ‘mini frameworks’ and models should be used in theoretical sampling and verified against incoming data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding technique</td>
<td>Looks at data as a whole or by sentence and paragraph and asks: “what is going on here?”</td>
<td>Breaks data down into discrete parts – almost word by word – and asks: “what does this word mean here? What would it mean in another context?” etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Major inconsistencies                     | 1. Mixing the words emerging, discovering and generating with reference to theory.  
2. Fails to acknowledge the implicit suggestion that he, too, is interpreting data.  
3. Occasionally states that deduction is part of GT whilst decrying it elsewhere. | 1. The use of ‘forcing techniques’ (e.g. conditional matrix) on data.  
2. Betrays the ‘inductive’ roots of GT by asking excessive a priori questions of the data.  
3. Also confuses terminology – generating or emerging theory? thereby demonstrating a lack of understanding of ontology. |

It is clear, therefore, that both paths – Glaserian and Straussian – are strewn with obstacles, some more difficult to negotiate than others, leaving the GT researcher to confront difficult decisions. One such researcher who has engaged with these questions with fruitful results is Kathy Charmaz, again a former student of Glaser and Strauss, who has written extensively on what has become known as the ‘constructivist revision’ of GT.
3.3.3. The Constructivist Revision.

In a landmark chapter Charmaz (2000) made an explicit case for the development of a revised version of GT. In the aftermath of the critiques of positivism through the 1950s and 1960s, she claimed that it is now possible to discern a continuum between objectivist and constructivist GT\(^{34}\). Further, she claimed that researchers should attempt to 'reclaim GT tools from their positivist underpinnings', thus developing a flexible strategy stressing its emergent, constructivist elements.

Charmaz (2000) indicates that her 'constructivist' position – or 'social constructivist' in her earlier work (1990) – "assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings". In short, a constructivist’s research report is also a social construction of the social constructions found and explicated in the data. Charmaz (1990) extends this position, claiming that researching into extant theory (grand or 'meta' theory) does not contradict the approach. Rather, it can foster a strong theoretical perspective that gives the researcher greater conceptual depth and breadth while still being firmly situated within the discipline. In conclusion, Charmaz (1990) suggests that greater attention to contemporary developments in Marxist and critical theory might foster closer connections between microscopic and macroscopic structures in grounded theory analysis.

Such sentiments have been reciprocated, notably by Layder (1993; 1998), who echoes such a position. Whilst he is generally critical of earlier incarnations of grounded theory, Layder (1998) proposes 'adaptive theory' as an alternative method of narrowing the gap between theory and research. Borrowing heavily from the central tenets of grounded theory methodology, 'adaptive theory' claims to increase the range and power of 'grounded' theories. This is achieved through a shifting of the ontological and epistemological focus of grounded theory to a position that Layder describes

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\(^{34}\) She implies here that the Glaserian method occupies the objectivist (positivist) end of the continuum, whereas her constructivist method occupies the other, with the Straussian method somewhere between.
as "neither positivist nor interpretivist", and that “embraces both objectivism and subjectivism” (p133). Drawing from both grounded theory and Merton’s (1967) ‘middle-range theory’, adaptive theory aims to ‘transcend the limitations of both’ (Layder, 1998: 139). At the heart of this method, it is assumed that:

**Social reality is composed of both subjective and objective aspects and that they both condition and influence each other since they are deeply interwoven. That is, social activity is conditioned and significantly shaped by systemic phenomena (values, ideology, power, money and the socially organised settings in which they are embedded) while simultaneously activity itself serves to reproduce, sustain or transform these social systemic features and arrangements (Layder, 1998: 141).**

Although Layder does not make specific reference to an explicit philosophical position, implicit are critical realist assumptions. Critical realism implies a position whereby social actors create and constantly recreate the social world, but are both constrained and enabled in this practice by structural factors (both visible and invisible) such as power, money, social class, patriarchy, political ideology etc. (the specific project of marrying critical realism and GT is undertaken in the following section 3.4).

The impact on research, according to Layder, is therefore to focus on the experiences of social actors whilst attempting to recognise and account for the possible structural (or systemic) influences upon their behaviour. Adaptive theory therefore places itself toward the middle of the aforementioned ontological/epistemological continuum, whilst also professing a dialectical position regarding the structure-agency and empiricism-rationalism debates. Such claims are easy to make, but rather more difficult to demonstrate and Layder (1998) fails to offer any practical guidance on these matters.

Close similarities between Charmaz’s (1990; 2000) position of ‘constructivism’ and Layder’s (1998) ‘adaptive theory’ can therefore be drawn. Both positions agree that social actors constantly create the social world through interaction, and that this is only interpreted through the eyes of the researcher (in stark contrast to the dictum of the 1967 text). Two levels of interpretation are
therefore evident: the subjects' interpretation of their reality, and the researcher's interpretation of their interpretation. This is, of course, what Giddens (1979) called the 'double hermeneutic'. Furthermore, they acknowledge the constraining and enabling effects of social structures (whether visible or invisible) upon those social actors who are the subjects of study.

At a methodological level, whilst Charmaz is still an advocate of grounded theory, she makes clear her desire to move toward a more reflexive approach where the researcher acknowledges their interpretations of the data. Furthermore, she claims that such an approach will enrich the quality of research stating: “Through sharing the worlds of our subjects, we come to conjure an image of their constructions and of our own” (Charmaz, 2000). Layder’s position, however, tends to place greater emphasis on the role of extant theory in the research process. Exactly where extant theory may enter the research process (before, during or after) and in what capacity is left to the discretion of the researcher. However, it is important that there be some interplay between data, emerging theory and extant theory in adaptive theory research.

So what, in sum, does this constructivist revision amount to in practical terms? It appears the most notable difference is the changing role of the researcher: from an objective, neutral observer (Locke’s tabula rasa or clean slate); to a fully, integrally involved interpreter. A further difference seems to be the emphasis placed on the role of extant theory in contemporary versions. Both Layder and Charmaz appear to be keen on the idea of allowing established sociological theory to earn its way into GT analysis. To summarise, these contemporary versions can be juxtaposed with the respective approaches of the founding authors in order to compare strengths and weaknesses. Table 3.5 (below) should therefore be regarded as an appendage to table 3.4 (above).
Table 3.5. The Constructivist Revision of GT: An Overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of the researcher in the research</th>
<th>Intrinsically involved at a fundamental level. Research reports are seen as the co-created constructions of the researcher and the participants. To the degree that team research projects are regarded as logical impossibilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical position</td>
<td>Claiming to be ‘constructivist’ but implicitly critical realist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory testing (inductive or deductive)</td>
<td>Some final corroboration with sociological (extant) theory may strengthen, or add insight to, the generated substantive theory. Some claims that GT applies principles of both induction (to begin) and deduction (to continue).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding technique</td>
<td>Charmaz explicitly sides with Glaser here. Data are to be inspected ‘from a distance’, or in the context of one’s sensitising concepts and data already analysed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major inconsistencies</td>
<td>Generally very few. However, there is a lack of ontological clarity and confusion remains over the issue of induction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advocates of this constructivist revision have commented on its advantages when compared to objectivist (or realist) approaches. For example, in direct response to an article by Glaser (2003) disregarding Charmaz’s work, Bryant (2003) accuses Glaser of regurgitating 40-year-old positivist dogma. He also explains how GT is “far too valuable a method to leave to the objectivists”, stating that the methodology remains of great value if researchers can recast its philosophical status. Harry et al. (2005) use an example from their own research into the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in special education to illustrate how a GT approach helped them to understand the complex, interrelated explanations of their problem\(^{35}\). In closing, they note that GT helped them to make the theory generation process transparent; and that the

\(^{35}\) Interestingly, in view of the forthcoming discussion, they note that no single explanation of the problem is valid in itself. What was important was the interrelatedness of their 7 explanations: each was insufficient but necessary for a complete understanding of the problem.
constructivist notion of admitting (and even embracing) personal bias, or interpretation, resulted in an open and honest account of their research.

However, despite their strong and sustained attack on the 'objectivists', some authors have recently claimed that constructivist grounded theorists, such as Charmaz, remain, implicitly, objectivist\(^{36}\) (or realist) in ontological terms (Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg, 2005). They accuse Charmaz of "seeking scientific approval" because she advocates following structured analytical steps; and that by using "detailed interview guides" she fails to uphold her constructivist credentials. Regarding this second criticism, Greckhamer and Koro-Ljungberg fail to observe that, elsewhere in her work (Charmaz, 2000b), Charmaz presents a number of interview techniques, just one of which happens to be the use of detailed guides (and, in context, toward the end of a GT study). Regarding the first criticism however, one can only suspect that both the authors would have trouble convincing others of their non-scientific status considering they hail from management studies and educational psychology departments respectively.

3.3.4. Common Ground.

Setting this considerable list of philosophical differences aside for a moment (and it is hard), it is possible to recognise some of the central tenets of the methodology that remain common across the range of incarnations (see Strauss and Corbin, 1994). These are listed and described briefly below:

- **'Induction'\(^{37}\): The researcher should enter the field without preconceived ideas about what they might find. Sometimes referred to as the 'tabula rasa' (or clean slate) approach (Charmaz, 1990). It has, however, been contested by a number of authors as to whether achieving such a state is actually possible (O'Callaghan, 1996; Annells, 1998; Charmaz, 1990; also see 3.4.4. A Critical Realist Epistemology). As Bryman (2001: 395) notes:

\(^{36}\) Unfortunately, the authors routinely mix-up philosophical terminology and meaning to the point where it is impossible to discern whether they are referring to ontological, epistemological or methodological positions in their critique. Thus, it is difficult to take such criticisms seriously.

\(^{37}\) The problem of induction has already been confronted in chapter 2.1 and some solutions will be offered later in this chapter (see sections 3.4.4.1 and 3.4.4.2 especially).
nowadays it is rarely accepted that theory-neutral observation is feasible...it is generally agreed that what we 'see' when we conduct research is conditioned by many factors, one of which is what we already know about the social world being studied.

Contemporary appraisal of the grounded theory methodology (cf. Thomas and James, 2006) appears to accept that a 'tabula rasa' position is unattainable and that 'theoretical sensitivity' can help the researcher direct their early gaze (as we have seen).

- **Constant comparative method**: Data collection and analysis should proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to one another. The process is *iterative* in the sense that the researcher's ideas about the data continually inform further collection, analysis and theorising. O'Callaghan (1996) refers to this as the 'flip flop' between data and interpretation or the 'constant comparative' method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The important point here is that it is not only data that are compared, but concepts and categories also. This way, the researcher generates the links between concepts and categories that become the fabric of theory. In this sense the researcher is always theorising.

On an epistemological level, this may also entail a 'zigzag' between induction and deduction on behalf of the researcher. Interestingly, Glaser comments on this in 1992 whilst trying to defend the purely inductive nature of his method:

> The two types of methodologies should be seen in sequential relation. First we discover the relevancies and write hypotheses about them, then the most relevant may be tested for whatever use may require it (Glaser, 1992: 30).

As this important issue receives dedicated treatment in the following sections (see sections 3.5 and 4.3), it will not be discussed in detail here.

- **Theoretical sampling**: The process of selecting research participants based on categories (or concepts) already derived from the data (or ideas
derived through prior theoretical sensitivity to an area). Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as ‘a process of data collection that is controlled by the emerging theory’. The specific character of theoretical sampling may change over the course of a project. To begin, it may simply constitute the process of selecting cases based on theoretical sensitivity (in this case, from data disclosed in a ‘mapping’ questionnaire). However, as concepts are generated and analysed, sampling becomes more focussed – focussed, that is, on saturating core categories.

Again, this point receives more dedicated treatment in future chapters, not least because many of the dictums set out by grounded theorists on this concept run counter to conventional scientific logic. That is, they stress a concern with verifying emerging hypotheses; or with sampling specifically aimed at confirming (as opposed to refuting) one’s theoretical ideas.

- **Fit**: Perhaps analogous with such terms as ‘credibility’ and ‘internal validity’ from other realms of research methods, ‘fit’ refers to the quality of the research product. Essentially, the substantive theory should, at any stage (nascent or final), have relevance and resonance with the subjects of the study. It must describe some aspect of their everyday experience that they recognise and understand (Layder, 1993: 65). Common techniques to ensure ‘fit’ in qualitative research are usually variations on the theme of respondent validation: the taking of research reports back to participants who comment on the accuracy of interpretations.

Following this extended discussion of the similarities and, indeed, differences between the various approaches to GT, one is, unfortunately, left with more questions than answers. Is there a clear philosophical position behind the methodology? Is it inductive or deductive (or both – or maybe neither)? How should we begin or continue our analyses? Should we attempt to verify or falsify emerging hypotheses (if we should cultivate hypotheses at all)? It is to these questions the following chapter aims to answer. It should be clear, at this stage, that such a project is not undertaken lightly, and that the solutions offered here might be considered, at best, embryonic. However, the
considerable problems inherent in GT cannot be ignored: to do so would be to bury one’s head in the methodological sand (Thomas and James, 2006). The following attempt to develop a new philosophical position for GT is therefore made with some level of consternation.

3.4. Grounded Theory and Critical Realism: A Happy Marriage?

There is no one correlation between philosophical positions and theories in social sciences. There may be a number of mutually conflicting theories in a social science, all of which are compatible with critical realism (Collier, 2005).

As we have seen, internal methodological coherence is of central importance to the quality of social research (also see section 3.6.1 ‘Validity’ in GT research). As such, and considering the statement made by Collier (above), extended comment on how critical realism (i.e. the ontological assumptions therein) sits with contemporary versions of grounded theory methodology is necessary. In short, the following sections will attempt to offer an answer to the question: is it possible to combine the ontology of critical realism with the methodology of grounded theory? Or, put simply, can critical realism help ground grounded theory?

3.4.1. Critical Realism: Stratified Ontology.

Critical Realism is the name given to a set of ontological assumptions generally used by social scientists to think about and explain the nature of the social world. The term was originally coined by the philosopher, Roy Bhaskar, in the mid-1970s – a combination of his transcendental realism and critical naturalism – whose work has since become gradually more abstract (Sayer, 2000). However, since Bhaskar’s early formulations, a number of researchers in substantive fields have attempted to apply critical realist assumptions in their own work. Certainly, in the fields of political science (Marsh and Smith, 2001; Lewis, 2002), information systems (Mingers, 2004), economics (Lee, 2002; Downward and Mearman, 2007), management studies (Fleetwood, 2005) and sociology (Sayer, 2000), critical realism has been adopted as a practically useful – and philosophically robust – position from which to see the world, and thus conduct empirical research.
A central feature of critical realism is the stratified ontology it proposes, identifying three ontological levels: the real, the actual, and the empirical. In this sense, critical realists accept there are real objects and structures that exist independently of our interpretations of them – unlike constructivists or relativists – but, unlike empirical (or naïve) realists, they accept that ideas about such objects can change as a result of social discourse. We know something exists – that it is ‘real’ – because it has ‘actual’ consequences, which can be manifest ‘empirically’ i.e. we can observe them (see figure 3.3). The ability to observe something directly may therefore make us sure that something exists; however, we also know that unobservable forces, or structures, exist because of their effects or manifestations (Lewis, 2000). For instance, we cannot directly observe the force of gravity, yet we are confident that it exists because Newton and Halley explained the moon’s effect on the tides (amongst other things).

Figure 3.3. Critical Realism’s Stratified Ontology (adapted from Downward and Mearman, 2007).

This stratified ontology is underpinned by two further fundamental concepts: the transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge. Bhaskar (1975) claims that the objects of science – physical processes or social phenomena – form the intransitive dimension, whereas the theories and discourse of science form the transitive dimension. Thus, when theories about science change, it does not necessarily mean that the objects they refer to change.
accordingly (e.g. the shift to a Copernican view of the universe in the
seventeenth century was not accompanied by a change in the configuration of
the universe itself). Put simply, the intransitive domain infers ontological
realism (in the social, as opposed to the physical, world). In this sense, the
presence of real, relatively durable structures in society can be assumed;
whereas the transitive domain infers epistemological relativism whereby those
structures – or rather their effects on the actions of people – can be
interpreted in a variety of different ways (though this does not necessarily
mean those structures actually change accordingly).

Furthermore, Sayer (2000:11) notes that the role of the researcher is perhaps
best cast modestly as construing rather than constructing the social world.
This alludes to a primary focus on the role of structure in social research, and,
indeed, the particular dialectic nature of structure and agency in a critical
realist approach will be confronted later in this chapter. However, for the
moment, it is sufficient to say that most critical realists subscribe to a view of
the world characterised by emergence, where ‘situations in which the
combination of two or more features gives rise to new phenomena, which
have properties irreducible to those of their constituents’ (Sayer, 2000:12).
Here, if a researcher is to understand whatever it is they observe, they must
first inspect the particular set of structures that may have formed the context
for those actions.

Commonly, then, a critical realist researcher will begin by attempting to map
out the social structures thought to be prominent in a given substantive area
(developing hypotheses) before proceeding to study empirically the potential
impacts those structures may have. This is what critical realists call
retroduction (or a form of abduction – as opposed to induction or deduction).
This point will be discussed at length later in this chapter, but the more
pressing issue that lies at the heart of the ontological assumptions held by
critical realists will first be inspected.
3.4.2. Critical Realism, the Structure-Agency Debate and Causality.

Bound up with ideas concerning structure and agency are those of causality. As such, it would be impossible to discuss a critical realist position in the structure-agency debate here without also saying something of causation.

Critical realists (for example Bhaskar, 1989:34, and Lewis, 2000; 2002) use the Aristotelian model or framework to describe their position on this matter. Using Aristotle’s sculpture metaphor – where structure is the sculptor’s material and agency is the sculptor – we are to understand that, whilst the material (structure) cannot mould itself into a given shape without the sculptor’s hands and tools, it can govern what the sculptor (agent) can ultimately fashion. For example, if a sculptor were given a block of marble, they would presumably create something very different to that which they might create were they given, say, a hedge. Hence, whilst agents are constrained in their actions by structure, they have the power to manipulate that same structure, within its material constraints.

Two types of causality can therefore be identified under a critical realist framework: efficient cause, or the agent making decisions in the present (like a sculptor choosing a particular tool), which is often conditioned by material cause, or the structural, historical context in which those actions take place (like the medium in which the sculptor is forced to work). In terms of the structure-agency debate then, critical realists understand structure and agency to be ‘recursively related’, where ‘each is both a condition and a consequence of the other’ (Lewis, 2000). In this sense, pre-existing social structures serve to both facilitate and constrain human agency in the present.

One problem in taking this view – where social structure is ontologically irreducible to the current exercise of human agency – is the implication that structure therefore enjoys some degree of autonomy from, and influence over, agency. This view has been criticised in the past, notably by Harre and Varela.

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38 There is some debate as to whether it was Aristotle or Plato who developed this model. Bertrand Russell (1946/2004) believed that it was Plato, as Aristotle’s long time tutor, to whom these ideas should be attributed. Aristotle’s framework, then, might be best seen as a slight extension of Plato’s work.
(1996) who place greater emphasis on the role of agency, favouring a broadly symbolic interactionist perspective. They claim that people are the 'powerful particulars' in society, and that by ascribing causal powers to social structures, as critical realists do, researchers are reifying a property of a group of social actors into an entity – what they call the 'fallacy of collectivism' (Harre and Varela, 1996).

If this argument is accepted to an extent and it is agreed that, whilst social structures make a difference to the course of action an actor might take, they do not initiate events in the social world (i.e. we accept Harre and Varela's point that they are not powerful particulars in the same sense that actors are), the question of how the causal efficacy of social structure is to be understood still remains (Lewis, 2000).

One argument, and the argument followed here, is to conceptualise the causal efficacy of structure in terms of an INUS condition (Lewis, 2000):

...a cause is an insufficient but necessary part of a set of conditions which are collectively unnecessary but sufficient for the production of some outcome (a social event, say).

Based on this perspective, Lewis (2000) goes on to state that social structure, on its own, is an insufficient but necessary explanation for human activity; and, to develop a complete explanation, the driving force of human agency must be added to the equation. Hence, 'social structure and human agency presuppose one another; only the combination of the two is sufficient to produce social events' (Lewis, 2000). In other words, the continual operation and interaction of structures generate, but are independent of, the flux of events one observes: structures may have power without exercising them; and, equally, powers may be exercised but not become manifest in events (Mingers, 2004; Lukes, 2005).

One further caveat to add here is that any one causal complex (the combination of a particular set of social structures and human agency) may be sufficient but not necessary for a particular outcome. Therefore, according to
critical realists, agency and structure exert causal influence in the social world, forming a causal complex that involves both *material* and *efficient* causation.

In attempting to identify points of agreement between critical realism and grounded theory then, one might usefully begin by looking at their respective positions concerning these fundamental debates of structure-agency and causation. One of the few authors to make explicit reference to such issues in grounded theory is Anselm Strauss (1987; 1990; 1998\(^39\)). Unlike many sociologists, Strauss does attempt to make his ideas on this matter explicit and lucid. Although his terminology is slightly different, Strauss does refer to a recursive relationship between structure and agency in a section of his book on coding for process, or ‘looking for sequences of evolving action/interaction in which changes can be traced to structural conditions’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:163). In a further telling passage, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 179) note that: “process [or actions] and structure are inextricably linked”.

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**Figure 3.4. Structure and Agency in Straussian Grounded Theory.**

\(^39\) The latter two books (1990; 1998) were co-authored with Juliet Corbin.
Furthermore, Strauss claims that grounded theorists, during their analysis of social process, should attempt to understand how structural conditions impact on (inter)actions which, in turn, produce consequences that become conditions, among others, for future actions (see figure 3.4).

It is clear, therefore, that grounded theorists like Strauss conceptualise the relationship between structure and agency in a similar way to critical realists; they are ontologically compatible even though they may use different terminology. The diagram above might also be extended to note that structural conditions are often complex: multiple and interrelated; and further, that actions are based on a combination of structural conditions. As Strauss and Corbin (1998:185) note:

> As analysts, we are interested in the interplay between micro and macro conditions, the nature of their influence on each other and the subsequent actions/interactions and the full scope of consequences that result as well as how those consequences feed back into the next conditional context to influence other actions/interaction.

Based on these comments then, a researcher following the Straussian method of GT might naturally be expected to adopt what might loosely be referred to as critical realist philosophical assumptions. Having said this, few GT authors thus far – perhaps with the exception of Pidgeon (1996) and Charmaz (2000a) (refer to table 3.5 above) – have attempted to explicate a clear philosophical position for the methodology (though these attempts, too, have their flaws).

Equally, it has been argued (for example, by Lee, 2002) that critical realists, particularly in the field of economics, have paid little attention to the methodological guidelines they might utilise for theory development. The possibility of combining critical realism and GT might therefore be investigated as a means to overcome their respective shortcomings.

### 3.4.3. Grounded Theory as a Critical Realist Methodology.

The relative lack of an adequate methodology for critical realists has been noted in the past (Sayer, 2000; Wuisman, 2005; Downward and Mearman,
2007), specifically with relation to the procedural and technical aspects of conducting empirical research. Authors have commented on the importance of conceptualisation and abstraction in critical realist research, suggesting that these fundamental issues have been largely ignored in the literature:

So much depends on the mode of abstraction we use, the way of carving up and defining our objects of study. Unfortunately, the bulk of methodological literature on social science completely ignores this fundamental issue, as if it were simply a matter of intuition (Sayer, 2000: 19).

Furthermore, critical realists are 'never content with just description', thus ruling out the use of simple statistical analysis or ethnographic methods (Mingers, 2004). Instead, critical realists seek to 'get beneath the surface to understand and explain why things are as they are, to hypothesise the structures and mechanisms that shape observable events' (Mingers, 2004). Thus, gaining knowledge or understanding in a given area will require the employment of a number of research methods – an idea shared by GT methodology.

As we have seen in previous chapters, GT authors generally seek to make these processes explicit, often going to great lengths to make these previously veiled tasks lucid, systematic and logical. To this end, Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) have written extensively on the topic of coding qualitative and quantitative data at different levels of abstraction, building conceptual explanations of events, and generating theory from data (amongst other things). Additionally, Charmaz (2000b) has explicated specific techniques for qualitative interviewing with specific attention to developing questions at various stages of grounded theory analysis. In short, a rich body of literature exists concerning the practicalities of conceptualisation, abstraction and theory generation under the grounded theory cannon.

Already, in the field of post-Keynesian economics, Lee (2002) has expounded a thesis claiming that: "grounded theory is consistent with critical realism and is a better and more developed set of guidelines for theory creation than the current advocated alternatives". He suggests that GT is logically compatible
with critical realism in the sense that it `embraces the use of qualitative and quantitative data [sic], and leads to an understanding of historically grounded emergent causal mechanisms and their relation to human agency'. Downward and Mearman (2007) also agree that, when paired with critical realist assumptions, grounded theory could be a fruitful methodological approach (although they ultimately argue that triangulation as a form of retroduction – see next section – might be a more appropriate method).

Moreover, Charmaz (2000a) has come close to advocating a critical realist position for her revised GT methodology. She claims that what she calls a `constructivist' version (or revision) of GT should `distinguish between the real and the true', and that a constructivist position `remains realist because it addresses human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds'. With an implicit nod to critical realism, Charmaz (2000a) surmises:

...the research products do not constitute the reality of the respondents’ reality. Rather, each is a rendering, one interpretation among multiple interpretations, of a shared...reality.

And further that:

Data do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the “discovered” reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts.

In other words, ‘if people define their situations as real, they are real in their consequences’ (Thomas and Thomas, 1928: 572); or, in critical realist terms, ontological realism does not deny the possibility of epistemological relativism, as we have seen.

As such – and bearing in mind the fundamental philosophical agreement noted in the previous section – it seems plausible that GT could provide critical realists with the clearly articulated methodology they evidently seek. Concurrently, critical realism may also provide GT researchers with a sufficiently complex and robust, yet appropriate, set of ontological assumptions on which to found their research. However, one further issue that
has yet to be addressed must be brought to light in this discussion to help fully bridge this gap between philosophy and practice. That issue is the current undeveloped nature of a critical realist epistemology (Outhwaite [1987: 34] suggests critical realism is ‘ontologically bold and epistemologically cautious’).

3.4.4. Critical Realism and Epistemology.

The full development and articulation of an epistemology linking critical realism (ontology) and GT (methodology) lies beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is possible to use the work of others to suggest a potential solution, if only a limited and certainly fallible one. In this case, Wuisman’s recent work (2005), combined with the evolutionary epistemology of Popper (1981; also see ter Hark, 2004 and Munz, 1985) can go some way toward linking the ontological assumptions of critical realism with the techniques and procedures of GT.

The central message of Wuisman’s paper (2005) stresses the perceived weakness of critical realism: “the gap between the philosophical and methodological ideas of critical realism and the practical aspects of doing research.” His ambitious attempt to solve this problem focuses on the opposing ‘modes of inference’ of induction, deduction and abduction (or retroduction). He states that if we assume each to be mutually exclusive modes of developing scientific knowledge, we will be led into a ‘vicious circle’ where no satisfactory conclusions can be drawn. The alternative Wuisman (2005) advances bears a striking resemblance to the epistemology of Karl Popper, where the three ‘modes of inference’ are combined to form a more coherent and logical method of scientific discovery.

Like Popper (1972), but arguing in an explicit critical realist context, Wuisman (2005) claims that science must begin with an act of abduction; that is, by leaping from an empirical observation to an explanatory law (Popper would have called this a ‘conjecture’ based on a horizon of expectations). This explanation should take the form of a fallible hypothesis about the underlying mechanism at work, which can then be ‘tested’ deductively by comparing the predictions made by the hypothesis with observable phenomena (what
Popper would have called attempts at 'refutation'). Popper and his evolutionary epistemology will be addressed in more detail shortly, but first Wuisman’s logic will be analysed more closely. Figure 3.5 (below) illustrates this logic and makes clear links to the stratified ontology of critical realism (layers of reality 1, 2 and 3 refer to the empirical, actual and real respectively).

**Figure 3.5. The Logic of Critical Realist Discovery (from Wuisman, 2005)**

The specific role of induction in this schema is, however, less clear. Wuisman claims, somewhat cryptically, that it is "to determine whether the hypothesised underlying mechanism and the deduced regularities and patterns really obtain and to what extent". One can only guess, therefore, that Wuisman uses the word induction in some special sense that differs from its common meaning. However, in order to elaborate on Wuisman’s schema, we can draw on Popper, beginning – appropriately – with his critique of induction.

**3.4.4.1. Karl Popper’s Evolutionary Epistemology.**

Building on Hume’s psychological solution to the problem of induction, Popper was concerned with exploding the ‘myth’ of the inductive method of science. He did so with a purely logical argument, starting with a critique of Hume’s
own psychological theory of learning via repeated observations. Popper (1972: 44) points out that Hume’s theory leads to a belief that there will be no change in the future course of nature\(^{40}\), and, in its stead, puts forward his own theory of knowledge: that we jump to conclusions (or to a theory – one of many possible theories) often based on a single observation (or by analogy), then submit that theory, or conjecture, or hypothesis, to the most severe test we can imagine and design. Those theories that emerge unscathed from the test will be held in our minds (but only tentatively) whilst those we are able to falsify or eliminate will be ‘committed to the flames’ (Popper, 1972: 53). This evolutionary epistemology, or ‘critical rationalism’ (as Popper labelled it), can be expressed in a logical schema that encapsulates Popperian thought in a succinct manner.

\[ P_1 \rightarrow TS \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P_2 \]

**Figure 3.6. Evolutionary Epistemology (adapted from Popper, 1981: 243).**

Using P for problem, TS for tentative solution and EE for error elimination, Popper (1981: 242-245) was able to describe the fundamental evolutionary sequence in biology and, by analogy, the growth of human knowledge. According to this schema (figure 3.6) error elimination (EE) acts as a control that ‘kills’ both organisms and hypotheses (TS) alike according to their success in solving problems (P) in the environment. Of course, in science these problems are research questions and the tentative solutions are hypotheses derived from theories. The important difference, then, between humans and animals is that humans do not die as they make mistakes; rather, we learn from error and ‘our hypotheses die in our stead’ (Popper, 1981: 244). Note also that this is not a simple cyclical process since the new problem situation (P\(_2\)) is different to the original situation (P\(_1\)) after certain solutions have been tried out and eliminated.

\(^{40}\) Hume suggested that constant conjunctions of ideas (of causes and effects) would ensure that future occurrences of one idea (cause) in the mind would automatically evoke the other (effect). Popper (1972: 44-46) reasoned that experiences we haven’t yet had must therefore resemble those of which we have had experience; hence, this theory amounts to the assumption that there will be no change in the future.
Popper's ideas have, however, come in for intense criticism since the publication of his *Logic of Scientific Discovery* in English in 1959. First there was the opposition of the 'sociologists of knowledge' such as Wittgenstein (1922) and Kuhn (1962) who claimed that Popper's interpretation of the history of science was inconsistent with 'the facts' – that falsification of scientific theories never actually occurred. The alternative they put forward\(^41\) – that knowledge could only be judged with reference to a particular set of assumptions adopted by a particular 'language community' (or 'paradigm') – was, however, deeply unsatisfactory and fundamentally flawed (Munz, 1985).

As Popper commented himself in 1945:

> Such methods [of the sociologists and psychologists of knowledge] are both easy to handle and good fun for those who handle them. But they clearly destroy the basis of rational discussion, and they must lead, ultimately, to anti-rationalism and mysticism (1945/1969b: 216).

These criticisms of Popper are, in fact, invalid on two fronts: first, unlike Kuhn, Popper was *not* attempting to describe the history of science; rather, he was making a case for how scientists *should* conduct their studies (Lakatos, 1970; Munz, 1985; Magee, 1997). Second, as Munz (1985) has carefully argued, it is in fact logically impossible to conduct a historiography of science without a meta-historical theory against which 'the facts' can be interpreted. As such, Kuhn's (1962) analysis, which assumes his interpretation of 'the bare facts' must be correct, is fundamentally flawed and cannot therefore be considered as a valid criticism of Popper\(^42\).

Another common criticism of Popper regards his falsifiability criterion of demarcation used to distinguish between scientific and pseudo-scientific (or metaphysical) theories. The best known form of this criticism is the Duhem-Quine thesis which, in a simple form, contends that:

\(^{41}\) Note that Popper's work was a direct response to Wittgenstein, whose *Tractatus* had been influential in the Vienna Circle (Hacohen, 2002), and that Kuhn was simply re-mobilising Wittgenstein's arguments, supported with historical 'facts', in an attempt to disprove Popper's falsification criterion (Munz, 1985).

\(^{42}\) Munz (1985: 113-114) shows that Kuhn's (1962) analysis is circular since he uses his history of science as proof that his philosophy of science is correct. Indeed, Munz concludes: 'had he read his book and applied its theory to history, one might argue ironically, he would not have invoked historical evidence and 'facts' to prove his philosophy of science'.
given sufficient imagination, any theory (whether consisting of one proposition or of a finite conjunction of many) can be permanently saved from 'refutation' by some suitable adjustment in the background knowledge in which it is embedded (Lakatos, 1970: 184).

The central problem with falsifiability, according to the Duhem-Quine thesis, is that any single falsifying instance (or 'crucial experiment'\(^{43}\)) will not, in practice, be sufficient for a scientist to give up a particular theory. Since any theory is part of a larger system of theories – or research programme (Lakatos, 1970) – the scientist will always replace any of the initial premises by invoking a change in a distant part of their total knowledge, thus saving the theory from falsification (Lakatos, 1970: 186).

In response to these apparently terminal criticisms, Lakatos (1970: 116) distinguished between naive and sophisticated falsificationism. Following Popper in 'rescuing his methodology', Lakatos (1970: 116-132) suggested that a scientific theory is only falsified if another theory has been proposed with the following characteristics:

1. It has excess empirical content than its rival (i.e. it predicts novel facts over its rival);
2. It explains the previous success of its rival (i.e. all non-refuted content of the rival theory is contained in the new theory);
3. Some of the excess content is corroborated.

This new set of criteria for falsification – what Lakatos (1970) calls sophisticated falsificationism (SF) – was proposed to replace the naive falsification some attributed to Popper (i.e. a theory is falsified by an observational statement which conflicts with it). Hence, Lakatos' (1970) new demarcation criterion reads: a theory is scientific only if it has corroborated excess empirical content over its predecessor (or rival).

\(^{43}\) Lakatos (1970: 173) warns that: "there are no such things as crucial experiments, at least not if these are meant to be experiments which can instantly overthrow a research programme."
Lakatos (1970: 117-122) goes on to explain the consequences of adopting a SF epistemology. First, SF suggests that ‘only a series of theories can be said to be scientific or unscientific: to apply the term ‘scientific’ to a single theory is a category mistake’ (p. 119). He goes on to claim that ‘no experiment, observation statement or well-corroborated low-level falsifying hypothesis alone can lead to falsification. There is no falsification before the emergence of a better theory. Thus, falsification has a historical character’ (p. 120).

Getting to the heart of the matter, Lakatos (1970: 122) comments on the way in which a scientist following SF should act:

>The honesty of SF demands that one should try to look at things from different points of view, to put forward new theories which anticipate novel facts, and to reject theories which have been superseded by more powerful ones.

It is this attitude, largely attributed to Popper\(^44\), which will be applied here in the hope of modifying the supposed ‘inductive’ methodology of GT, thus setting it on more logically stable ground. After all, falsification, by the strictest possible definition, may not be possible in sociological research; but as a broad methodological principle it is certainly applicable, as Popper (1945/1969b: 267) has made clear in a summary of this attitude to social or historical research:

>\textit{If... we can give to such material [a historical/social theory] an interpretation that radically deviates from that adopted by our authority... then the character of out interpretation may perhaps take on some semblance to that of a scientific hypothesis... for only if we can look out for counter examples can we test a theory.}

3.4.4.2. Towards a Popperian Grounded Theory.

It is indeed odd that some grounded theorists still cling dogmatically (which is mildly ironic considering their attitude towards dogmatism in general) to the idea that they are ‘doing induction’ when it has been so comprehensively

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\(^44\) Lakatos (1970: 181) distinguishes three Poppers: Popper\(_0\) (dogmatic falsificationist), Popper\(_1\) (naive falsificationist) and Popper\(_2\) (sophisticated falsificationist). Lakatos claims that Popper\(_0\) never existed (but was criticised by those who hadn’t read his work e.g. Ayer and other logical positivists), whilst the real Popper can be situated somewhere between Popper\(_1\) and Popper\(_2\).
defeated by Popper and his followers over the past 70 years. What they should be claiming instead is to be following Popper’s evolutionary epistemology: an iterative process of conjecture (that is, jumping quickly to one of many possible theories to explain the data) and refutation (that is, submitting the hypothesis to a test in subsequent interviews, or whatever), ultimately arriving at the fittest theory they can generate that best explains the variation in the data subsumed beneath it. This point has been made previously by Hammersley (1989: 201) who notes that GT mirrors the hypothetico-deductive method in its commitment to mapping causal relationships, but concedes that it isn’t clear whether these relationships are assumed to be universal or probabilistic.

Put simply, the constant comparative method that lies at the heart of the GT methodology is Popperian science in microcosm. This can be demonstrated by comparing Popper’s (1981) schema of evolutionary epistemology in figure 3.6 (above) to the model describing the constant comparative process in figure 3.8 (below) and figure 3.9 in section 3.5.1. Furthermore, having reviewed the various approaches to GT (Glaserian, Straussian, Constructivist) it has been shown that all make basic errors in their descriptions of the methodology with respect to ontological and epistemological matters (cf. Thomas and James, 2006). By introducing evolutionary epistemology, the grounded theorist is forced to engage with the problem of induction. This can only strengthen their position, thus allowing them to begin an investigation with a clear understanding of where and how theory should be introduced (i.e. begin with a problem derived from expectations and ‘intuition’), and the nature of the interaction between theory and data.

A further way in which evolutionary epistemology can help modify GT relates to the concept of theoretical sampling. In classical formulations of GT (e.g.

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45 One might even say since Hume, although his alternative theory was also flawed; and certainly since Whewell, whose critique of induction (particularly of J. S. Mill’s work) should surely have ended the debate around the middle of the nineteenth century (Blaikie, 1993: 24-25).

46 Many of these criticisms have been made previously by Thomas and James (2006). The three problems of grounded theory they offer — those of ‘theory’, ‘ground’ and ‘discovery’ — are simply the problem of induction in disguise. Thus, in using Popper’s evolutionary epistemology to explain away and circumvent the problem of induction, it is possible to ‘reinvent’ grounded theory — something Thomas and James (2006) aspire to but ultimately fail to attempt — on philosophically stable ground.
Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1990), the purpose of theoretical sampling is to help 'saturate' emerging concepts and categories. The onus is on verifying – or finding data to support – the emerging substantive theory. This, of course, has always been a natural component of the inductive sciences (cf. Bacon, 1620; Whewell, 1847). But once one accepts the logic and principles of sophisticated falsificationism (SF), the idea of theoretical sampling must also be turned on its head. Instead of sampling cases (places, people, groups etc.) which are expected to yield confirmation of the theory, the Popperian grounded theorist must sample cases where they expect the theory to fail. Following SF, they should actively attempt to falsify their hypotheses by conjecturing more and more general theories that predict further novel facts about the phenomena under study. More specifically, they should always enter the field with more than one explanatory theory, for a theory cannot be falsified without the presence of a rival (Lakatos, 1970).

Before summarising this subsection, some brief comments can be made regarding the nature of the possible agreement between evolutionary epistemology and critical realist ontology. This appears necessary since some critical realists reject Popper's epistemology on the grounds that falsification is impossible (cf. Sayer, 1984: 226-231). This criticism has already been dealt with above and it seems probable that those who reject Popper on these grounds are rejecting Popper, who, according to Lakatos (1970: 181), never existed!

Sayer (1984: 227) aims two further criticisms at Popper: first, that he proposes making universal and deterministic statements – i.e. all Xs are Ys – about contingently related phenomena; and second, that he denies 'natural necessity' (whatever that might be). The first criticism is not evidenced by Sayer (1984) and can only be based on a reading of Popper's very early work (i.e. prior to the development of evolutionary epistemology or SF)47. The second criticism seems odd since Popper cannot be blamed for ignoring

47 Incidentally, Popper's A World of Propensities (1990) deals with this subject at great length, thus answering any criticisms on the understanding of the nature of contingently related phenomena. Also, in an essay published in 1981, he refers to himself as an indeterminist – likening himself to C. S. Pierce.
something which only critical realists appear to know anything about (the term 'natural necessity' is not explained anywhere in Sayer's book and Bhaskar [1979: 13] attends to it only in brief and somewhat opaque fashion).

So what do critical realists propose in place of evolutionary epistemology? According to Blaikie (1993: 162) they favour the 'retroductive logic' of C.S. Peirce:

Typically, then, the construction of an explanation... will involve the building of a model, utilising such cognitive materials and operating under the control of something like a logic of analogy or metaphor, of a mechanism, which if it were to exist and act in the postulated way would account for the phenomenon in question (a movement in thought that might be styled as 'retroduction'). The reality of the postulated explanation must then, of course, be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bhaskar, 1979: 15).

The passage above suggests a two-stage process at work in critical realist enquiry: first an act of 'retroduction' (generating a hypothesis by analogy) followed by an act of error elimination (subjecting the hypothesis to empirical scrutiny). Exactly how this differs from Popper's evolutionary epistemology is difficult to discern (see figure 3.7 below).

![Figure 3.7. Retroduction and Evolutionary Epistemology.](image)

According to Blaikie (1993: 165) Pierce didn't know how we execute retroduction – that is, how people were able to invent completely new theories or explanations – at a psychological level, but imagined that it was something like a 'natural instinct' or by 'analogical reasoning'. However, he maintained that retroduction was the process that preceded or initiated all mature sciences (Blaikie, 1993: 165). A digression into psychology – that is, into the question: how do we generate TS? – at this point would not be timely, though
it can be noted that Popper did develop some ideas as to how this psychology of creativity and problem solving might proceed with his ‘searchlight’ theory of learning (Popper, 1981: 341-361). The more important task in this section is to show that retroduction can be considered part of, rather than alternative to, evolutionary epistemology (see figure 3.7 above).

First, it can be shown that Popper was a keen admirer of Pierce’s views on scientific method. Popper went so far as to call Pierce “one of the greatest philosophers of all time” (1981: 212), and suggested that he was the pioneer of the indeterminist view he himself held (1981: 215). Second, it can be demonstrated that Bhaskar’s (1979) views on epistemology closely resemble those of Popper (1981). In a succinct description of the logic of a critical realist science (or rather critical naturalist/transcendental realist at the time of writing), Bhaskar (1979: 15) refers to a 3-phase process of scientific development:

1. Identification of a phenomenon to study;
2. Constructing hypothetical explanations of phenomena;
3. Empirically testing those explanations.

Bhaskar (1979: 15) claims that this process yields the identification of generative mechanisms at work (i.e. in the intransitive domain) which then become the new phenomena to be explained. A cyclical process then takes over where “deeper levels or strata of reality are successively unfolded” (Bhaskar, 1979: 15). What stands out in this description is the similarity to Popper’s realist, evolutionary epistemology on the one hand, and the constant comparative method of grounded theory on the other. Thus, by integrating the three different, yet complimentary, ideas, a coherent and logically consistent research approach can be identified.

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3.4.5. Synthesising Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology.

By way of summary, figure 3.8 (below) extends the earlier model of Wuisman (2005), suggesting a place for evolutionary epistemology and GT in his explication of the logic of critical realist science. It should be noted that the role of 'induction' in Wuisman's logic is questioned here⁴⁹, though it is possible he is using it in the same sense as did Pierce, who, according to Blaikie (1993: 167) should be forgiven for ignoring the theory-dependence of all observation (though Wuisman cannot be excused so easily).

![Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.8. Critical Realism, Evolutionary Epistemology and Grounded Theory.**

Wuisman (2005) sums up with a comment of particular significance to the current discussion:

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⁴⁹ Elsewhere in his paper, Wuisman defines induction as the process of: “inferring propositions about general regularities or universal laws from a limited set of sensory observations”. But, he later notes (with Popper) that: “no amount of sensory observations will suffice to draw valid universal conclusions about social reality”. To therefore include induction, thus defined, in any logical schema is unnecessary, even if it is combined with abduction and deduction.
A cycle of discovery can only be triggered by the interaction between a theoretically informed, reflective and inquisitive mind and the manifestations that appear in the domain of the empirical. What in this context is special about critical realism is not only that its ontology contains a clear hypothesis about what represents the field of discovery open to the social sciences... but also points to what to look out for in the first place: underlying mechanisms that operate in a particular context and that might generate events whose appearances manifest themselves in the domain of the empirical. Where critical realism still seems to fall short, however, is in following up the logical implications of its own ontology to their endpoint.

Thus, critical realism provides a social researcher with a vocabulary to express their ideas on difficult issues such as truth the nature of the social world, the structure-agency debate and causation. In a related sense, it also gives the researcher direction: it tells them where to look and what too look for. But this is currently all it can do. If critical realism is to be followed through to its logical conclusions, we must look elsewhere for answers. Fortunately, Wuisman (2005) sets fourth some potential paths to follow; and by drawing on Popper (1981) and Lakatos (1970) it is possible to go further, and explicate, more fully, a potential epistemology for critical realism. Again, following this logic, it is possible to draw on a revised or modified GT methodology to provide concrete steps and procedures to follow in social research.

Therefore, it is hereby argued – and partly in support of Lee (2002) – that critical realism, evolutionary epistemology and grounded theory, when combined, form a rich and coherent approach one might utilise when conducting empirical research in the social sciences.

3.4.6. From Philosophy to Practice.
Arguing with Wuisman (2005), clear links need to be made between abstract philosophical concepts and their impact on the very practical decisions made when doing empirical research. It is the primary concern of the following section to make these links explicit.

First, and before the researcher begins in earnest, it is important for them to develop a broad understanding of those structures thought to populate a potential causal complex in the given substantive area. In GT terminology,
theoretical sensitivity must be developed. In the case of this research, reading was undertaken in the areas of youth sport policy, childhood and adolescent sociology, and the wider political context in Britain. Such 'sensitising' enabled the researcher to develop an early, admittedly incomplete, picture of the substantive – and theoretical – area under study and the structures potentially influencing actors’ decisions therein.

As this research is, in essence, a policy evaluation, it is also necessary to remember that, under critical realist assumptions, policies are always introduced into open systems (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). As a result, the policy or programme is unlikely to be stable since its operation depends on at least two interrelated factors: first, how actors interpret and implement it (efficient cause); and second, the variable context in which it is implemented (material cause). Hence, it is important when evaluating a national policy to visit a number of diverse cases not only to investigate how individual actors interpret it differently, but also to understand what effect local cultural and geographical factors have on its implementation and – ultimately – success. As Sayer (2000: 22) notes: 'Responses to programmes are likely to vary within and between cases and researchers should attempt to identify these (variations)'.

Since the details of the methodology have already been alluded to in earlier chapters on GT, there is little left to say on the subject here. However, it could be added that, from a shared critical realist/GT perspective, policy evaluation research needs “intensive research, repeated movement between concrete and abstract and between particular empirical cases and general theory” (Sayer, 2000: 23).

Following data collection and analysis, it should be stressed that any resulting explanation should reflect the ‘real’ complexity of the phenomenon under study. That is, the range of structures forming a causal complex, the particular actions of individuals, and specific temporal factors should all be included in any account or explanation of events. Additionally, again considering that research takes place in an open system (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), it is
essential to make clear that what was found is continually changing and subject to local temporal conditions. As such, it is unlikely that grand claims for generalisability or prediction would be made. Rather, that the generated substantive theory might apply given that the same, or, at least, a very similar, set of conditions and actions are present in another situation. Finally, the critical realist/GT researcher would be expected to demonstrate the transparency and authenticity of their research by making explicit links between interpretive accounts and general theory; or explaining how the part is related to the whole.

3.5. Methods.

Following from the discussion of grounded theory methodology, a number of data collection techniques can be discussed within the context of a 'constructivist', or critical realist, approach. This section will be brief since details of data collection are integrated with the following three 'vintage' chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6).

Grounded theory methodology does not prescribe any specific data collection techniques as such. The collection of data within which the substantive theory will eventually be grounded is left to the discretion of the individual researcher. However, common techniques found in past research with young people typically indicate the use of un-structured or semi-structured interviews (Outley & Floyd, 2002; Skar and Tamm, 2001; Woodgate, 1998) participant observation (Boyle et al., 2003) and focus groups (Groves and Laws, 2000). Structured interviews tend not to be used (at least in the early stages of grounded theory) as they restrict the level of expression disclosed by the participant. In this sense, the asking of structured questions violates the very essence of grounded theory, as the researcher's agenda becomes the focus of the interview rather than remaining open to the issues implicit (or explicit) in the discourse of the subject(s).

GT therefore assumes that the researcher enter the field "with abstract wonderment of what is going on that is at issue and how it is handled" (Glaser, 1992: 22). Perhaps reflecting the detached position he vehemently espouses,
Glaser goes on the recommend that “the researcher never, never asks the question directly in interviews as this would preconceive the emergence of data”. This does not mean to suggest, however, that structured interviews or closed questions may not be part of the grounded theorist’s repertoire. Rather, that the researcher should carefully consider the questions they ask, the implications of leading questions, the context and timing of certain questions and at what stage of the research process they are included.

Contrary to popular opinion in the social sciences, GT also embraces the use of quantitative methods for data collection. Strauss and Corbin (1994) note that grounded theory has developed in such fields as education, social work and nursing to include quantitative methods. Additionally, in the original Discovery text, Glaser and Strauss (1967: 17-18) made clear the methodology’s position as applicable to both quantitative and qualitative studies:

*We believe that each form of data is useful for both verification and generation of theory, whatever the primacy of emphasis. Primacy depends only on the circumstances of research, on the interests and training of the researcher, and on the kinds of material (needed for) theory....In many instances, both forms of data are necessary.*

The capacity in which quantitative methods might service the research then becomes the central question. In the past, quantitative techniques have been used to verify substantive theory or its related hypotheses. However, more recently, quantitative methods such as surveys (or questionnaires) have been utilised in an entirely different capacity.

Batterham (2002), a proponent of the mixed method approach, states that qualitative and quantitative methods may complement one another when “a small sample of cases for interview are based on extreme scores form a questionnaire”. With specific reference to research with children, James et al. (1998: 179) support the suggestion of Batterham:

*...it is possible to utilise the techniques of large-scale survey and statistical sociology in the service of more recent concepts of children and childhood. It*
requires, however... a determination to include them as social actors and the imagination to develop new techniques.

Of course, it is also possible that the youth researcher may want to place greater emphasis on the quantitative aspect of a mixed method study where the major form of collection and analysis is quantitative (e.g. Allen, 2003; Patterson and Faucette, 1990). However, it is clear that the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods is both acceptable and useful in grounded theory research, not least when questionnaire data are utilised as a platform from which to begin theoretical sampling.

In this case, questionnaires were used as the starting point of data collection (see appendix B). Questionnaire data (demographic data in particular) formed a base upon which interesting cases were selected in terms of, for example: their ethnic or gender diversity or their high level of success, or indeed, failure (with regard to football provision). In the case of this research, emphasis (or primacy to use the terminology of Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was placed on qualitative data analysis due to the ethical, ontological and epistemological assumptions already discussed. Major tools of data collection were therefore focus groups (Renold, 2001; Morgan et al., 2002; Dowling-Naess, 2001; MacPhail et al., 2003b) as they appear to have been effective in extracting rich qualitative data in past research in youth sport research.

Of further note is the use of child-centred or youth friendly methods in the research. The adoption of alternative, creative methods has become a common concern in youth research and has been addressed in a number of recent texts and articles (Prout and James, 1990; Morrow and Richards, 1996; James et al., 1998; Morrow, 1999). Morrow (1999) warns that using traditional data collection techniques, conceived with adults in mind, may inhibit the extraction of ‘good’ data when employed with children and goes on to state that:

...children have different abilities, and are encouraged to be skilled and confident in different mediums of communication (drawings, stories, written work, and so on) that researchers might usefully draw upon (Morrow, 1999).
The resultant approaches adopted in her research with primary and secondary school children were designed to allow the children to express themselves in ways they felt most comfortable with. Morrow (1999) explains that drawing tended to be more popular with younger children, whilst those in the 11-14 age-group favoured story writing. Focus groups allowed shy children to participate in group activities, discussions and vignette completion where they may not have contributed otherwise. However, Morrow (1999) also reminds us that problems are inherent when using such techniques. She notes that ethical issues surround the ownership of drawings and stories and that the researcher must take time to listen to the child explain their creations so as to avoid the ‘very great danger’ of misrepresentation and over interpretation.

Furthermore, there is a necessity to acknowledge the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched at the point of data collection when working with children (Morrow, 1999). Morgan et al. (2002) also make explicit reference for the need to break down power imbalances through the use of innovative, youth friendly methods. In their research into the experiences of young asthma sufferers (aged 7-11) Morgan et al. (2002) used puppets to talk to younger members of the group in an effort to downplay their adult status. They also made time in their focus groups for children to act out scenarios with toys so as to depersonalise their accounts of sensitive experiences. Ultimately, the methods employed by Morrow (1999) and Morgan et al. (2002) represent the shifting epistemological stance, discussed in earlier chapters, toward listening to children in research that concerns them. Youth friendly methods such as drawing, vignette completion, observing play and writing stories may therefore help the researcher negotiate power imbalances and extract richer data than might be otherwise possible with traditional ‘adult orientated’ methods such as one-to-one interviews.

With reference to the practical aspects of the research, the important point is that a range of methods were made available to young people of all ages so that they were able to choose to engage with the one they felt most comfortable with (as recommended by Fajerman et al., 2004). In addition to
this, it should be noted that such innovative methods as those identified above would be used in service of, rather that instead of, focus groups (i.e. they could be referred to as ‘adjuncts’ rather than methods). For example, after early focus groups, some interesting stories and experiences were disclosed, leading to the development of important concepts. These experiences were then used as a template for short vignettes that helped initiate further discussion about similar issues in future interviews. Full details of the methods (and ‘adjuncts’) employed and a rationale for their inclusion is provided in two further sections, 4.3 and 5.2, in the first and second vintage chapters.

On a technical note, interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim shortly afterwards. Interview transcripts were then copied into an N*Vivo project file and analysed following broad GT dictums as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2000; 2003). The use of N*Vivo and its purported advantages over manual analysis methods are discussed at length in Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1).


As was highlighted in the previous section, questionnaires were used to map the landscape of youth football. In this case, data of various types (primarily nominal, ordinal and interval) were collected and analysed by generating descriptive statistics with SPSS. Small samples of interesting and diverse case studies were identified through the survey data (e.g. clubs with high female participation rates and schools with large out-of-school provision) returned by clubs and schools from across the country. After initial contact was made, focus groups presented a forum for open discussion (Morrow, 1999; Renold, 2001; Hyden and Bulow, 2003; Kitzinger, 1994) through which initial themes and concepts were identified. As common themes were generated, a more structured approach to the focus groups was adopted in order to ‘test’ early hypotheses (again, this process is discussed at length in section 4.3).

The selection of case studies based on the questionnaire data needed to reflect the diversity of young people within the Charter Standard scheme. As
such, it was important that, especially in the early stages of the research, case studies represented a balance of male and female participants, a range of socio-economic groups and a mixture of ethnic backgrounds. Another crucial point here is that case studies were selected according to the range of ages within the club, and to a lesser extent, school. As the Charter Standard scheme aims to increase the quality and quantity of football opportunities for young people of all ages, it was necessary to reflect this in the initial study sample.

Figure 3.9. Basic Stages in Grounded Theory (Derived from Glaser, 1978; Bryman, 2001; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 1990; Miller, 1995).

Figure 3.9 (above) outlines the grounded theory method as a procedural diagram. Salient features and steps of the method are included, however, many of the finer aspects are omitted from this diagram as it would be impossible to include them in a lucid and coherent fashion. Instead, the diagram aims to explain the relationship between the basic stages of grounded theory research in a manner that introduces the reader to the logical
progression of its fundamental concepts. Figure 3.9 also illustrates where data collection methods fit within the wider framework of GT methodology.

With reference to figure 3.9, the grounded theory method began with, and was continually influenced by, ‘theoretical sensitivity’. Referring to the personal qualities of the researcher, their awareness of the subtleties of the meaning of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), theoretical sensitivity can be enhanced by reading widely around the area of research (Glaser, 1978). A number of authors also point out that theoretical sensitivity is somewhat dependent on the individual personality, ability and skills of the researcher which will condition their theoretical insight into the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 1990)\(^50\). Strauss and Corbin (1990) also note that theoretical sensitivity may be enhanced during the research process itself, suggesting it may come from:

...collecting and asking questions about the data, making comparisons, thinking about what you see, making hypotheses, developing small theoretical frameworks (miniframeworks) about concepts and their relationships. In turn, the researcher uses these to look again at the data.

Once sensitised to the area of study – in this case theories of childhood and sport policy research with young people – the researcher may proceed to define their area of research and begin ‘theoretical sampling’. In the case of this research, data received from the initial questionnaire survey served as the initial basis for theoretical sampling (as depicted in figure 3.9). Theoretical sampling in this context simply refers to the process of selecting a sample based on prior knowledge in the area (whether informed by previous reading or questionnaire data). However, once the iterative or constant comparative process has begun, theoretical sampling adopts a mildly different personality. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 201) define theoretical sampling as:

Data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of making ‘constant comparisons’, whose purpose it is to go to places, people, or events that will maximise opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify [sic] categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.

\(^50\) Refer back to section 2.1 where this concept was discussed in detail.
In this general sense then, theoretical sampling is, as Charmaz (2000) suggests, 'about the refinement of ideas in research rather than boosting sample size'. The researcher is led to the next sample by the data and 'emerging' theory or hypotheses. As figure 3.9 suggests, early data from focus groups led to the generation of hypotheses to help explain the experiences of young footballers and, hence, later interviews became structured around these themes (i.e. according to the need to 'test' emerging hypotheses).

Theoretical sampling is ongoing as long as data is collected, analyses are made and hypotheses are generated. This process of analysis is also critically informed by the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher. In this sense, the substantive literature pertaining to the 'emerging' concepts began to inform the emerging theory (Glaser, 1992: 33). Again, this is discussed in detail in chapters 5 and 6 especially.

The constant comparative process can be brought to a conclusion once theoretical saturation has been reached. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 212) elaborate:

This means, until (a) no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated.

At this point then, the researcher is finding nothing new with respect to the core categories that are acting at an abstract level above a cluster of concepts. More data may allow for a greater range of examples and descriptions, but by this stage the pattern of codes that form substantive theory will have 'emerged' (Miller, 1995)51.

Theory in this sense explicates phenomena, specifies concepts that categorise the relevant phenomena, explains relationships between concepts and provides a framework for making predictions (Charmaz, 1990). The

51 Under a revised SF grounded theory, as discussed in section 3.4.4.2, the concept of theoretical saturation also requires modification. Rather than being a point where a category is 'full of data', saturation becomes a point where attempted refutations of the theory are unsuccessful.
important distinction to be made is between substantive and formal theory, and refers to their respective explanatory range. Substantive theory relates to a specific empirical area or instance such as occupational socialisation or youth football in England. Formal theory operates at a higher level of abstraction and has a wider range of applicability to several substantive areas (Bryman, 2001: 392). Charmaz (1990) states that data from various sources can be utilised to move across substantive areas, fostering conceptual power, depth and comprehensiveness. Approaching formal theory, however, is not a goal of this research for two main reasons: first, for pragmatic reasons, in that it would require further research that is beyond the scope of this project; and second, for philosophical reasons, in that formal theory implies dogmatism as opposed to falliblism – a central tenet of the modified Popperian or SF version of GT discussed throughout this chapter.

By way of summary, and in order to preface the forthcoming ‘vintage’ chapters, figure 3.10 (below), describes when and where methods were employed at the various stages of the project. The whole process described in figure 3.10 can be considered as a ‘close-up’ and more specific view of the constant comparative process illustrated in figure 3.9 (above).

![Figure 3.10. Data Collection Methods and 'Adjuncts' by Vintage.](chart.png)
With reference to figure 3.10, focus groups (or focussed group-interviews, see section 4.3.1) constituted the major data collection tool throughout the study. Within such interviews, child-friendly prompts or adjuncts were employed to generate open discussion in the first vintage. Once a group of open codes had been generated, these prompts changed. Moving into the second and third vintages, new methods such as agree/disagree statements and vignettes were employed to lead discussions along predefined lines that were theoretically pertinent i.e. they would provoke discussion around conjectured hypotheses that would help develop the 'emerging' theory.

3.6. ‘Validity’ and ‘Reliability’.
Issues of validity, and perhaps to a lesser extent reliability, are still pertinent in qualitative forms of research (Bryman, 2001: 29; Morse et al., 2002), despite the advancement of arguments for the rejection of these terms in recent times (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Kirk and Miller, 1986). New terms such as rigour, trustworthiness and authenticity have begun to replace the traditional terms of validity and reliability with reference to judging the quality of qualitative research.

Initially addressing reliability, the applicability of external reliability – or the reproducibility of an observation at different times (Rich and Ginsburg, 1999; Kirk and Miller, 1986: 42) – in qualitative forms of enquiry is diminished by its propensity to measure unchanging features in a changing world. To assume data are isomorphic across periods of time would be to ‘deny history’ (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 42). Conversely, internal reliability refers to the agreement of observations from two or more perspectives at the same time (Rich and Ginsburg, 1999; Kirk and Miller, 1986: 42). Also referred to as interrater reliability (Rich and Ginsburg, 1999) or inter-observer consistency (Bryman, 2001), methods such as observer congruence, observation correlation and standardising data collection tools are common strategies employed.

\[\text{2 This form of reliability is analogous to Popper's (1945/1969b: 217-218) notion of objectivity as 'inter-subjectivity' and corresponds to his description of the 'public character of scientific method'.}\]
he applicability of such tests for reliability is, however, brought into question by Barbour (2001). She contends that such overt practices are both expensive and time consuming but, more importantly, that they create multiple levels of interpretation of the data. This 'multiple hermeneutic' may therefore undermine the researcher's own important and carefully constructed interpretations of the data. Barbour (2001) adds that internal reliability is often achieved implicitly through supervisions and meetings and through revisiting previously collected data (a core feature of grounded theory).

Barbour (2001) concludes that the systematic process of 'thoroughly interrogating the data' should be rendered transparent in the written research project. Silverman (2001: 248) does, however, make a case for achieving generalisability (his term for reliability) in qualitative research. He explains that case study findings can be generalised to the wider population when compared with similar research findings, a process similar to that of developing formal theory from substantive theory (see figure 3.9). However, it seems appropriate in light of the preceding discussion to focus here on the more applicable (and problematic) concept of validity.

Few would doubt that rigour is essential in social research. Indeed, Morse et al. (2002) state that 'without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility'. It is therefore important to distinguish between the implications of the use of the term validity in quantitative and qualitative forms of research respectively. As Kirk and Miller (1986: 21) posit:

In the case of qualitative observations, the issue of validity is not a matter of methodological hair-splitting about the fifth decimal point, but a question of whether the researcher sees what he or she thinks he or she sees.

According to Kirk and Miller (1986), in the physical sciences, validity often refers to the rigid control of variables, of the environment and of samples, in order to avoid making errors in drawing statistical inferences between variables. However, the implications of validity are very different in qualitative or social research.

From her social constructivist position, Charmaz (2000) asserts that the co-created constructions which become the product of study are formed through a shared understanding of the worlds of the researcher and the researched (i.e. not of external assessors).
Hammersley (1990: 57) comments on the meaning of validity in social research stating that: "By validity, I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". In this sense, Hammersley is referring to whether the researcher's account (normally written) accurately reflects what they observe and hear usually in interviews) when in the field. Whether or not participants' accounts can be said to be accurate or 'true' is, however, impossible to assess from the critical realist ontological position. The accuracy, or inaccuracy, of the researchers account, then, must be assessed.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) and Schwandt (1996) also claim that using validity in the positivist sense) as a criterion for judging the quality of social research is not only virtually irrelevant, but naive in the context of post-modernism. Lincoln and Guba (2000: 178) go on to state that:

This communicative and pragmatic concept of validity is never fixed or unvarying. Rather, it is created by means of community narrative, itself subject to the historical and temporal conditions that gave rise to that community.

In this sense, the post-modern turn (i.e. Popper's critique of induction and positivism) has given rise to a new definition of the concept of validity in social research. Thus, validity has been redefined and reformulated in order to provide social researchers with criteria for establishing the quality or, in Lincoln and Guba's (2000) terms, 'trustworthiness' of research. The central concern for the social researcher might therefore be reoriented toward such questions as: a) Are these findings sufficiently authentic (trustworthy) that I may trust myself to act on their implications?; and b) Would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them? (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of this radical reconfiguration of what constitutes validity is that it leaves the researcher with multiple, sometimes conflicting, mandates of what constitutes rigorous research (Lincoln and Guba, 2000: 178). Indeed, Morse et al. (2002) assert that the plethora of
Arms and criteria for validity present a confusing situation that has resulted in a deteriorating ability to actually discern rigour. They add that 'the literature on validity has become muddled to the point of making it unrecognisable'. If rigour is indeed a vital part of social research (Rich and Ginsburg, 1999; Morse et al., 2002), the central question is one of how the researcher should go about demonstrating, achieving or establishing it.

Lincoln and Guba’s most recent (2000: 180) formulation of what they initially called ‘trustworthiness’ – spanning the traditional terms of validity and reliability – is centred on ‘validity as authenticity’. They identify two major arguments in relation to the authenticity of qualitative research: a) that of rigor in the application of method (in the traditional positivist sense) i.e. was the method of data collection and analysis rigorous?; and b) defensible reasoning, i.e. in ascribing salience to one interpretation over another, are we interpretively rigorous? In other words, can our co-created constructions be trusted to provide purchase on some important human phenomenon?

Extending from these two central questions, Lincoln and Guba (2000: 180) present five new criteria for judging the authenticity of qualitative research:

- **Fairness**: All stakeholder views, voices and concerns should be apparent in the text.
- **Ontological and Educative authenticity**: As criteria for determining a raised level of participant awareness; the capacity for subjects to engage in moral critique.
- **Catalytic and Tactical authenticity**: The ability of the researcher to prompt action on the part of research participants; the involvement of the researcher in training participants in forms of social and political action if so desired.

Schwandt (1996) highlights three key criteria for ‘evaluating the goodness of the product or outcome of social enquiry’.
Considerations: a) that social enquiry ought to generate knowledge that complements or supplements rather than displaces lay probing of social problems; b) that the outcome of inquiry can be judged in terms of whether the inquirer is successful at enhancing or cultivating critical intelligence in parties to the research encounter; and c) that the social inquirer can be evaluated on the success to which their reports of the inquiry enable the training of human judgement.

It appears then, that contemporary formulations of validity (or whatever terms have been substituted in its place) in social research centre around demonstrating increased participant awareness of social phenomenon, educating participants and promoting action. However, as Bryman (2001: 32) notes, whilst sharing an affinity with action research, these new formulations of validity offer little in the way of practical guidance for ensuring rigor throughout the research process. Indeed, Morse et al. (2002) suggest that investigators employing strategies to establish 'trustworthiness', at the end of the study, rather than focusing on processes of verification during the study, run the risk of missing serious threats to validity and reliability until it is too late to correct them.

The social researcher is therefore left not only with the problem of defining and justifying which type of validity is relevant in assessing the quality of their research, but also with selecting techniques (if any) to go about establishing it. Fortunately, grounded theory methodology is naturally rigorous, in the sense that the constant comparative process forces the researcher to treat data in a rigorous fashion (Miller, 1995). Furthermore, it has been suggested that grounded theory possesses a number of in-built rigorous procedures/techniques that may guide the researcher toward a 'quality' grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000). Lending support to this idea, Kvale (1996: 242) highlights the special properties of the methodology:

An investigative concept of validation is inherent in the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Validation is here not some final verification or product control; verification is built into the research process.
with continual checks on credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness of the findings.

Here, Kvale (1996) also supports the assertion of Morse et al. (2002) that verification strategies are best employed throughout the course of research rather than as a tool for evaluating trustworthiness upon its conclusion. However, in light of the preceding discussion regarding the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research product (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), it might be prudent to assess the quality of this research from both perspectives; thus providing the researcher with specific verification techniques to ensure rigour during the study whilst also evaluating the resulting 'trustworthiness' or 'authenticity' of the final product.

3.6.1. 'Validity' in Grounded Theory Research.

Glaser (1978: 4-5) identifies four criteria for evaluating grounded theory: fit, work, relevance and modifiability. Fit refers to categories fitting the data; categories must explain the data they subsume (Charmaz, 2000). Glaser (1978: 4) notes two further vital properties of fit: refit and emergent fit. Refit entails constantly revising categories as they emerge from the data, 'thus categories are not precious, just captivating'. Emergent fit refers to extant categories (pre-existing categories derived from the researcher's theoretical sensitivity) 'earning' their way into the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978: 4). In this sense, just as generated categories are refitted to the data, extant categories may also be modified or fitted as data emerges to ensure it works.

The second criteria of work is therefore underpinned by fit in the sense that a theory should be able to interpret and explain what is happening in a substantive area and also predict what might happen in the future (Glaser, 1978: 4). Implicit within the idea of work, then, relevance refers to the resonance the grounded, substantive theory has with the participants of the study. Relevance is analogous with the aforementioned terms credibility or ecological validity. It infers that in order to be 'valid', the theory (that is the product of research), whether nascent or final, should be recognisable by the subjects of the study (Glaser, 1978: 5). The final criteria of modifiability
appears simple but is often missed automatically in the pursuit of reconceived theories (Glaser, 1978: 5). As Glaser observes:

...generation is an ever modifying process and nothing is sacred if the analyst is dedicated to giving priority attention to the data.... The theory can never be more correct than its ability to work the data – thus as the latter reveals itself in research the former must constantly be modified.

This flexibility assumed within the concept of modifiability is not confined to the data collection and analysis stage of research. Charmaz (1990) explains how this may extend into writing and rewriting drafts of research reports, citing examples from her own research where categories were renamed thus enhancing their clarity and vividness. Therefore, grounded theories are always open-ended: they are never finished or complete and should not be presented in such a way.

3.6.2. Quality Assurance Techniques.

The evaluation criteria identified above are commonly presented as 'post-hoc' assessments of the quality of grounded theories. However, they are, or can be, subsumed by a number of procedural techniques, thus developing a comprehensive validation of a grounded theory. Drawing heavily on grounded theory methodology, Morse et al. (2002) identify five verification strategies for qualitative research: a) investigator responsiveness; b) methodological coherence; c) theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy; d) an active analytical stance; e) saturation. Verification in this sense:

...refers to the mechanisms used during the process of research to incrementally contribute to ensuring reliability and validity and, thus, rigor of a study. These mechanisms are woven into every step of the enquiry to construct a solid product by identifying and correcting errors before they are built into the developing model and before they subvert the analysis (Morse et al., 2002).

Barbour (2001) also identifies a checklist of five ‘technical fixes’ enjoying popularity in recent journal articles and attempts a realistic appraisal of their potential. Purposive sampling, grounded theory (implicitly referring to the constant comparative element of the methodology), multiple coding,
 triangulation, and respondent validation are all critically analysed. Barbour adds that the uncritical and overzealous adoption of such a checklist can be counterproductive if detached from a broader understanding of qualitative research design and data analysis. Barbour (2001) labels this a case of “the tail (the checklist) wagging the dog (the research)” and warns against the prescriptive, ‘one size fits all’ use of such techniques in research projects. Once again drawing implicitly on grounded theory, Silverman (2001: 236-241) presents a checklist of five ways of validating qualitative research:

- Analytic induction;
- The constant comparative method;
- Deviant-case analysis;
- Comprehensive data treatment;
- Using appropriate tabulations.

Many of these technical fixes or verification strategies proposed by Morse et al. (2002), Barbour (2001) and Silverman (2001) overlap and draw from similar sources. As such, it would be time-consuming and occasionally repetitive to discuss each in turn. Instead, it is possible to group and summarise similar techniques, provide a basic description of each and highlight major criticisms in the following table (3.6).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant comparative</strong></td>
<td>Iterative/reflexive process of data collection, analysis and theory development.</td>
<td>Often used as an ‘approving bumper sticker’ rather than a helpful description of the strategy used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active analytical stance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grounded theory</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deviant case analysis.</td>
<td>Sample based on theoretical ideas/sensitivity and deviant cases sought out as a ‘true test’ of theory.</td>
<td>Often the sample is discussed in the method but ignored in the analysis of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive sampling.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical sampling</strong> (adequacy).</td>
<td>Theory should fit data, investigator must ensure saturation is reached but that product remains modifiable.</td>
<td>Largely dependent on skill of investigator. Rarely made clear when saturation is reached, preferring a ‘neat and tidy’ account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive data treatment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator responsiveness.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Saturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using appropriate tabulations.</td>
<td>Using simple counting techniques to justify selection of excerpts, and to get a ‘flavour of the data as a whole’.</td>
<td>The numbers of statements are little indication of their salience to the phenomenon under study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple coding (inter-rater reliability)</td>
<td>Cross checking interpretations of data with independent researchers.</td>
<td>Co-created constructions (i.e. between the researcher and participants) of the phenomenon are valuable and may be lost or ‘filtered out’ by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological coherence</td>
<td>The research question, methods, type of data and subsequent analysis must demonstrate congruence.</td>
<td>Process and assumptions are rarely made transparent in research papers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Techniques in italics denote concepts ‘borrowed’ from GT.


Two further techniques offered by Barbour (2001) but not included in table 3.6 – triangulation and respondent validation – are heavily criticised by Silverman (2001: 233-236). Silverman presents an argument against the use of triangulation as a technique for ensuring validity. He foresees problems associated with comparing different forms of data (such as field notes and interview transcripts) and the enforced conundrum of having to adopt a starting point, thus ascribing salience to one form of data over another. Silverman also goes on to question the use of respondent validation (albeit in a less convincing fashion), stating that what researchers are in fact doing when they provide participants with a research report is collecting another
orm of data. He notes that while feedback cannot be taken as direct confirmation or refutation of the researcher's interpretation, it can open up interesting paths for further analysis.

In contrast to Silverman (2001), Downward (2005) presents a taxonomy of forms of triangulation – data, investigator, theoretical and methodological – and two arguments to justify the use of triangulation in social research. The first is the often rehearsed argument that triangulation increases the persuasiveness' (read: validity) of evidence through increasing the completeness of insights' (Downward, 2005). Commonly this involves one of two strategies: a) using inferential statistical tests to 'test' the validity of qualitative insights; and b) using qualitative investigation to gain deeper insights into extreme cases from large-scale survey findings.

The second argument can be rejected from the critical realist position since, as Downward (2005) points out, the instrumentalist argument 'sidesteps philosophical issues' (i.e. it subscribes neither to realism or constructivism). The first argument, however, deserves closer scrutiny. Like Silverman (2001), Downward (2005) points out that triangulation (data or methodological) must be rejected unless a realist ontological position is assumed. That is, triangulation is based on the assumption that, by comparing different perspectives (i.e. interpretations or data), some middle point that reflects the real' interpretation can be found. In conclusion, Downward (2005) claims that combining methods is central to the retroductive activity, with 'quantitative' methods identifying partial regularities as outcomes of causal processes from which 'qualitative' methods can investigate their causes.

Perhaps the most important technique of those listed in table 3.6, due to its overarching impact on the validity of a study, is the final strategy of methodological coherence'. In a related sense, Morse et al. (2002) note that research may not unfold in a linear fashion – data may demand that the question is changed or theoretical sampling may lead to a change of course – and as such, coherency must be maintained through verifying each previous component and the methodological assumptions as a whole.
Charmaz (1990) goes some way towards highlighting the need for rigor within an internally coherent framework in the context of grounded theory:

...what grounded theory provides is a rigorous method for qualitative studies. Hence grounded theory must be assessed from internal logic of its own method, not by the inappropriate application of external criteria founded in other methods.

This position is shared and elaborated upon by Holloway and Todres (2003) who argue strongly for consistency and coherence in one’s approach, beginning with its philosophical underpinnings and ending in the subtle nuances that it may adopt in its methodological procedures. Furthermore, like Barbour (2001), they argue that this should be rendered transparent in the written project.

Following from this, a selection of those strategies identified in table 3.6 will be utilised in this research to ‘overcome the danger of purely anecdotal research’ (Silverman, 2001: 254). The constant comparative method forces the researcher to treat data in a rigorous fashion, continually comparing incident to incident, category to category, incident to category etc. Theoretical sampling (and ‘deviant case’ analysis) ensures samples are chosen based on emerging theoretical ideas, and that emerging hypotheses are put to the most severe test of ‘trustworthiness’ (as Einstein cautiously noted: “no amount of evidence can prove me right, but any amount of evidence can prove me wrong”, cited in Wolcott, 2001: 30). Comprehensive data treatment (entailing fit and saturation) ensures that adequate data are collected to ‘saturate’ core categories subsumed by the substantive theory, whilst the virtues of methodological coherence are discussed above.

Taking responsibility for rigour by adopting an active and responsive approach to threats to validity throughout the course of research should naturally result in accomplishing the post-hoc criteria proposed by Glaser (1978: 4-5), Bryman (2001: 32), Lincoln and Guba (2000: 180) and Schwandt (1996). Thus, verification and attention to rigour will be evident throughout the text rather
than being relegated to a section of post-hoc reflection on the finished work (Morse et al., 2002).

3.7. Ethical Issues in Researching Young People.

Ethical issues permeate all research and possess a complex and deeply interwoven relationship with research methods and issues of validity (Oliver and Fishwick, 2004). In this light, it might have appeared sensible to discuss ethics in social research within the preceding chapters. However, due to the ‘extra sensitive’ nature of ethical issues in research with children and young people, it is perhaps necessary to provide a more dedicated discussion of their relevance to this research. In addition, the wider debate of the adoption of the biomedical ethics model in social research is also taken up to provide a background to the specific discussion on ethical issues in research with young people.

A body of research pertaining to ethics in all forms of social research has grown over the past 20 years, ranging from general issues such as the adoption of the biomedical ethics model, to much more specific, but still related, problems such as gaining informed consent from young people. In a general context, Bryman (2001: 479) makes clear the importance of possessing an understanding of the key ethical debates and their impact on research:

> Only if researchers are aware of the ethical issues involved can they make informed decisions about the implications of their choices...Ethical issues that arise in the course of doing research are most likely to impinge on students.

Indeed, the choices one makes during the course of social research are at the heart of most ethical dilemmas, and certainly students or beginner researchers, through lack of experience, are most susceptible to making poor ethical choices (also see Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). By way of introduction, Bryman (2001: 479) offers four overlapping areas or questions relating to ethics in social research:
• Is there harm caused to participants?
• Is there a lack of informed consent?
• Is there an invasion of privacy?
• Is an element of deception involved?

If the researcher were to answer ‘yes’ to any of these questions when thinking critically of their own research, they might sensibly be forced to reconsider their methods. However, it is with the first two of these four questions that are perhaps of most importance to this research as it is hard to imagine how ‘deception’ or a serious ‘invasion of privacy’ will be part of it.

Harm, as Bryman (2001) notes, might not only be physical, but also psychological (e.g. harm to self esteem or stress), or involve ‘inducing the performance of reprehensible acts’. The BSA (British Sociological Association) makes the following statement regarding ‘harm’ in social research:

_The researcher should anticipate, and guard against, consequences for research participants which can be predicted to be ‘harmful’... they should also consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one._

Unfortunately, as Guillemin and Gillam (2004) concede, it is rarely possible (in research practice) to anticipate all situations that might be construed as ‘harmful’ before they emerge. And, like Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001), they question what exactly constitutes ‘harm’. Additionally, they recount an example from their research where sensitive information was divulged by a research participant ‘out of the blue’ placing the researcher in what they term an ‘ethically important moment’. Drawing on further examples, Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) make a distinction between ‘procedural ethics’ (the type of ethical considerations made before consultation with an ethics committee) and ‘ethics in practice’ (the choices and dilemmas facing the researcher in the

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55 The examples of deceptive research or research that impinged on the privacy of participants provided by Bryman (2001) and Guillemin and Gillam (2004) are generally extreme in nature: such as the study where participants were asked to administer escalating electric shocks to other human subjects who were actually actors mimicking shock victims.
field). This is an important point, and one we shall return to later in the chapter following a brief discussion of the second of Bryman’s four questions: informed consent.

In social research, the notion of informed consent is taken as given and essential (David et al., 2001). Under the traditional biomedical model of ethics adopted uncritically by most social researchers – or perhaps more accurately ethics committees (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Oliver and Fishwick, 2004) – informed consent often involves little more than obtaining written consent (usually a signature on a form) after an explanation of what the research involves; or, in the words of David et al. (2001) ‘a one-off event at the outset’. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) offer a more useful explanation of what constitutes informed consent in social research:

Informed consent is at heart an interpersonal process between researcher and participant, where the prospective participant comes to an understanding of what the research project is about and what participation would involve and makes his or her own free decision about whether, and on what terms, to participate.

The SRA (Social Research Association) elaborate, stating that subjects should not be under the impression that they are required to participate and fully aware of their entitlement to ‘refuse at any stage for whatever reason and to withdraw data just supplied’. This point – that informed consent also entail that the research participants be fully aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage – is echoed elsewhere (Renold, 2002 ['informed dissent']; David et al., 2001; Fajerman et al., 2004: 14), most notably in relation to research with young people.

Some researchers have noted that uneven power relations often observed between adult researchers and young research participants may impact on the informed consent process. Renold (2002) openly acknowledges the authoritative adult researcher status (or identity) she assumed whilst researching sexual identity in primary schools; one that needed to be ‘constantly negotiated on accessing children’s worlds’. Also discussing
research in schools, Morrow (1999) refers to the research participants as 'a captive sample'. She notes that because children are the 'objects' of schooling, they also become the objects of research, adding that 'the voluntary nature of student participation in any school-based study may be doubted at a general level'.

3.7.1. Informed Consent and Young People.
Various attempts have recently been made in youth research to place the focus of informed consent squarely with young people rather than with adult gatekeepers, as in past research. In their study into children's understanding of parental involvement in education, David et al. (2001) state that their aim was to 'privilege their (children's) own self selection and decision to participate in research rather than that given by their parents and/or teachers'. Renold (2002) discusses at length the problems associated with her decisions to keep certain information about the research from teachers and parents, thereby placing consent solely with the research participants as the research began to unfold. Morrow (1999) undertakes a frank discussion of the process of obtaining informed consent first from parents, then teachers and finally, but most importantly, from children. Additionally, Anderson et al. (2003) present a cogent argument for increasing adolescents' involvement in giving informed consent, stating that it may enhance their growing autonomy and capabilities.

Morrow (1999) also begins to highlight the importance of guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of information when working with young people. The way such ideas are communicated to young people (depending somewhat on their age) are of great ethical importance: if young people do not understand what is meant by anonymity and (somewhat paradoxically) confidentiality56, how are they to make a decision to participate or not? Morrow (1999) also makes a clear distinction between what was earlier termed 'procedural ethics' and 'ethics in practice' or macro and micro ethics respectively (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

56 The fundamental paradox of confidentiality in research is highlighted by Sparkes (2004) who questions whether information submitted by research participants essentially marked for publication can ever be considered 'confidential'.
Procedural, or macro, ethics is often described, albeit briefly, in research with young people (Morgan et al., 2002; Brackenridge et al., 2004), where the researchers state that, as per ethics committee guidelines or statements from professional organisations such as the BSA, informed consent was gained from adult gatekeepers before research began. It is rare that an open discussion of ethical issues arising during the research ('ethics in practice' or micro ethics) takes place. However, as Guillemin and Gillam (2004) and Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) argue, it is these issues that may ultimately have the greatest impact on the overall quality of the research and well-being of research participants. Arising from such a discussion is the argument that informed consent (and perhaps ethics in general) should be a process rather than a single event.

As early as 1980, Wax identified the need for the consent process to be modified in the practice of fieldwork in social research:

> In good fieldwork the research relationship is (sociologically) primary; and, as in the primary relationship of the family, it is jointly constructed and emergent.... Thus, consent (to the field researcher) cannot be a unique event, but must be processual and developmental. At early stages in the formation of a primary relationship, consent may be a sign of its moral quality; yet, after time, it is inadequate and misleading for ethical analysis.

It seems then, that Wax (1980) saw problems with traditional methods of gaining consent in field research and that consent gained in the early stages of research became inadequate as research developed. This may be an especially salient point for this research due to its emergent nature and in the sense that it is impossible to accurately predict where the grounded theory methodology might lead the research focus once data collection has begun.

More recently, David et al., (2001), Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001), Renold (2002), Guillemin and Gillam (2004) and Oliver and Fishwick (2004), all make convincing arguments in favour of the 'ethics (and informed consent) as process' model. Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) explain what this may entail:
Trust with research participants is established and then maintained over time. Consent needs to be re-established on a regular basis, as does the right to withdraw from the study.

In a comprehensive appraisal of ethical issues in social research with children, Morrow and Richards (1996) tend to concur with the authors noted above:

Existing ethical guidelines appear unlikely to provide specific, clear applications to the dilemmas that researchers face. Researchers need to be aware that ethical considerations are ongoing, and that ethical dilemmas may arise at any stage of the research, and not just at the point of contact with the research participants.

Additionally, they go on to make methodological and practical suggestions for researchers wishing to undertake ethical research with young people.

3.7.2. Conducting ‘Ethical’ Research with Young People.

Firstly, Morrow and Richards (1996) note that researchers should be aware that accounts young people give of themselves will be affected by a range of variables: gender, age, ethnicity and other personal characteristics such as shyness and willingness to talk to adults. In a related sense, they also infer that the personal characteristics of the researcher – their age, gender, ethnic background and personal style – will affect the research. Renold (2002) provides a ‘confessional’ account of how her age, gender, physical size and appearance may have affected her access and ability to retrieve good data with a group of primary schools children. She notes that her youthful appearance and small physical stature (many of the children were taller than her) may have aided her ability to affectively ‘infiltrate’ their culture.

Secondly, Morrow and Richards (1996) suggest that the environment in which data are collected – in school, at home, in the playground, on the street corner, in a private space or a ‘neutral setting’ (Mahon, et al., 1996), or on a football field during a training session – should be an ethical consideration. For example, children participating in research in school may not feel they are in a position to dissent because most tasks in school are compulsory. Thirdly, the questions often taken for granted when researching adults such as those concerning social class, ethnicity, marital status and so on, become unethical
as far as children are concerned i.e. they may not know the ‘correct’ answer and feel their responses are inadequate. In this situation, it may be appropriate for such issues to be inferred by observation and detailed background descriptions of the local context of the children concerned (Morrow and Richards, 1996).

Furthermore, Morrow and Richards (1996) – like Morrow (1999), James et al. (1998), Thomas and O’Kane (2000), Morgan et al. (2002), Mahon et al. (1996) and Fajerman et al. (2004) – suggest that drawing on a range of creative methods (see sections 3.5 and 4.3.2), and using multiple research strategies might be the way forward. In this sense, an over-reliance on one type of data collection method (such as face-to-face interviews) can lead to biases, given young people’s relatively powerless position in society (Morrow and Richards, 1996).

The ethical issue at stake here is one of choosing, or allowing the participants to choose, the method of data collection most suited to them – one that accounts for their different competencies (Morrow, 1999; Thomas and O’Kane, 2000), thus avoiding (as far as possible) taking advantage of their powerless position. More extreme examples of this, where children and young people become the researchers themselves, are becoming more popular (cf. MacPhail et al., 2003b; Fajerman et al., 2004). However, Mahon et al. (1996) warn that the appropriateness of involving children as researchers should be judged on the basis of the research topic, the methods and the degree of skill and responsibility (and, hence age or maturity) required of the researcher.

One final point regarding the ethics of conducting research with young people is that of interpretation and representation in dissemination. As Morrow and Richards (1996) explain:

> Researchers must bear responsibility for how children are represented in reports of research in the media and be aware that the potential for misrepresentation is very great indeed. Children, as a powerless group in society, are not in a position to challenge the ways in which research findings about them are presented.
Offering more practical advice (but in a general sense) Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) suggest that participants should check how they are represented in whatever is written in field notes at the very least (if not publications) and be actively encouraged to change what has been written. This point illustrates how ethical issues impinge on issues of validity (see previous discussion on ‘relevance’ and ‘respondent validation’ in section 3.6), and highlights the problems facing the researcher wishing to undertake a study that is both valid and ethical. In conclusion, Ramcharan and Cutcliffe (2001) make clear the importance of representation and accountability in any research project:

*Asking the question about accountability for both findings, their implementation and use is perhaps the most important part of establishing the 'actual' beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice of any research project.*

So what, in summary, might constitute ‘ethical’ research with young people in this study? Morrow and Richards (1996) suggest that ‘for research to be regarded as ethical, ethical considerations need to be situational (like in micro ethics, Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) and responsive, and no researcher or research body can anticipate all ethical problems that may be encountered in this respect’. Furthermore, they suggest that support in the form of tight supervision or advisory group where ethical dilemmas can be discussed throughout the course of a research project (from inception to dissemination) is very important.

Certainly, it appears reasonable that, in addition to making the mandatory macro ethical considerations (as in a proposal made to an ethics committee), micro ethical issues should force the researcher to be ‘ethically reflexive’ (to borrow a term from Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). In a related sense, informed consent should be constantly renegotiated between researcher and participants as the study develops rather than an isolated, one-off event (a more pertinent point in the case of this research due to the use of grounded theory methodology). Furthermore, the methods used in data collection should be ‘child friendly’ and open to selection by the participants themselves so as to reduce the chance of exploiting uneven power relations between
researcher and researched. Similarly, Mahon et al. (1996) found that allowing
the participants to hold and control the tape recorder during sessions
increased their willingness to participate and helped to develop a rapport
between researcher and respondent.

Finally, it might be appropriate for extra care to be taken when interpreting
and representing the accounts of young people with ongoing checks (not
respondent validation in the tradition sense offered by Silverman, 2001: 233-
236) an important element of the data collection process. In this sense, as
Morrow and Richards (1996) suggest, `a more social-anthropological
approach that allows data to be co-produced in the relationship between
researcher and participants, rather than being driven by problem orientated
adult questions, may be useful in child research'.

3.8. Chapter Summary.
This short section aims to outline the complete methodological system that
underpins and guides this research. Figure 3.11 (below) illustrates the
relationship between ontology, ethics, epistemology, methodology and
methods previously discussed. Although each of these concepts and their
relations has been explained in previous sections, the following numbered
(almost axiomatic) description provides an overview, placing particular
emphasis on the internal logic that binds the system together.
Figure 3.11. The Logical Coherence of the Methodological System.

1. The ontological assumptions of critical realism (CR) provide the researcher with a vocabulary, or set of concepts, with which to define the field of enquiry. The stratified nature of the social world – the identification of the real, actual and empirical – and the causal mechanisms that drive phenomena are therefore important considerations for the social scientist. This ontological theory can also inform one’s ethical theory. As was discussed earlier (see section 1.6), considering the moral ideas (the ethics) of a given society can help to identify appropriate research questions. CR suggests that there might be some real notion of right and wrong – of what we consider moral behaviour – that is independent of our various interpretations; but it also suggests that such moral benchmarks or touchstones are socially constructed and thus open to change with scientific study. In short, we must moralise research and research morals. This idea is analogous to Popper’s notion of piecemeal social engineering (PSE) that can only take place in an open society.
2. Following from these abstract assumptions, we are logically led to certain epistemological conclusions. The argument put forward thus far is that the sophisticated falsificationism (SF) of Lakatos (1970) and Popper (1981) is compatible with CR. That is, the logic of enquiry (the sophisticated version of conjecture and refutation, or the cyclical logic of retroduction followed by deduction) can be said to fit clearly with the assumptions about the nature of reality made by CR (see figure 3.8). To understand the world, we must first observe (or listen) with a 'theoretically sensitive' posture; put forth a conjecture or hypothesis to suggest a causal law or rule that might govern behaviour; then, through carefully designed 'experiments' (or questions), seek to falsify said hypothesis; or, in other words, to refute our conjecture. This, however, satisfies only one element of epistemology: the logic of generating knowledge. In addition to outlining this logic, it is necessary to make a statement about what we perceive to be valid data. In this respect, an ethical theory can go some way toward suggesting what can and cannot be considered valid data; hence, only an appeal to the moral ideas of the time (and place) can guide us. The example provided earlier was that of legislation and government policy which clearly implies that we must listen to children and young people on issues that affect them (i.e. youth sport policy decisions). So, because CR suggests any type of data – words or numbers – are valid (even necessary) and thus offers no strict answers, we are led, by our ethical considerations, to the conclusion that unstructured interview data would be best used to understand the particular phenomena under study.

3. The logic demanded by this epistemology is identical to that outlined in GT. Although many authors still cling dogmatically to the idea of 'doing induction', they are largely mistaken in this claim. Additionally, GT offers clear procedures and guidelines for doing social research that are most useful in practice, as long as we remain aware of the sound SF logic and ignore, to a large extent, conventional GT logic as explicated by Glaser (1978; 1992) and Strauss (1990; 1998). Thus, the constant comparative process of collecting, analysing and theorising about data allows us to remain open to the agenda of the research participants and generate
explanatory models of action. CR reminds us that we must look 'behind' phenomena in an attempt to understand the causal complex of conditions driving it (this point is also made by Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

4. In choosing appropriate methods it is necessary to once again draw on ethical considerations (i.e. on legislation, policy, academic papers, public opinion etc.) and methodological procedures. In this case, it has been suggested that focussed group-interviews (FGIs) provide an opportunity to explore issues in a context in which young people are comfortable. FGIs can also be either unstructured (in the early stages of GT) or semi-structured (in the later stages of GT) which makes them perfectly flexible for use in this type of study. Additional prompts or adjuncts may be used with younger groups in light of the recognition that they are proficient in different forms of communication than adults.
CHAPTER 4:  
THE FIRST ‘VINTAGE’: MAPPING THE ISSUES

“What scientists do has never been the subject of a scientific, that is, an ethological enquiry. It is no use looking to scientific ‘papers’, for they not merely conceal but actively misinterpret the reasoning that goes into the work they describe.”\(^{57}\)

- Sir Peter Medawar

\(^{57}\) Admittedly, Medawar wrote this before the publication of Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), but I think the spirit of the comment justifies the approach taken here.
CHAPTER 4:
THE FIRST ‘VINTAGE’: MAPPING THE ISSUES

4.1. Introduction to the First Vintage.
The following three chapters (4, 5 and 6) chart the data collection and analysis phase of my research. The title, or the first part of it at least, I borrowed from Francis Bacon. In his much maligned and misunderstood methodology (Novum Organon, 1620), Bacon would refer to his initial observations and tentative ideas as his first ‘vintage’, conferring the idea of a rough first attempt at apprehending the phenomenon under study. Subsequent studies would become his second and third ‘vintage’ (etc.), where the rough ideas from the first would be developed and refined; though, according to Snyder (1999), Bacon rarely tells us how.

Like the following two chapters, this chapter (chapter 4) is written as a narrative or a ‘confessional tale’ (van Maanen, 1998; Sparkes, 2002), where my goal was to lay bare the decisions I made and the problems I encountered. This particular approach to structure and writing was necessary, I believe, for three equally important reasons:

a. As I stressed in the preface and methodology chapter, I do not claim objectivity for this study. Rather, I confess to interpreting the voices and accounts of the research participants throughout. To write in the traditional, detached, third-person style would therefore be misleading. It has been well noted that this convention is outdated and inappropriate when writing accounts of interpretive research (cf. Sparkes, 2002; Richardson, 2000).

b. The logic of GT (i.e. making constant comparisons, theoretical sampling, iterations of collection and analysis, theory building) demands a faithful, chronological, re-telling. In this sense, my aim is to lead the reader on a journey, taking in major landmarks, making references to the reasoning and decision making processes as they happened. Thus, the reader should be able to see clearly when and, more importantly, why certain courses of action were taken; why some
leads were followed and others left, thereby increasing the transparency (or quality) of the research.

c. Following from the previous point, I believe the 'confessional account' provides greater opportunities (that is, when compared to a conventional 'sanitized' methods chapter) for future researchers to build on my work. Weaknesses (and, perhaps, strengths) will be noted in the hope that those following a similar course might avoid the problems I encountered and build on those methods and ideas that offered some success.

I hope, therefore, that the reader will be satisfied with my rationale for taking this somewhat unorthodox approach to the following chapters. They are structured in chronological order, from the first iteration (or vintage) to the last, charting a logical route through this often messy and complicated process.

The aim of this chapter, this first vintage, is therefore to describe the data collection and analysis process and explain how I arrived at the tentative hypotheses that provided a 'springboard' for further study. In this sense, the chapter concludes with my initial attempts to make sense of the data I had collected over the course of the first ten interviews. These ideas and hypotheses lead logically into the second vintage, where my aim was the attempted ‘falsification’ of said hypotheses via the implementation of new methods and styles of questioning within interviews. The third and final vintage consolidates the ideas developed through the first two and presents the final substantive theory with an explanation of core themes and the nature of the relationships between them.

4.2. Sampling: The Big Picture.

Before describing the data collection and analysis process, it is useful to present an overview. As noted in previous chapters (see section 3.5), case study sites were selected based on information collected through a mapping questionnaire. For example, in this first vintage it was my aim to select an even number of schools and clubs in which I could find both male and female football players in a range of age groups. The basic aim of theoretical
sampling at this stage was therefore to cast my net as wide as possible, selecting research partners that were most likely to have the greatest range (i.e. in terms of the core variables of age, sex and ethnic origin) of players present. In this way I hoped to be able to carry out interviews across the entire range of potential participants in the first vintage.

Pragmatism was also a necessary criteria in terms of case selection as I intended to spend some time familiarising myself with players before conducting interviews. Prior to entering the field, I had assumed that one week would be long enough to achieve this, working on the premise that I might be able to meet a group twice before interview. Of course, I soon realised these expectations were misconceived and had to reconsider the amount of time I would spend at each site. As such, it also became clear that I would have to select sites, where possible, within commuting distance of either Loughborough or Huddersfield (the location of my father's house). Table 4.1 below summarises the entire interview schedule, detailing the location, group composition and date of each session.
### Table 4.1. Summary of Interviews by Vintage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vintage</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Groups interviewed</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Visit duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wallsend Town JFC (Newcastle)</td>
<td>U14 boys</td>
<td>07.03.05</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thorpe Acre Junior School (Leicestershire)</td>
<td>U10 boys</td>
<td>10.03.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siddal Moor High School and Sports College (Rochdale)</td>
<td>Year 5&amp;6* boys</td>
<td>21.04.05</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 5&amp;6* girls</td>
<td>26.04.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Mary’s RC Primary School (Rochdale)</td>
<td>Year 7&amp;8* boys</td>
<td>13.05.05</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 11* boys</td>
<td>16.05.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 8&amp;9* girls</td>
<td>17.05.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rochdale Youth Council</td>
<td>Year 6* boys</td>
<td>23.05.05</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 5&amp;6* girls</td>
<td>23.05.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asfordby Ladies’ and Girls’ FC (Leicestershire)</td>
<td>U12 girls</td>
<td>20.07.05</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U18 girls</td>
<td>24.08.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U15 girls</td>
<td>31.08.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Joseph’s High School and Sports College (Bolton)</td>
<td>Year 10* boys</td>
<td>03.11.05</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 11* girls</td>
<td>04.11.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knottingley High School and Sports College (West Yorkshire)</td>
<td>Year 8* girls</td>
<td>10.11.05</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year 10* boys</td>
<td>11.11.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loughborough Dynamo JFC (Leicestershire)</td>
<td>U15 boys</td>
<td>20.11.05</td>
<td>10 months (full season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U10 boys</td>
<td>05.02.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U18 boys</td>
<td>19.04.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leicestershire Nirvana FC</td>
<td>U14 boys</td>
<td>11.03.06</td>
<td>11 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middleton Colts FC (Rochdale)</td>
<td>U9 boys</td>
<td>15.04.06</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year 5 = 8-years-old, Year 6 = 9-years-old, Year 7 = 10-years-old, Year 8 = 11-years-old, Year 9 = 12-years-old etc

### Interview table summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By age</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(some overlapping)</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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137 | Page
The column to the far right of the table above, headed “visit duration”, denotes the total time spent at the club or school. As such, it is important to note that field observations were made throughout my visits and contributed significantly to the primary data collected in interviews. I kept a research diary in which I made notes on the following: the environment in which the club or school was situated; specific incidents I witnessed of interest to the research; details of impromptu ‘interviews’ and meetings with research participants outside of formal interviews. I also made a few notes concerning theoretical issues and thoughts about how concepts and categories might be developed and linked.

It should be clear from table 4.1 that I was unable to achieve my initial aim in the first vintage; and that, in total, I conducted more interviews with some groups than with others. For example, girls and ‘young adults’ (17+) were underrepresented in my sample. This is, however, not a serious problem due, in part, to a feature of GT. ‘Theoretical sampling’ dictates that the researcher can go to places and people that are significant for theoretical rather than representative reasons. This rationale, coupled with the pragmatic considerations of time and difficulty of access (particularly in schools), is sufficient, I think, to allay any fears of inadequate sampling. Under the circumstances, I believe the course of interviews I conducted was sufficient to generate rich (and sometimes emotive) research findings.

4.3. Data collection methods

The following section will briefly discuss the methods used to collect data in the first vintage. The aim here was, of course, to generate lots of open codes based on discussions provoked by innovative ‘prompts’. The intended function of these prompts will be explained in due course. But before this, a short discussion of the major method of data collection utilised throughout this research – focussed group-interviews – is undertaken.

4.3.1. Focussed Group-Interviews.

Before describing and critically evaluating this method, a few comments on the label researchers usually attach to it might be appropriate. Robert K.
Merton, the founder of what is commonly known as the 'focus group' method (Merton and Kendall, 1946; Merton et al., 1956) suggests that this term is 'barbarism'. This misuse, claims Merton (1987):

\[\ldots\text{consists in taking merely plausible interpretations deriving from qualitative group interviews and treating them as though they had been shown to be reliably valid for gauging the distributions of response (emphasis in original).}\]

Conversely, Merton's original method – the focussed group-interview – is taken "as a source of new ideas and new hypotheses, not as demonstrated findings with regard to the extent and distribution of the provisionally identified qualitative patterns of response" (Merton, 1987). Indeed, Merton claims that his original method has fallen victim to 'obliteration by incorporation' or 'the obliteration of the sources of ideas or methods by their incorporation in currently accepted knowledge' (Merton, 1987). As Merton's intentions for his method – i.e. the initial exploration of specific phenomena and generation of tentative hypotheses – match those of this research, the term 'focussed group-interview' (or FGI), will be used here for reasons of intellectual honesty.

There have, in the past, been a number of attempts to define FGIs. Some definitions focus fairly narrowly on logistics (i.e. the number of participants, time duration, group composition etc.) whereas some remain broad and open to interpretation. A useful broad yet succinct definition is offered by Morgan (1997: 2):

\[\text{As a form of qualitative research, focus groups are basically group interviews, although not in the sense of an alternation between researcher's questions and research participants' responses. Instead, the reliance is on interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of moderator. The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found within a group.}\]

This emphasis on encouraging group interaction and the researcher's role as moderator is closer, it could be argued, to Merton's original intentions than many definitions offered, typically, in market research literature (Field, 2000). Furthermore, FGIs are commonly used in situations where the researcher
wishes to empower participants, effectively allowing them to bring their own agenda, priorities and concerns to the research (Duncan, 1997). This particular feature of FGIs is of obvious attraction for the GT researcher. As Wilkinson (1998) notes:

*Compared to the one-to-one interview, it is much harder for the researcher to impose his or her own agenda in the group context... Reduced researcher control gives focus group participants much greater opportunity to set the research agenda, and to develop the themes most important to them.*

In a related sense, FGIs have been used in an attempt to break down power imbalances between researcher and participants (Pole et al., 1999; Field, 2000; Naess, 2001; Morgan et al., 2002). The group collective, it can be assumed, finds safety and confidence in numbers. This point is made well by France et al. (2000) who claim that “traditional approaches of engaging research subjects may not be the best suited methods for creating opportunities for children and young people to express their views”. It is therefore necessary to do everything possible to break-down the potential barriers uneven status (or power) inevitably erects. Field (2000) also claims that a central advantage of using FGIs “arises from the requirement for the researcher to cede a degree of control to group members”. Hence, FGIs provide a way of conducting research with people, rather than on people (West, 1996).

A further benefit of FGIs noted by Field (2000) follows from their propensity to provoke group interactions, thus enabling the researcher to study behaviour in social networks (a point also made by Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). Wilkinson (1998) goes further and suggests that FGI research ‘presupposes that sense-making is produced collectively, in the course of social interactions between people’. FGIs therefore offer the researcher a unique opportunity to analyse how views are constructed, expressed and defended (or altered) in a group context. The central point here, of course, is that people, as social animals, do not form beliefs or opinions in a vacuum, but in response to the natural groups.

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58 As we have seen, the ethical and philosophical rationale of this research demands that methods are used that allow participants agenda to lead the research (see section 1.6).
they always find themselves in (Wilkinson, 1998). A FGI is therefore to be considered itself a social context; and it is the interaction between group members that constitute the primary data (Wilkinson, 1998).

This point, however, brings up the first of a number of difficulties regarding the use of FGIs as a research tool: namely the problem of group composition. Many of these difficulties are related and, with anticipation, can be circumvented or overcome. As such, the following section will highlight potential problems before explaining how, in this research, they were negotiated.

4.3.1.1. Group Composition.
The choice here is deceptively simple: does one select a ‘representative’ or ‘pre-existing’ (i.e. friendship, family) group for the research? The argument for selecting a ‘representative’ group is made by Kitzinger (1994) and Hyden and Bulow (2001). They suggest that randomly selected groups increase the ‘general isability’ of findings and allow the exploration of diversity in people’s views. Conversely, Fern (2001) and Renold (2001) suggest that the selection of friendship groups may be necessary for enabling effective participation, particularly with children, where the aim is often to create a ‘trusting and comfortable atmosphere’ (Renold, 2001). Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) also highlight the issue of ‘networks’ within pre-existing groups, where the same individual might give different answers to the same question depending on the particular group they are situated in. For example, a 15-year-old boy might be expected to present totally contrasting views on, say, sexual experiences if participating in groups populated by a) his parents, b) his school-friends and c) girls of the same age.

This point, however, leads to a potential solution. Kitzinger (1994) claims that the discussion topic should strongly influence the decision to sample a pre-existing or representative group. In the example given above, it would therefore be sensible, if you wished to elicit ‘accurate’ views, to sample a same sex friendship group as opposed to a family group. Fern (2001) also suggests that ‘generalisability’ is not a legitimate concern in FGI research, a
position supported by discussion in earlier chapters (see section 3.6). Given these views, the decision was taken in this research to use friendship groups. This decision can be supported by a two-fold argument. First, the nature of the topic seems to suggest that team-mates or class-mates might provide the most lively discussion of their football experiences. Second, as the research findings will not be generalisable to a wider population (at least, not in a statistical sense), sampling representative groups would have been both time-consuming and pointless (this is also a pragmatic argument).

4.3.1.2. Power and Dominant Voices.
Related to the previous difficulty of group composition, a number of authors claim that dominant individuals can force ‘party line’ opinions on the rest of the group, particularly in familiar groups (Reed and Payton, 1997; Smithson, 2000). This concern is shared by Field (2000) who concedes that ‘some individuals are likely to seek to overtly dominate the group, while others may attempt covert domination’. However, on reflection, Reed and Payton (1997) conclude that such domination is difficult to subvert and that, in many cases, such instances provide interesting data about group dynamics in themselves. As Field (2000) notes: “the influence of dominant individuals...may be precisely what we need to take into account”.

With reference to this problem, Smithson (2000) draws a distinction between ‘natural’ (i.e. open) and ‘artificial’ (i.e. influenced by a dominant individual) discussion. Smithson (2000) concludes, however, that ‘there is no simple opposition between the institution and the everyday, or the artificial and the real’. Hence, neither kind of data (artificial or natural) is intrinsically better than the other; everything depends on the method of analysis. As such, Smithson (2000) recommends that all FGI data should be analysed as discussions occurring in specific controlled settings, and that, in analysis, we must account for the social context in which data are gathered. Thus, the ‘problem’ of dominant voices is not one that can necessarily be overcome. Rather, dominant views should be regarded as a form of data in themselves, providing valuable information about group dynamics and, perhaps, the ways in which dominant opinions are established.
It should be noted here that such situations did arise in this research. In some cases a powerful individual would often serve to start discussions and help others feel at ease with the situation. At other times, however, it was clear that submissive participants were being ‘shouted down’ by dominant members. In these situations attempts were made to ‘step in’ and control the discussion, thus allowing the quieter voices to be heard.

4.3.1.3. Recording Context and Issues in Analysis.
Following from the last point, and considering the claims made earlier about the value of group interaction, some authors suggest there is great value to be gained by recording the context in which FGIs take place. Morgan et al. (2002) and Dowling-Naess (2001) for example, employed additional researchers in their FGIs to make records of the nature of group interactions and body-language. Such observational data can be analysed with the text to provide a richer account of the views and meanings expressed within the group.

It has been claimed (Smithson, 2000; Reed and Payton, 1997) that accounting for the context in which discussion takes place is vital for adequate FGI analysis. However, it is rarely made clear how this is to be achieved. Surely not all researchers have the luxury of additional helpers to record mood and body language (as I didn’t); and the post-hoc analysis of context is problematic. Following Wilkinson (1998), Smithson (2000) essentially argues that all FGI data are a performance; that opinions are constructed jointly through group interaction; and that group opinions do not ‘belong’ to individuals, rather they are discourses that emerge from a specific context. Based on this argument, Smithson (2000) suggests two ways of accounting for context when analysing FGI data: looking at the constructions of collective voices; and highlighting diverse voices. In the first strategy, the aim is to analyse and understand views as ‘a collective procedure leading to consensus’ (not an individual’s view). In the second strategy, it is the researcher’s goal to ‘highlight the emergence of diverse voices’. In conclusion, Smithson (2000) suggests the two strategies might be used in tandem in any analysis to account for the interactive nature of the data.
In the analysis of the FGI data generated in this study, an understanding of the collective procedure of approaching, and sometimes reaching, consensus views was sought. This was, however, not always possible as blunt disagreements were common. In such cases, it was interesting to highlight contrasting opinions. Occasional arguments and incidents of playing devil’s advocate often served to test the conviction of people's opinions.

4.3.1.4. FGIs: A Summary.
To conclude this discussion of FGIs, a brief summary of the arguments that qualify the decision to employ the method in this research can be made. First, FGIs enabled the agenda of the participants to surface; bringing forward their own priorities and perspectives, “creating theory grounded in the actual experience and language of [the participants]” (Smithson, 2000). Second, and in a related sense, FGIs might be useful with disadvantaged or ‘powerless’ groups (e.g. children and young people) where the comfort or safety of the group serves to balance the uneven power relations constructed by age. Another feature of FGIs is their flexibility. The possibility of combining FGIs with child-friendly ‘adjuncts’ or ‘prompts’ to initiate discussion was of critical importance in terms of helping young people communicate in a contrived and alien situation. This synthesis is the subject of the next section.

4.3.2. Discussion Prompts.
It has been suggested by Lloyd-Smith and Tarr (2000) that a lack of confidence in methodological tools has acted as a significant deterrent to those wishing to research children's perceptions or the world. In response, a number of authors have begun to discuss the importance of developing innovative techniques to facilitate discussions when interviewing young people (cf. Morrow, 1999; Morgan et al., 2002; Renold, 2001; Kay et al., 2003). This concern originates from the recognition that young people have different modes of communication than adults. Morrow (1999), for example, suggests that children are most comfortable in situations where they can employ communication skills they are accustomed to and proficient in (e.g. story writing or painting pictures). Researchers should not therefore assume
children and young people will be able to communicate effectively in a formal interview situation. That is not to say that they are poor communicators; rather, they simply prefer, or are accustomed to, communicating in different ways. Finding ways to engage with and empower young people has therefore become a central concern of childhood and adolescence researchers.

In their research on the health and religious beliefs of young people respectively, France et al. (2000) and Nesbitt (2000) designed a number of methods to help young people communicate more effectively. These include: draw and write exercises; labelling pictures; discussing vignettes; photograph discussions; and personal diaries. In an attempt to negotiate power barriers with very young children, Morgan et al. (2002) used puppets and toys to act out sensitive scenarios with victims of sexual abuse. In another example, Morrow (1999) offered a choice of communication methods in her studies with primary school children. Some chose to draw or paint pictures, others chose to write stories; but in each case the activities prompted interesting discussions.

Offering a choice of communication activities in FGIs with young people appears to increase the likelihood of stimulating fruitful discussions. In an excellent resource recently published by Save the Children (Children are Service Users Too), Fajerman et al. (2004) introduce a number of activities to assist the researcher (or service provider) in consulting young people. Among the numerous techniques they describe (many are designed for use with young children and thus not suitable in this context) two were considered for use in the early stages of the research: ‘mind maps’ and ‘likes/dislikes’.

Mind maps are now a commonplace activity in many English classrooms. They often require the child to think about features of an issue or item and to draw a diagram to represent this (Buzan, 2003). This is often, essentially, a descriptive exercise, but it promotes thought about a particular issue or topic and involves writing and drawing: activities young people are usually comfortable with. Fajerman et al. (2004) note that mind maps are familiar to young people and can be adapted to suit any age group: simple, descriptive,
picture-based and colourful for the very young; or detailed, connected and analytical for young adults. Furthermore, in the context of GT, it could be argued that mind maps are a useful method through which young people can generate their own 'open codes' on a roughly defined topic (e.g. football).

The second 'adjunct' activity used in the early stages was also derived from Children are Service Users Too (Fajerman et al., 2004). The 'likes/dislikes' exercise was adopted due to its simplicity and flexibility. In this research, young people were asked to work in small groups (sometimes pairs) with a large piece of paper (A1 size), listing and drawing pictures of the things they liked and disliked most about football. These were then compared to identify points of agreement and disagreement among the group, ultimately leading to lively discussion on the factors that made football enjoyable or unpleasant.

By combining these innovative, child-friendly adjuncts with the traditional FGI, it was possible to facilitate discussions on a wide range of issues. Due to the flexible nature of the exercises, it was also possible to modify the FGI schedule for different groups e.g. big paper, colourful pens and drawing exercises for 8-10-year-olds; and more formalised interview questions for 17+ groups. In the early stages of the first vintage, the topics of discussion were always driven by the young people. Younger groups were encouraged to discuss the topics that arose from the drawing and writing exercises. With older groups open questions were used and attempts were made to avoid leading discussions, as far as possible, in any particular direction. This was, however, rather difficult, particularly with groups of teenage boys who, in some cases, found it difficult to say anything at all – even when confronted with a simple closed question. It is to such practical data collection issues we now turn. By writing a 'confessional' narrative (van Maanen, 1988; Sparkes, 2002) it is possible to highlight both the difficulties and benefits of undertaking such a research strategy. Others following such an approach might therefore avoid the mistakes and repeat, or build on, the successful elements of this research.

The following chapter is broken down into smaller sub-sections to denote salient stages in the first vintage. I begin by discussing the lessons learned during the pilot study before highlighting some of the issues I came upon in schools and a youth parliament group who completed the first vintage (see table 4.1 above).

4.4.1. The Pilot Study: Learning Lessons.

Before embarking on the data collection process in earnest, I undertook a week-long pilot study at Wallsend Town FC in Newcastle in March 2005. The club was situated in a deprived area northeast of the city in a former shipbuilding district. They had no facilities of their own and used a variety of council-owned pitches dotted around the area. The club had recently formed but had quickly achieved CS development status following the hard work of two committed individuals. They exist in the shadow of the well-established Wallsend Boys Club who have a long tradition of developing professional players (e.g. Alan Shearer, Steve Bruce).

My central aim here was to trial run some of the innovative methods I had developed in an attempt to identify potential problems. I also wanted to work out how long I might have to spend building rapport with teams before I felt confident enough to conduct an interview. Some additional side issues I wished to explore included: working through the informed consent process; developing trust with staff and players; and facilitating FGIs.

Over the course of the week, everything that could have gone wrong did. My first visit with the under-14s was effectively washed out by torrential storms and gale-force winds. Then, returning from my second visit, in which I conducted my first interview with a group of U14 boys, I made the following anguished entry in my research diary (see appendix C for full diary):

`Interview 1 (Wallsend Town U14s)
There were a complex of difficulties including, but not limited to:
1). The difficult age of the respondents (14 years) which may have been partly responsible for their lack of articulation and elaboration on various`
issues. However, this may have also been due to my inability to draw out further comment with follow-up questions. 2). This is linked to my attempts to keep strictly to the GT approach and not asking any direct questions. Maybe I need to develop a set of following questions once they have highlighted certain points themselves (see below). 3). My lack of rapport with the participants and the way they ‘volunteered’ for interview. I think I really need to spend at least 4-6 sessions with a group before I try an interview; also, upon asking them to volunteer, I need to fully explain the nature of the interview and what will be required of them. In the interview they seemed very withdrawn and cagey from the outset which I feel limited their participation significantly. Also, name badges would have been useful in this case, but perhaps unnecessary in future sessions where I already know participants.  

Recommendations:

- I need to spend more time developing rapport over a number of sessions in order to make the participants comfortable, and thus talkative, before an interview.
- I need to make it absolutely clear from the outset what I am doing there and what I would like from them. Also, the concept of consent!

Review the GT method of questioning and see if there is scope to focus questions around certain topics as they arise. I think there is and may try this in the next interview… (Research diary entry: 07.03.05)

At the time, I felt that it would be much more difficult to conduct the research as planned than I had initially imagined. Among others things, my greatest concern was that the GT imperative of not ‘forcing’ the data – given the fact that I got virtually no response to my open questions – would be impossible to follow. Disappointed and a little angry with myself, I set to work developing a set of non-leading questions I thought would be suitable for use in future ‘emergencies’ (i.e. at times when original prompts elicited little response):

Potential questions (in addition to what are your experiences of football? and what are the good and bad things about football?):

- What other sports/activities do you do and how do they compare to football?
- Do you do football at school? How does it compare to football at the club? (and vice versa).
- How did you get involved in football? (Parents?)
- Why do you continue to play football? Are there any other things you do that take up spare time apart from football?
- What are the best/worse things about a training session and/or game? (Research diary entry: 07.03.05)

In the second interview with a group of under-10s, I was able to facilitate a much more fruitful discussion. They were, in the first instance, far more responsive to the likes/dislikes exercise than the U14s had been with the Mind
maps. Beyond this technical issue, the major reason this group responded positively to me was, I feel, simply their age. Unlike before, where the U14s had been guarded and suspicious, the U10s were happy and playful and couldn’t wait to tell me their opinions on a number of matters. As I noted in my diary after this second interview:

The age factor seemed to be most important as they were laughing and joking throughout. They also found the drawing and writing aspects more engaging and argued playfully over who had stolen whose ideas, and whose pictures were the best. The number of codes they developed was more numerous and therefore we had more to talk about in the conclusion. They also responded well to the question of whether or not football at the club was better than at school. I think this type of comparative question gives them a frame of reference and allows them to articulate their feelings in more depth. (Research diary entry: 10.03.05)

That is not to say, however, that this second session proceeded without difficulties. I noted further in my diary that I had failed to control the FGI, especially toward the end where a number of boys began to dominate the session, messing around and distracting the others. Further problems, however, lay outside my control. First, the coach hadn’t distributed letters to parents as we had agreed prior to the session. I therefore had to obtain written consent from parents during the session whilst explaining what the research was all about. Second, the changing room in which the FGI took place echoed terribly. This wasn’t something I noticed until I attempted to transcribe the interview (which proved almost impossible) some weeks later. The changing room was also open to the public and during the interview random men walked in and got changed, compromising my claims that the information disclosed would be kept confidential.

On reflection, the pilot study\footnote{Although this was technically a pilot study, and I wasn’t necessarily content with the way I had facilitated the interviews, some useful data were generated and I saw no reason not to use them.} constituted a tremendously valuable learning experience. Aside from the value of being around, and familiarising myself with, a youth football environment, the important lessons I learned from this experience can be summarised as follows:
• There is a need to spend more time with groups prior to interview so as to develop rapport and establish some trust (particularly with the difficult 13-16 age group).

• Develop a range of methods and open/comparative questions in case discussion falls flat during an interview (whilst guarding against the violation of the GT imperative).

• Make it absolutely clear to participants and parents, from the earliest point possible, what I am doing there and what I want from them.

• Do not leave important tasks, like distributing letters to parents and describing the purpose of the research, to others. Young people must be aware of what the research is about and how they can help.

• Identify potential interview locations early and check them out for suitability.

4.4.2. Making a Start in Schools.

Upon returning from Wallsend I decided to change my approach to data collection. First, I developed a detailed interview guide that would help me facilitate more successful FGIs, including the questions I had developed after the first interview (see appendix D). Second, I decided that I would have to spend more time with groups prior to interview trying to develop trusting relationships. I had no idea how long this might take, though I suspected it would vary significantly with age (less time for younger groups, more for adolescents). My new aim was therefore to contact schools and clubs within easy commuting distance. This way I could spend significant time in an environment without feeling pressurised into rushing toward an interview.

The selection of schools at this stage was based on the fulfilment of criteria I believed would provide me with access to the greatest range of participants:

• There must be a large number of pupils (i.e. 50+) taking part in regular football sessions.

• School must provide for boys’ and girls’ teams.

• School should provide regular out-of-school-hours football sessions.

• If possible, the school should have a diverse cultural/ethnic mix.
This information was derived from the mapping questionnaire data (see appendix E) and a shortlist of suitable cases was drawn up. I proceeded to contact schools in close proximity to my two possible bases, sending information by post or email if the initial telephone conversation had been successful. The first school offering a positive response was Thorpe Acre junior school in Loughborough. The school draws most of its pupils from a nearby council estate with a healthy mix of black, white and Asian children. At the time of my visit (April 2005), the school had held CS status for one year and were developing a very popular after-school programme for boys and girls. The girls’ teams were involved in an active sports programme that placed them in a competitive local league, of which the boys were rather jealous.

After 3 weeks of visits (1 or 2 visits per week), I felt sufficiently comfortable to conduct an interview. I began with a group of year 5 and 6 boys who were lively and responsive during a lunchtime session. Happy with the way the interview went, I followed it up quickly with a group of year 5 and 6 girls later the same week. Following the second interview I made my first of a set of operational and ‘theoretical’ memos in my research diary:

_Thorpe Acre JS, Interview year 5 & 6 girls (aged 8-11)_
The interview began well with some interesting and diverse answers to the question: how did you first get involved in football? I think this is a useful way to begin an interview from now on and helps participants to think about their own early experiences and reasons for playing. It allows them all to contribute early to the interview which may help build confidence. I think that instructions about the exercise may have been made clearer - they need to know just to get an idea down quickly rather than writing down whole sentences. Also, I think my questions pertaining to their answers could be more focussed (no double or triple questions). A core outcome of this interview is the idea of ‘youth football trajectories’. Early answers highlighted differences in age and how they became involved in football - significant others and reasons for dropout. Over a range of ages, this could be fruitfully developed so as to understand how young people experience football throughout their lives: how they begin, who is important, what they like/dislike, how this impacts on their commitment to continue playing and how and why they move from school to club football and so on... (Research diary entry: 26.04.05)

Although this idea of ‘youth football trajectories’ was effectively generated by my use of the question: how did you first get involved in football? I still
believed it was a potentially interesting way of looking at the data. I did, however, warn myself not to consider this too seriously at this early stage and to remain open to the ideas of the young participants. Another important realisation here concerned my questioning technique. After listening to the interview, I realised I was often asking double or even triple questions. I believe this behaviour follows from the inability of some participants to fully comprehend the questions I was asking; my immediate reaction to continue blurting out the same question phrased differently. Becoming conscious of this annoying habit helped me to overcome it, to a certain extent, in future interviews.

One additional (and happy) point to make about this visit concerns the positive practical outcomes of my interviews. Both boys and girls suggested that they would like to play in the Champions League in their interviews. One teacher who sat in on the sessions decided this might be a good idea and inaugurated the schools first ‘Champions League’ competition in the following weeks. I was invited back to the school on a number of occasions to teach football, baseball and referee matches. Each time I returned, the children explained how excited they were about the next round of games where their team, Real Madrid, would take on arch rivals, Barcelona. The local newspaper even ran a story covering the competition which, of course, increased the children’s excitement yet further.

The third trip I made during the first vintage involved repeated visits to two schools in the Rochdale area: Siddal Moor Sports College (Heywood) and St. Mary’s RC Primary School (Littleborough). Both schools are situated in relatively poor semi-rural areas and have predominantly white student populations. Siddal Moor, being a SSC, is the hub of the local SSP in Heywood. Its facilities are therefore excellent, as is the quality of the teaching staff. Conversely, St. Mary’s lay outside the nearest SSP at the time I visited and sport provision was piecemeal and poorly facilitated (the PE coordinator

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60 It is claimed by some contemporary authors (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 2000) that ‘catalytic’ and ‘tactical’ authenticity – or the ability of the researcher to prompt action on the part of research participants – might be used as a criterion to judge the quality of social research.
was clearly not interested in sport). The contrasting status of the two schools was not, however, reflected in the enthusiasm of the pupils.

Over a period of 3 weeks, I visited both schools on an almost daily basis coaching football and basketball sessions and generally helping out with after-school activities. At St. Mary's, the children would always present me with a warm welcome – I was the 'football guy' who came at lunchtimes. At Siddal Moor, I was less conspicuous, but I was able to develop a good rapport with 2 groups in particular: the year 7-8 boys with whom I coached basketball for 3 weeks (the usual teacher was happy to let an 'expert' take over); and the year 11 boys with whom I played football on Fridays. This latter group presented a special 'challenge' to me in a physical sense: testing me out, as it were, on the field with a few robust challenges. My response was to give as good as I got, not something advised in the ethics guidelines, but I felt it was necessary in that particular group. That is to say, I feel that I would have lost their respect – and thus trust – had I not treated them equally. I have found that boys at this age, in trying to work you out, often present physical or technical challenges in a football environment. Backing down in such situations would severely compromise any chance of developing trust and, as a consequence, of obtaining 'good' data in an interview situation.

Each of the 5 FGIs I conducted in these schools (3 at Siddal Moor, 2 at St. Mary's) built significantly on the learning experiences of the past. I felt my interview technique developing, making me far more comfortable and relaxed. I also experimented with some new techniques to facilitate data collection with the older groups (Siddal Moor year 11 boys, year 8-9 girls). In these cases, an earlier impromptu interview with a boy in a lesson caused me to think about what other things – i.e. apart from football – dominated the leisure time of the young participants. The diary entry recounting the interview and my theoretical memo ran as follows:

_Siddal Moor, Year 10 Boys Volleyball class_

_During the session, I speak to a boy called Danny who is sitting out due to injury. I tell him what I am doing and ask if he plays football. He tells me he did, but has since stopped playing. He says he wasn't getting picked for his_
club team and wasn’t enjoying it even when he did get in. He also plays volleyball for the school besides basketball and rugby league. This places constraints on his leisure time and the commitment he is able to make to each sport, he says. He appears very polite and committed (demonstrated by his mere presence) to volleyball. It would be interesting to see where football stands in the sporting priorities of other students at the school, particularly at this age (11-14), to get an idea about “sampling” and how common it is, and how it affects their sporting “careers”. Also, how do certain sports win out over others?
(Research diary entry: 05.05.05)

Following this, I took paper (A4) and pens into my interviews and asked participants to note down, in order of importance, what they did in their leisure time. This led me to think further about ‘football careers’ as a way of organising the data: what influences decisions to take up, stay in, or get out of football. Again, at this point I wasn’t thinking too seriously about theory, but the importance people were attaching to football at this stage caused me to think about where it fits with other important elements of their lives.

Back at St. Mary's, I had conducted interviews with groups of boys and girls. In the boys’ interview, the concept of ‘feeling under pressure’ and its impact on performance was raised for the first time. This interested me greatly and became a focus of future interviews with younger groups. In the girls’ interview, it was especially noticeable, again for the first time, how much their experience of football was dominated by hatred of boys. I feel this was rooted in the fact that football sessions were mixed at the school, and girls often felt marginalised because of the dominant physical play of the boys. The nature of such ‘gender wars’ thus became a point of interest here and would inform my future interviews with female groups.

The final visit I made that ‘closed’ the first vintage was with a non-football group again based in Rochdale. At this point I had become concerned that I would only be able to access one side of the story – that I couldn’t really get a handle on what motivated young people to play football – if I didn’t speak to those who, for whatever reason, did not play football. I gained access to this
group – the Rochdale Youth Council (RYC)\textsuperscript{61} – via my father who works in the education department. I had also met previously with the group coordinator to inform her about my project and discuss the best strategy for conducting an interview.

I spent the whole day with the RYC, many of whom were Muslims of Pakistani origin (all were highly experienced in group discussion situations) talking about football, cricket (the Ashes were on TV) and sport in general. The interview was most valuable from a non-sporting perspective. In particular, many of the Muslim girls in the group openly discussed the barriers they feel prevent them from participating in sport (especially football). One story, recorded in my research diary, illustrated the problems Muslim girls face if they wish to get involved in football:

One of the support staff - a Muslim lady - came to talk to me after the session. She told me that many Muslim families are still actively discouraging their children, mainly daughters, from playing football. She said that 'Bend it like Beckham' was seen as heresy and that she knew of many parents who had prevented their daughters from seeing the film, scared that it might empower them. She also told me that the young Asian women group they work with managed to access some grant money to spend on leisure activities. They voted on what to spend the money on and decided that football was the popular option. However, they also decided not to tell their parents they were playing football, simply telling them they were doing “sport” instead. She believes this negative attitude toward sport, and football in particular, will soon be broken down with the 3rd generation of Muslims in England. Attitudes, she tells me, are already changing. (Research diary entry: 11.08.05)

This incident, along with general discussion in the session, caused me to think about potential barriers to participation, the role of racism in football, separate leagues for ethnic minorities, and whether all this was good or bad for community integration in general. These are issues that clearly extend far beyond the pitch, but can be studied, I feel, through the microcosm of football.

\textsuperscript{61} Youth councils are now common in most UK towns and cities. It is their function to meet and discuss contemporary issues, occasionally political issues, with feedback informing local government services and practices. For example, on the day of my visit, an educational psychologist was asking their opinions about dealing with bullying in school.
4.5. Open Coding and Early Conceptualisation.

During the breaks between visits, I transcribed the interviews and analysed the data using N*Vivo software. Following coding techniques described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and, to a lesser extent, Charmaz (2003), I began to generate open codes with line-by-line, ‘microscopic’ analysis of the FGI transcripts. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 70-71) claim that microanalysis is useful at the start of a research project ‘to discover categories and uncover relationships among concepts’. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 65-70) list 9 key functions of microanalysis, salient features of which are summarised below:

1. Focuses attention on details, both descriptive and analytical, making comparisons that allow the researcher to ‘break data apart’ and reconstruct them in an interpretive scheme.

2. Causes researchers to listen closely to and focus on what participants are saying to them, taking into account their interpretations.

3. Involves asking lots of questions of the data, both general and specific e.g. Who? What? When? Why? How?. Asking theoretical questions can help establish under what conditions phenomena occur and what the consequences of action might be.

4. Involves making provisional hypotheses (relational statements about concepts) that begin as crude formulations but become more precise over time.

5. Encourages examination of ‘taken for granted’ assumptions. False assumptions will crumble when compared to data, incident by incident.

More specifically, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 74-83) elaborate further on the key processes of asking questions and making comparisons.

In asking the question: “what is a good question?” Strauss and Corbin (1998: 75-76) explain that it is one that ‘leads the researcher to answers that serve the developing theoretical formation’. The focus of questions should therefore change with the development of the research: focussed on central phenomena early in a study; then aimed at ‘fleshing out’ existing concepts in later stages. Questions, we are told, should also move from substantive topics (e.g. what drugs are teenagers using?) to theoretical issues (e.g. how do images of the future affect whether or not teenagers take drugs?). In this way,
the researcher moves from listening, to closely examining data for clues of how two concepts relate to one another (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 75). We must remain aware, however, that questions do not generate data, only ideas or ways of thinking about data. Questions stimulate thinking about where to go next: who or where to sample and what type of questions to ask.

With reference to the second key process of making comparisons, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 78) assert that "comparative analysis is usually built into a research project, whether explicit or implicit". The aim, therefore, is to make comparison explicit as it is a central feature of the methodology. In GT, the object of making comparisons "is to become sensitive to the number and types of properties that might pertain to phenomena that otherwise might not be noticed, or noticed much later" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 82). At a practical level, this might involve comparing incident to incident, concepts to categories, or similar to different concepts to bring out properties and dimensions (p. 93-94).

These important features of analysis and coding can be illustrated with an example from this research. In the example below, the aim is to show how a concept was generated after microanalysis of data; how the properties and dimensions of this concept changed after comparison; and how hypotheses were developed that led to further sampling and questioning.

4.5.1. An Example of Analysing and Coding Data.

I took the following data extracts from an early interview with 11-12-year-old boys who played for the school team at Siddal Moor.

_Jack_: Last Sunday, we won in the cup semi-final, and in the game this lad hit the post, the keeper went down on the edge of the box, open net and I hit it over the bar. Then everyone were going on at me cos we losing 4-3 in the last five minutes...

_Robert_: And also in school, you're trying to play for your place a bit more cos there's lost more people... so there's a bit more pressure on you as well to play good.
(Siddal Moor year 7-8 boys, 13.05.05)
Upon reading this transcript, I initially asked the following questions of the data:

- What’s going on here? What are they telling me?

In this case, both boys were simply describing situations when they feel, or have felt, under pressure. So I asked myself the further question:

- Under what conditions do they feel under pressure?

In the first case it seemed to be a reaction to criticisms directed at poor performance; in the second case it appeared to be a reaction to the structure of the playing environment at the school. As a result, the data led me to generate the concept ‘under pressure’. The properties of which I roughly described as follows:

Performance anxiety applied by others: perhaps teachers, coaches, team mates, competitors, parents (social facilitation?)

Some days later, I conducted an interview with another group of boys at St. Mary’s and the subject of being ‘under pressure’ came up again (this time as a direct response to the likes/dislikes exercise):

I: What about this: ‘being put under pressure’. What does this mean?  
Tom: When everyone’s like - when you’re taking a penalty - and the go: ‘Oooooh - you’re rubbish’…
Will: People put pressure on you to do well…
I: Can you think of an example when things like that have happened?  
Will: When I used to play up front for school, so if I hadn’t scored any goals after a game then I’d feel like a bit…
Chris: Kill you!
Will: Like I haven’t done my job…and when I play centre-back at club level, if you like make a mistake then you feel like…
Chris: That’s what I did, when I like make a mistake, cos I handballed it in the box…
Tom: Shhh, Chris, don’t remind me.
I: Is that something that comes from you - do you put yourself under pressure?  
Will: Well, you can put your self under pressure but… well, if you like miss a chance and everyone’s like: ‘Oh, why didn’t you score it, why did you do that’.
I: Is that like your team-mates or…
Will: Well it could be your team-mates or people on the sideline.
(St. Mary’s year 6 boys, 23.05.05)
Here, by asking the same questions as before and comparing this incident to the previous incidents, I expanded the initial description of the concept ‘under pressure’ to include two distinct dimensions: ‘pressure from outside’, and ‘pressure from within’. The new description ran as follows:

*Performance anxiety applied by others: teachers, coaches, team mates, competitors, parents (social facilitation?) - or from within (cognitive dissonance?) Has different dimensions: ‘pressure from outside’ and ‘pressure from within’.*

Clearly, two established concepts from psychology – social facilitation and cognitive dissonance – informed my thinking here. In the case of the latter, I hypothesised that the players’ own self-expectations might generate anxiety if they didn’t ‘do their job’ (as Will put it). I also wanted to know what effect being ‘under pressure’ had on performance. Some clues to this came up in the same interview:

*I: Okay, let’s look at some of the things we got down - good things about football. Scoring, getting a goal, heading a goal, scoring a penalty...
Tom: (reading) Express yourself.
I: Who wrote that?
Will: Me.
I: What do you mean by expressing yourself?
Will: Cos you can just...when you’re playing well...you can just play how you want to play and it’s dead good unlike...
I: When do you feel like that?
Will: Just when you’re playing well, and then you just get more confidence other than sometimes when you’ve got pressure on you than, y’know, you don’t want to do anything to make a mistake.
(St. Mary’s year 6 boys, 23.05.05)*

I had already generated a concept named ‘express yourself’, which I later changed to ‘self expression’, to capture the idea of freedom and confidence that characterised this feeling. After analysing the passage above, I asked myself the following questions:

- What is the nature of the relationship between ‘under pressure’ and ‘self expression’?
- Could it be that anxiety (or pressure) inhibits players’ ability to express themselves?
If expressing yourself is an enjoyable feature of football for young people, what are implications for those who might be responsible for applying pressure to others (coaches, parents etc.)?

In order to capture my thoughts on this matter, and as a reminder to explore this issue in future interviews, I wrote the following memo after an extended bout of data analysis at the end of the first vintage:

**Memo - pressure and expression (22.09.05)**

Perhaps the codes 'under pressure' and 'self expression' are related? In an interview, one boy talks about being able to express himself when there's no pressure to perform.

[Data exert repeated from above]

As both codes are recurring, it would be interesting to see if this relationship is also common. Essentially, do players feel happier and able to express themselves - and thus, enjoy football - when pressure to perform is absent? Also, what are the implications of this if it does turn out to be corroborated? If creating a pressurised, performance orientated environment causes young players to play 'within themselves' (i.e. with fear of making a mistake), can we expect players to be confident and try creative moves later on?

This could be explored with agree disagree statements, questions or a vignette.

In preparing for the second vintage, I wrote a vignette based on the data exerts coded into this concept. This was then used as a prompt to provoke discussion on this issue in future interviews.

4.5.2. N*Vivo Software and Qualitative Data Analysis.

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) has become an increasingly popular tool with qualitative researchers over the last 20 years (Crowley *et al.*, 2002). The move away from traditional, manual methods of storing, filing, analysing and retrieving data has been facilitated by new developments in computer technology, creating a range of new opportunities for qualitative researchers. And, although this “overthrow of the old regime” may have been “profoundly conservative” – perhaps marked by fear and uncertainty – (Richards, 2002a) researchers working with qualitative methods are now expected to use CAQDAS (ESRC, 2001). Two of the most
sophisticated packages – NUD*IST and, more recently, N*Vivo – have been
developed by Qualitative Solutions and Research (QSR) to assist qualitative
researchers in their analyses (Crowley et al., 2002). Due to its advanced
functions, as compared to NUD*IST, N*Vivo was used in this research
following Bringer’s (2004) explanation of how it assisted her in demonstrating
transparency in a GT doctoral thesis.

Debate in this field has been piecemeal and infrequent (Richards, 2002a).
However, the little debate that does exist focuses on the following common
criticisms of CAQDAS:

1. Computers encourage quantitative content analysis in qualitative
   studies; reflected in extreme concerns that CAQDAS involves turning
   words into numbers (Crowley et al., 2002).

2. Computers will somehow take over analysis, posing the question: “who
   is in charge, the software or the researcher?” Such concerns are often
   reflected in enquiries such as: “Will it let me...?” (Crowley et al., 2002).

3. CAQDAS is used as a prima facie validation of rigour in analysis. There
   is a false expectation that CAQDAS will enhance rigour and make
   analysis more systematic (Bringer et al., 2004).

The first and second of these concerns can be overcome with a simple
counter argument: we accept that the researcher must still interpret,
conceptualise, examine relationships, document decisions and develop
theory. In short it must be understood that “the computer can assist in these
tasks, but by no means does the computer analyse qualitative data” (Bringer
et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is necessary to realise that “the researcher is not
hostage to qualitative software” (Crowley et al., 2002); that they can, at any
point, defer to manual methods if they feel in any way constrained by the
software. This rather obvious point is made at some length in the literature
(Crowley et al., 2002; Richards, 2002a; Morse and Richards, 2002; Richards,
2002b; Bryman, 2001: 406-409), so there is little value in labouring it here.

The third criticism listed above can only be dispelled, however, with a clear
demonstration of how the software was used. Hence, a clear and transparent
account of how and why N*Vivo was employed in this research can go some way toward demonstrating rigour. Before offering such an account, some of the more generic advantages CAQDAS is purported to offer the qualitative researcher can be outlined.

Perhaps the single most important characteristic of N*Vivo is that it enables the researcher to leave an audit trail, documenting key decisions that steered their research (Bringer et al., 2004). Given the earlier discussion on the quality of qualitative research (see section 3.6)\(^{62}\), it seems reasonable that a conscientious researcher should do everything possible to demonstrate transparency in his or her research. In this respect, it has been argued that CAQDAS offers "the `revolutionary' prospect of demonstrating methodological congruence because of a level of transparency that is so labour intensive that it is rarely, if ever, seen in manual methods" (Morse and Richards, 2002). Or, as Crowley et al. (2002) put it:

*It could be argued that (any) use of such software makes analysis more visible, thereby enhancing transparency and so the quality of evidence and argument might be more easily judged.*

In their excellent paper outlining this process, Bringer et al. (2004) use ‘screen prints’ taken at salient points in the project to show the reader how the research evolved over time. Arguably, this is of utmost importance in a GT study where the ‘evolutionary’ nature of the research is pronounced. Indeed, it has been suggested by some that the creation of CAQDAS, particularly N*Vivo, was predicated on styles of analysis owing much to GT (Coffey et al. 1996).

Further advantages follow from the organising, coding and linking properties of the software. Arguing against the assertion that computers have simply

\(^{62}\)This argument can be summarised as follows: we can no longer judge social research quality by appealing to outmoded notions of validity; because, after postmodernism, we cannot assume the ‘truth’ of the accounts we present. If validity is concerned with the accuracy of an account (Hammersley 1990: 57) – or its proximity to some external reality – how, in a world of multiple realities, can we judge one account as more accurate than the next? If this argument is philosophically (or ontologically) sound, we must abandon all appeals to ‘validity’, so defined, for assessing the quality of qualitative research. Transparency is therefore the only logical method through which we can allow others to judge the quality of our reports.
replaced filing cabinets – presenting benefits merely in ‘administration and archiving’ – Richards (2002a) claims CAQDAS has broadened the methodological horizons of qualitative research significantly:

Unlike filing cabinets, index cards or coloured pens, the computer provided effectively unlimited ability to code text rapidly and multiply, potentially removing the boundaries of limited storage capacity in paper filing systems. The software was able to link text with codes, to retrieve text according to the category or categories at which it was coded, importantly retrieving too the context.

This last point, about retrieving data in context, might be emphasised considering the earlier discussion on the analysis of FGI data (see section 4.3.1.3). Further to these benefits in coding and organising data, the ability to search and thus develop theoretical insights about data has been enhanced with modern developments. The live node browser (a feature of N*Vivo), for instance, offers to take the user into new modes of reflecting on and reviewing the results of coding. Researchers can now code, then browse, recode, rethink, return to the document (context) and revise (Richards, 2002a). Such flexibility can only be an advantage to the researcher who wishes to develop sophisticated and integrated analyses of complex phenomenon.

The ‘model explorer’ function in N*Vivo also creates opportunities for the researcher to access data ‘live’ and compare incidents to ideas in memos or with concept descriptions. Changes can be made ‘on-the-fly’ as the researcher develops ideas and new ways of thinking about data, concepts and theoretical relationships. All of this can be illustrated graphically and accessed live with N*Vivo’s model explorer (see figure 4.1 below).
Figure 4.1. The model explorer window, depicting nodes, memos and conceptual links.

Using a clearer image, it is also possible to demonstrate how memos and concepts were linked and kept together in one place, thus allowing the researcher to keep track of their thoughts on the links between two concepts. In figure 4.2 (below), it is possible see how the concepts used in the earlier example – 'under pressure' and 'self expression' – were displayed along with the memo explaining their potential relationship.
Figure 4.2. Close-up view showing how memos and concepts can be linked using the model explorer function.

With reference to GT, this function also assists in developing theoretical models that are important in the process of theory building. In this sense, NVivo supplies structure and organisation (Crowley et al., 2002) in the (necessary) absence of theory which is of great value in the early stages of a GT project when it is easy to get lost in open coding.

In summary, the opportunities NVivo presents to the qualitative researcher clearly outweigh the potential drawbacks. However, the important caveats many authors point out when drawing on the assistance of computer software must not be overlooked. CAQDAS is, and will only ever be, a tool which is potentially beneficial to qualitative analysis. Indeed, the extent to which it can benefit analysis is largely dependent on the skill of, and choices made by, the researcher using it.

4.5.2.1. Using NVivo Software.

Having assessed the relative merits and demerits of using NVivo, I shall now attempt to outline the ways in which it was employed in my research. First, I
created rich text documents and transcripts were copied into the project. My research diary (or journal) was also kept in the project file, recording my thoughts on emerging practical and theoretical issues. The diary was also used to record field notes which were coded into 'nodes' (N*Vivo terminology for concepts) along with sections of text from transcripts. Figure 4.3 (below) depicts the 'document browser' screen as it was set up for much of the coding I did. On the left is the document text (a transcript, memo, diary etc.); in the centre of the screen sits the 'coder' bar, a list of live nodes; and on the right 'coding stripes' indicate the name of the node in which corresponding text sections have been coded. The process of coding simply involved highlighting text and dragging it over the desired node in the 'coder' bar.

As I generated concepts through open coding (i.e. creating 'free nodes') the first vintage interview transcripts, I gave them definitions, attempting to identify properties and dimensions. In these early stages, I changed the names and definitions of free nodes on a continuous basis, adjusting to new data as I analysed the text. On occasion, when data pertained to similar incidents, I
needed to make a decision on whether to expand the definition of an existing node or create an entirely new node to place data in. This was not a problem as long as I kept a record (often in the node properties) that one node was closely aligned to the other.

With a developing list of free nodes, I began to place them in the model explorer (see figure 4.1 above) to illustrate which nodes were linked or should be grouped together. I also began writing memos to record my early thoughts on the relationships between concepts (see section 4.5.1) and on possible threads to follow in future interviews. By the end of the first vintage, I had generated 77 free nodes and a number of memos that helped me to design the prompts to be used in the second vintage. A list of the 77 free nodes, along with descriptions of their properties (and sometimes dimensions), can be viewed in appendix F.

In the following section I will present an overview of the 'map' of concepts that constituted the product of the first vintage. Examples of salient concepts (i.e. commonly referenced or deemed theoretically important) are discussed with an explanation of how I generated them. Following this I will present a short list of questions, derived mostly from memos, that informed and changed the interview schedule in the second vintage. As a reflection of my emerging thoughts on the analysis, this final section should explain my decisions to sample certain groups and ask certain questions as the research moved into its second phase.
4.6. An Early Map of Open Codes.

I generated the following conceptual map (figure 4.4 below) using MindManager (Pro 6) software. This was my first attempt at organising the concepts I had generated into some legible schema. The basic aim at this stage was the grouping of like concepts and the identification of relationships or tensions (at either the conceptual or category level). Getting everything on the same page seemed to be, at this point, an important step in terms of 'gaining distance' from the analysis. It helped me to step back and look at the whole picture, thus allowing me to identify the important potential relationships and gaps that would inform future sampling and data collection.

![Conceptual Map](image)

Figure 4.4. A Map of Early Grouped Concepts and Potential Relationships (a full-page map can be found in appendix G).
Of the first 8 categories extending from ‘youth football’, 6 denote purely arbitrary labels used at this point as convenient modes of organising the scheme (Football career; Gender/Cultural issues; Motivation; Getting started; Environment; Feelings). The concepts generated through open coding – i.e. the ‘leaves or flowers of the tree’ as it were – should be viewed, therefore, not as organised rigidly, but grouped loosely in broad, ill-defined categories. To work through explanations of the generation of every concept would be both time consuming and unnecessary. Instead, I shall use the example of concepts under the headings gender/cultural issues and marginalised to explain how concepts, and the tentative relationships between them, were generated.

Table 4.2 (below) is an extension of a small section of the map featured in figure 4.4. Descriptions of the properties of concepts explain my thoughts as I generated them and, occasionally, potential relationships with other concepts. For example, the concepts ‘cant wear it in a pony tail’ and football friendships refer to ways in which football defines, to some extent, the identity of female participants. This process of identifying themselves involves girls distancing themselves from boys in most cases. Hence, those concepts grouped under the sub-categories equal and separate refer to girls’ feelings about participating with boys. In the early interviews this feeling was best characterised under the concept gender rivalry (closely aligned to male superiority, dominance and lesbian stigma) suggesting that there is conflict – a battle for possession in/of the game. Following this, Gender equality captures the relatively rare idea that girls would like to compete on an even playing field with boys; whereas gender separation refers to the preference for separate football provision. The tension between these two contrasting responses to gender rivalry was of interest to me and was something I attempted to explore in future interviews. I wanted to know what caused girls to react differently: was it a personality type, an environmental issue or a combination of both? As I noted in a memo written at the end of the first vintage:
Memo - gender separation (27.09.05)

It is interesting to see, within this concept, that different opinions are conflicting. For instance, some girls believe that football should be mixed at their age level because they think playing with (not against) boys helps them improve and grow in confidence. However, some girls think football should be a separate endeavour for boys and girls. This stems from a belief that boys will dominate possession of the ball and they will not be able to get involved in the game.

I need to find out where these contrasting beliefs come from. I suspect early experiences and individual 'drive' (or mental toughness) have something to do with it. But I need to ask more questions.

I saw analogous concepts in the data derived from interviews with young people from ethnic minorities (hence the combined category label). Here the feeling of being marginalised can be said to follow from male superiority, dominance in girls, and because of culture barriers in those from ethnic minorities (girls from ethnic minorities might therefore be expected to experience double marginalisation). Once again, I saw a difficult tension characterised this time in the concept integration or separation. This concept posed the question: do young people from ethnic minorities want separate but equal football opportunities (with the risk of dividing communities), or integrated football opportunities (with the possibility of racism)? Again, this difficult question caused me to generate new ideas to follow up in future interviews with minority groups.

With reference back to figure 4.4 (above) I also noted additional relationships between gender issues, making, keeping friends and stretched leisure time. In this case, I had found that girls appeared to attach greater importance to the friendship element of football than did boys. They also appeared to participate in a greater number of activities in their leisure time, with boys focussing more on one or two activities (generally football and one other sport). Clearly, the sheer number of potential relationships and conflicts between concepts created a dizzying number of issues for me at this time. For this reason, I was forced to focus on a relatively small set of problems (or hypotheses) to pursue in the second vintage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Properties (description)</th>
<th>Example data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Identity     | ‘Can't wear it in a ponytail’ | Some idea of gender identity. There is some notion of conforming to a girlie ideal appearance - and way of acting - when with non-football friends. Thus, is the football identity seen as the masculine opposite? Or just different? | I: So do you find it easy to switch personalities when you’re with your girlie mates?  
Ali: Well, yeah. I just don’t talk about football, and change my hair - you can’t wear it in a ponytail when you’re with your girlie mates.  
(Astfordby U15 girls)  
Anna: I’ve just had two groups of mates: my football mates and my girlie mates. You know, they’re all bothered about their hair and stuff (laughing).  
(Astfordby U18 girls) |
| Football friendships | YP regard friendships inside and outside football as entirely separate. They believe they have to change their persona in order to fit with the different groups - but this isn’t necessarily seen as constraining. |                                                                                                                                                  | Anna: It’s like I have two groups of mates: my football mates and my girlie mates. You know, they’re all bothered about their hair and stuff (laughing).  
(Astfordby U18 girls) |
| Equal        | Gender equity              | Girls in particular are keen on the idea that female football should enjoy the same recognition and privileges as male football. There is a clear understanding of what is equitable and what isn’t. It would be interesting to see if boys feel the same (I doubt they would). | I: How do you think it should be then?  
Alex: We think they should consider us just as good as boys instead of, like, not as good.  
I: Do you get the same amount of time to play as the boys? Or…  
Chloe: No, they get more.  
(Astfordby U12 girls) |
| Separate     | Gender rivalry              | Conflict of interest between male and female players (particularly at younger age-groups where mixed football is common). Girls often relate experiences where boys dominate possession. Manifest in GENDER WARS where girls and boys see themselves as populating two sides in a battle for possession (of the game). | Natalie: The bad thing about football is though, on Friday…cos erm, it’s good when it’s just the girls team cos we pass to each other, but it’s the boys who just pass to each other, they only pass to the girl if you’re the closest to them…  
Laura: (interrupting) It’s not even then.  
Natalie: We have to get the ball for ourselves…  
(St Mary’s year 6 girls) |
| Gender separation | Football should be a separate endeavour for boys and girls. Both parties feel, in most instances, that this would provide more constructive, fairer sessions. Link to FAIRNESS AND MORALITY. However, not all feel this way. But what is it that makes some feel one way and others another? |                                                                                                                                                  | Anna: Yeah, I think girls should be able to play with other girls at school. Not forced to play with the boys - that would just put them off.  
Vicky: I had a bad experience at school where the boys wouldn’t pass to me and teased me. I almost gave up because of that.  
(Astfordby U18 girls) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Male superiority, dominance</strong></th>
<th>A belief that boys/men dominate the game, manifest in a bullying, aggressive attitude toward girls. Both boys and girls perceive this - but framed in different terms.</th>
<th>Laura: ...they [boys] always just shout to me: ‘Just stay back and don't bother touching the ball', and so that's what you do. (St Mary's year 6 girls)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesbian stigma</strong></td>
<td>YP perceive there to be a lesbian stigma still attached to female football. Particularly boys - maybe linked in this sense to MALE DOMINATION**?</td>
<td>Ash: It's bad enough watching women referees init. I: Never had one… Ash: We've had two: lesbians. Dan: They were together... they're local - everybody just knows. I have to speak to them - cos I referee - I have to speak to em. (Siddal Moor year 11 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration or separation</strong></td>
<td>A complex idea regarding racial integration in or through football. There seems to be some conflict as to what young Asian people want: equal but separate (i.e. not racist) football; or integrated (but possibly still racist) football? Related to MARGINALISED, CULTURE BARRIERS, and perhaps even NO ROLE MODELS**?</td>
<td>Shazad:...there's this area called Faytons yeah, it's supposed to be quite a racist area and we've got a youth bank organisation there. We funded them to buy a kit for themselves, and as part of the funding, they had to play us in a football match - our youth bank team. So we go over once, a Saturday morning, I dunno. We were wearing jeans pants and t-shirts yeah, normal clothes. And they had the full kit on and we played them at proper football and now we know them, like, when we see them we chat to them and stuff. Before that, we wouldn't have even looked at them. (Rochdale Youth Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture barriers</strong></td>
<td>The idea that cultural or traditional (perhaps religious) values in the family (or wider society) run counter to allowing young people from ethnic minorities access to football. Here, 'Bend it like Beckham' was a strong point of reference in terms of the situation Asian girls find themselves in.</td>
<td>Uzman: Erm, also, you know, like Jacob just said 'Bend it like Beckham' pointed out a lot of the problems that Asian girls - not all, but some Asian girls - have to face from the family. Y'know the parents think that all they can be is doctors or IT specialists or whatever, but they don't really have the focus on the sport because they're not interested. (Rochdale Youth Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marginalised (Being victimised)</strong></td>
<td>Feeling left out (or pushed out) of a team or group. But by who, and how? This exclusion can occur in different ways. Potentially leading to premature drop-out due to disillusionment.</td>
<td>Michael: Well last season I wasn't playing much so... I were just on the subs bench all the time. I: So that's why you left this year? M: Yeah...I were going to go for trials [at another club] but I just never got round to it. (Siddal Moor year 11 boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All terms in CAPITALS refer to concepts and potential relationships.
4.7. Memos and Early Conjectures (or Hypotheses).

Throughout the early analysis, I developed ideas about individual concepts, groups of concepts, and potential relationships that might exist. I tried to capture these ideas in the form of memos in which I recorded theoretical hypotheses (theoretical memos) and ideas about future lines of enquiry (operational memos) (Charmaz, 2003). It is my aim, in this section, to describe how these ideas were formed and how they, in turn, informed my approach to the second vintage. I advise my readers to use figure 4.4 (above), or the full-size map in appendix G, as a point of reference when working through the following pages.

Memo - Gender wars (18.08.05)

It appears that younger girls - perhaps those less experienced and able (e.g. St Mary's girls) - particularly dislike playing with boys (mixed) as they feel left out of the game. Boys don't pass to them, and for no good reason (as far as they're concerned), which creates an 'us against them' scenario with girls finding boys the greatest single barrier to their football participation.

Li: I don't like it when the boys run past you or come up to you and go: 'You shouldn't be playing football, it's a boys sport'. 'Netball's a girls sport; we're not allowed to play netball, so you shouldn't be allowed to play football'.
La: And half the time, the captains are the people who absolutely hate you, which is really annoying...
(St Mary's girls)

On the other hand, however, those girls who are more confident and able (e.g. Ashfordby U12s), appear to enjoy the challenge of playing against boys - although they still lose - particularly because they think they will improve and become more confident from pitting themselves against better players (i.e. boys)

C: (interrupting) I think there should be big goals.
I: So do you like it being girls V boys or would you like it mixed?
E & G: Mixed.
H: Yeaaahhh!
G: It's easier for the young team...if they have a small one then...boys have got more touch, but when I go up to a boy and tackle, then I get more confident in how to tackle...and you get more confidence from the boys, like, you won't be scared to tackle anybody.
I: Playing against the boys is good for confidence then?
G & H: Yep.
I: That's interesting.
(Ashfordby U12s)

Hence, it is possible that 'gender rivalry' and 'gender separation' are conditioned by experience and ability. Those girls who have had positive early experiences in a protected environment (i.e. an all-girl environment) are more likely to perceive mixed football in a positive light: an opportunity to improve by competing with better players.
Maybe it is necessary for early experiences to be sheltered and conditioned so that a minimum level of self confidence can be built before introducing mixed soccer? I think this may also be conditioned by the expertise of the coach i.e. a coach/teacher who understands that boys dominate and may employ conditions to prevent this from happening. They could facilitate mixed soccer in a way that girls would enjoy and find constructive.

This also ties in with previous research on socialisation (e.g. Donnelly and Young, 1999), where early experiences have been shown to be of great importance for continued participation in sport.

**Memo - gender separation (27.09.05)**

It is interesting to see, within this concept, that different opinions are conflicting. For instance, some girls believe that football should be mixed at their age level because they think playing with (not against) boys helps them improve and grow in confidence. However, some girls think football should be a separate endeavour for boys and girls. This stems from a belief that boys will dominate possession of the ball and they will not be able to get involved in the game.

I need to find out where these contrasting beliefs come from. I suspect early experiences and individual ‘drive’ (or mental toughness) have something to do with it. But I need to ask more questions.

In the two memos featured above (gender wars and gender separation) I tried to make sense of the data I had generated when interviewing girls. Clearly, a tension was apparent. In the earlier interviews with primary school girls, a strong opinion that boys and girls should be separated was evident. This grew from the uneven nature of the mixed games they had been exposed to. Conversely, girls from the first interview at Asfordby suggested that mixed football was a good way to develop confidence. I hypothesised that girls who had positive early experiences of football – i.e. in a controlled, all-female environment – might be more confident and thus better prepared to ‘take the boys on’ in mixed sessions. I could see no reason why girls should be any worse than boys in mixed football other than a relative lack of experience. I therefore wanted to know if girls agreed, and also what they thought about the idea of introducing football to girls earlier in the primary curriculum (at the same time as boys). I also wanted to ask boys’ opinion of girls’ football as no boys had thus far raised the issue. Setting aside these ‘within football’ issues, I also tried to understand the possible factors inhibiting girls’ access to football. The following memo contains my early thoughts on this matter.
Based largely on the interview from the Rochdale youth group, some interesting links can be drawn between existing codes and barriers to female participation. For example:

A 'lack of female role models' and the perception that football is a 'male dominated' world reinforces the old stereotypes of what is and what isn't suitable activity for girls.

Also, 'stretched leisure time' in the sense that girls may have more activities taking up their time than do boys. Hence, unless football forms a large part of their identity, they are unlikely to dedicate time to it over other, perceived more important activities (friends, TV etc.)

Thus, a combination of factors may conspire to form barriers which prevent girls becoming involved in football. Clearly, much good work is being done in this area to make football more accessible to girls, however, it may also be said that much more work is needed to break these barriers down.

This theoretical memo explains my thinking about combinations of concepts that may help explain girls' perceptions of barriers to playing football. By associating the concepts negative role models (which may in turn also be linked to parental-family influence and 'culture barriers') male superiority, dominance and stretched leisure time, I thought this may help explain why some girls feel marginalised in football (or unable to get involved in the first place). That is, a lack of positive role models (in the family or at a professional level) coupled with the idea of football as a male sport, may cause girls to perceive football as a potentially intimidating environment. If girls were also involved in additional, typically female, activities e.g. netball, meeting friends etc., meaning their leisure time was precious, why bother becoming involved in football at all? This was one of the questions I wished to explore further in the second vintage, essentially trying to work out how these concepts were related and under what conditions they conspired to create barriers.

This could be a large category in terms of properties and dimensions. Perhaps needs to be split into subcategories to denote the extent of this variation?

I think this concept varies dimensionally with age, sex and depth of involvement. It is clear that, at all ages, various activities compete for leisure time with football. In younger age groups (both boys and girls), they appear to 'sample' lots of sports and activities, if only once or twice. Getting older, it appears girls continue to sample until socialising becomes a major influence (around 14?), whereas boys perhaps focus...
down on one or two sports (I still need to check this with more data). I have spoken to few - if any - girls who have a clear idea about where, or if, they want to play in the future. The focus is much more squarely on academic study or getting a job - basically, becoming an adult.

This central concept was generated to denote the feeling that leisure time was stretched to a point where football was either pushed out by, or would push out, other activates from young people's lives. Once again, the sex variable was important here, with few girls expressing a fixed desire to continue playing football beyond school (even those playing in clubs). In order to investigate this concept further, I decided the following questions would be important: What other activities compete for your leisure time? What activities tend to dominate your time and why? Have you dropped any activities in the past, and if so, what were your reasons?

Thus far, the ideas I have related concern, in some way, young people's access to and potential exit from football. Other ideas I generated at this time had more to do with experiences in football: motivations and feelings about what makes football enjoyable (or not).

Memo - Football & Fitness (22.09.05)

I think it is worth investigating where this idea comes from. Generally, this is a popular motivation (intrinsic) or reason for playing football - or maybe it is just a useful 'side-effect' of playing (I don't think YP play just to keep fit)?

I: Right, what else have we got down here? (reading) Keeps you fit?
W: Oh, that were me.
I: Does anyone else think this is important?
Jo: Yeah that's good cos...
C: (interrupting) Yeah, six-pack when you're older.
I: But do you think keeping fit is important at your age?
(collectively) Yeah.
(St Mary's year 6 boys)

But where do these ideas come from? Here, body image is prominent; but why does a 10-11 year-old boy care about having a six-pack when he's older? What pressures are young people under today to look good or 'acceptable' (indeed, what is an acceptable body image to them)? Does this differ between girls and boys (I suspect it does, but I'm not sure how exactly)?

The ideas contained in this memo are clear, as are the questions I planned to pursue. **Fitness through football** was a recurring concept and I wanted to
explore the meaning young people attached to playing football, being fit and looking good. Essentially, I was concerned with finding out why children were concerned with image and where the messages were coming from. I suspected either media images (i.e. of ‘good looking’ footballers) or the general ‘child obesity’ rhetoric might be influential on their beliefs but needed to investigate further.

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**Memo - marginalised and feedback for learning (24.09.05)**

A: I put being sub...or being subbed. Sometimes it's like, better if you're struggling or injured or something, but, if you like playing football and you get subbed you're like a bit miffed... well I am.

I: Do you get told why you're being subbed?
A: No you just come off.

C: (interjecting) They're (teachers) not going to see this are they?
I: No, only me. So does the coach not tell you why they've subbed you off?
A: Sometimes they do but most of the time...
C: Miss Clayton does, but the others don't tell you anything.
I: So what kind of things does she say?
C: She'll tell you what you've done wrong and everything, like y'know if you're getting tired she'll tell you that you got tired and things like that.
I: So do you think that's better?
C&A: Yeah, cos then you can improve it for the next match.
I: Right, so you know what to work on...
M: Yeah, so then you won't get subbed.
(Siddal moor year 8/9 girls)

I: What about you Mike, is that the same for you?
M: Last season, just all of it.
I: What was it - not getting picked?
M: Yeah, I played about three games or something.
I: And in comparison to past seasons?
M: I'd been playing all the way through, but just that season he didn't play me.
A: We had a new manager then.
I: So the new guy came in and didn't like what he saw? Didn't he talk to you about it?
D: He dunt say nothing to yer if yer sat on the bench.
A: He'll try to ignore you - like if the balls gone over there he won't look.
I: A bit childish?
D: That's what he does.
(Siddal Moor year 11 boys)

This passage started me thinking that perhaps feedback and feeling marginalised are linked. What I mean is that coaches or teachers (i.e. those people usually responsible for pushing YP into the margins) could justify their decisions to YP. That way, they know why they have been subbed, left out, spoken to abruptly etc., it helps them to rationalise those decisions and act accordingly. For instance, Chelsea here is talking about a time she was subbed and received no reason why. If the teacher had explained her decision, Chelsea would have been able to make sense of it and adjust her performance in training accordingly. So, this idea of feedback is not only important for the learning process, but also in keeping YP onside as it were.
Here I tried to explain a tentative link between the concepts feedback for learning and marginalised (and, by extension, staying in or leaving football). Again, it is clear from the memo that I wanted to look closely at the behaviour of the coach (or teacher) – in particular the nature and timing of feedback – and understand its impact on players’ motivation. My conjecture was that poorly timed or negative feedback (sometimes a complete absence of feedback) might contribute to feelings of being marginalised. Again, key questions were of a ‘who?’ and ‘when?’ nature.

In a related sense, I also found that significant others – coaches and parents etc. – might be negatively influencing young people’s experiences of football. In the memo below, I attempted to make links between the concepts under pressure and self expression.

Memo - pressure and expression (22.09.05)

Perhaps the concepts 'under pressure' and 'self expression' are related? In an interview, one boy talks about being able to express himself when there's no pressure to perform.

I: What do you mean by expressing yourself?
W: Cos you can just...when you're playing well...you can just play how you want to, play and it's dead good unlike...
I: When do you feel like that?
W: Just when you're playing well, and then you just get more confidence other than sometimes when you've got pressure on you than, y'know, you don't want to do anything to make a mistake.
(St Mary's boys)

As both codes are recurring, it would be interesting to see if this relationship is also common. Essentially, do players feel happier and able to express themselves - and thus, enjoy football - when pressure to perform is absent? Also, what are the implications of this if it does turn out to be corroborated? If creating a pressurised, performance orientated environment causes young players to play 'within themselves' (i.e. with fear of making a mistake), can we expect players to be confident and try creative moves later on?

This could be explored with agree disagree statements, questions or a vignette.

This memo is repeated from an earlier example but I feel it is important to repeat the point again here. After writing this, the questions I asked myself were these: Where does pressure come from (who applies it)? How does it affect performance? Does this change with age? What are the implications for
coaching/coach education? I felt this was an important concept in general terms i.e. football as an intrinsically enjoyable activity. I also thought it might be important in a technical sense i.e. if we place young players under unnecessary pressure, they are likely to become less skilful as they get older and stop trying new things on the pitch.

Motivations for involvement in football also seemed to be of either an extrinsic or intrinsic nature. This dichotomy was clearly evident in the accounts of the first vintage participants.

Memo - ‘winning trophies’ and age

I have had a hunch, confirmed by the following passage from Ash at Siddal Moor (year 11), that extrinsic rewards attached to winning become more important as YP get older.

D: It's more enjoyment than anything else, but you obviously want to win a cup or something to cap your season off, but really for enjoyment so...
A: (interrupting) But as you get older, you want to win more, I don't know why really...you get more satisfaction that way.
(Siddal Moor year 11 boys)

I think this is worth pursuing in future interviews. Perhaps using an agree/disagree statement along the lines of the following: 'It's no the winning, it's the taking part'. As this is a common maxim in football terms, they will be familiar with its meaning and hopefully able to articulate interesting answers.

In this memo my aim was to suggest a relationship between motivation (intrinsic and/or extrinsic) and age. I thought that motivations for playing football might change with age, with extrinsic (or performance related) reasons becoming more prominent as players get older. Here also I created a operational memo to suggest a course of action for future interviews.

Memo - ‘scoring’, ‘praise’ and ‘feedback’ (27.09.05).

I think these concepts are linked perhaps. The idea that ‘scoring garners adulation’ or ‘praise’ from peers and coaches, even parents, links to positive ‘feedback’. In this sense, all feedback (both internal and external) after scoring a goal is positive, and, in turn, this praise will have a positive impact on the player’s confidence.

I: Okay, what about this here? Who wrote this? It says ‘getting cheered, scoring goals’.
A: That's what I put that. Scoring goals and getting cheered because it makes you feel better and gives you confidence.
E: (simultaneously) Gives you more confidence...
A: Yeah, and your confidence goes woooooo (signalling an upward line on a graph).
I: So scoring goals: did anyone score this afternoon?
H: Me!
L: I have.
I: (to L) Was it a good goal?
L: Yeah, it was right at the end.
I: What, on the whistle - was it to win?
L: Yeah.
(Ashfordby U12s)

Hence, there are implications for coaches to design practices around lots of scoring; to include games where there is an advantage to the attacking team and opportunities to score lots of goals. Maybe also to give all players a chance to play in positions where they can score i.e. not sticking players in defence all the time.

This was not an idea I wished to pursue particularly, more a record of my thoughts connecting these concepts and explaining some of the potential implications for coaching (structuring sessions, selecting teams etc.)

The lines of enquiry I followed in the second vintage were not entirely limited to the issues I have communicated here with the help of memos. It was still my aim to begin interviews with open questions and prompts – still allowing the participants to lead – but also ask more direct questions should an issue arise that I was sensitive to. I also generated a new set of ‘adjuncts’ to lead discussions on issues derived from the first vintage analysis. These new methods will be introduced at the beginning of the following chapter (5.2 Data collection methods II) before which I will summarise the emerging issues and questions arising from the research that presented a ‘springboard’ into the second vintage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/concept(s)</th>
<th>Key questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues</td>
<td>Should girls’ football be separate or mixed? Are the answers to this question mediated by experience and ability? Would girls like an earlier introduction to football? How do girls see their football careers developing? Are there sufficient opportunities to join a team outside of school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural issues</td>
<td>Is football perceived to be an institutionally racist sport? What are the barriers to participation? Family? Lack of positive role models? Should we have separate Asian teams/leagues? If so, what would be the consequences for societal integration? (How) can football help integrate diverse ethnic communities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretched leisure time (staying in or leaving football)</td>
<td>Why do girls continue to ‘sample’ into adolescence whereas boys seem to specialise early? Do people drop out of sport because of this? If so, why do some activities win out over others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness through football</td>
<td>Is this an important motivating factor in football? What pressure are young people under to look good? Where do ideas about body image come from? Do media images or ‘child obesity’ rhetoric influence young people’s ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalised and feedback</td>
<td>How does feedback (timing and type) impact on experiences of marginalisation? Who is responsible for providing feedback and when? Can poor feedback alone cause someone to quit football?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure and self expression</td>
<td>When do you feel under pressure? How does this affect your performance? Who is responsible for applying this pressure (coach, parents, team-mates)? Do players cope with pressure better as they grow older? Or is this just ‘conditioning’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age and motivation</td>
<td>What are young people’s motivations for playing football (intrinsic/extrinsic)? Do motivations change with age: intrinsic when young, extrinsic in late adolescence? If so, at what age does this change occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of a good coach/teacher</td>
<td>What are the characteristics of a good coach/coaching session? What coach behaviours lead to most effective player learning? Examples and experiences?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5:
THE SECOND ‘VINTAGE’:
EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS

“Science is built up of facts, as a house is built of stones; but an accumulation of facts is no more a science than a heap of stones is a house.”

- Henri Poincare
CHAPTER 5: 
THE SECOND ‘VINTAGE': EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS

5.1. Introduction to the Second Vintage.
Following the broad but shallow analysis undertaken during the first vintage, it was my aim here to develop the key emerging ideas by attempting to ‘test' emerging hypotheses. In order to achieve this, I had to develop new methods, or ‘adjuncts', that would help provoke discussion around the conjectured relationships between early concepts. As such, the first section of this chapter introduces and discusses those new methods employed from this second vintage onward: namely, vignettes and agree/disagree statements.

Following this, I resume the narrative that I began in the first vintage, describing the process of data collection and analysis as faithfully as possible. As will become clear, sometime toward the end of the analysis of the second vintage data, I became concerned that the subject-based classification of concepts I had thus far developed was inadequate. That is, I did not see how it could lead to a concise theory that explained, in essence, how young people experienced football. This problem situation is explained fully in section 5.4 and the solution I arrived at is developed in section 5.5.

The second vintage concludes with a brief review of the literature I began to engage with at this point of the research. It seemed to me that, at this stage, the literature on socialisation would present the most fruitful point of access in terms of linking my findings to a wider body of research. This was the logical result of sampling a wide range of participants – i.e. males and females from 8-18-years-old – and the development of an early explanatory model describing the variation in ‘youth football careers'.

5.2 Data collection methods II.
The following section introduces the two additional adjuncts or prompts used in the second (and third) vintage to provoke discussions on pre-defined topics. In the previous chapter (see 4.3.2 Discussion Prompts) the use of these
techniques were justified within the GT framework of analysis. Essentially, the goal here was to use prompts with the following characteristics:

1. They should frame emerging questions in an appropriate 'child-friendly' manner i.e. they should be clearly and simply presented in age-appropriate language.
2. They should immediately capture the essence of an idea/hypothesis and grab the attention of the young participants.
3. They should communicate the questions in adequate detail whilst allowing participants space to expand on the conditions that underpin their responses.

Based on these criteria, two prompts were selected from a range of those identified in the literature: vignettes and agree/disagree statements. They are discussed in turn in the following sections (the detailed second vintage interview guide is in appendix H).

5.2.1 Vignettes.

Vignettes are short stories or scenarios often used by social researchers (both in quantitative and qualitative studies) to facilitate discussion, or to pose questions, on a given topic. Hughes (1998) elaborates:

Vignettes can be described as stories about individuals and situations which make reference to important points in the study of perceptions, beliefs and attitudes... Participants are typically asked to respond to these stories with what they would do in a particular situation or how they think a third person would respond.

Hence, vignettes are often referred to as 'complementary' methods of data collection, or 'adjuncts' to more established methods (both qualitative and quantitative) such as questionnaires or focus groups. There is little point here discussing at length all the various ways in which vignettes have been employed in the past, for it would be time consuming and largely unnecessary. Rather, it is sufficient to state that two general methods of use can be determined. First, as quantitative methods in their own right, where the respondent reads a short passage depicting a substantive scenario, before
ticking one of a set of pre-determined boxes (answers), thus enabling data to be easily quantified. In the second method – and the method adopted here – the researcher commonly presents a scenario to a respondent, or group of respondents, before asking them to discuss potential responses to the situation (Barter and Renold, 2000).

The potential benefits or advantages of using vignettes have been noted by Schoenberg and Ravdal (2000). They state that vignettes are often more enjoyable for the respondents in the sense that they are ‘a break from the norm’ and allow participants flexibility and creativity in their responses. This point might be magnified in the current context of doing research with young people. They also claim, in a related sense, that vignettes may help depersonalise research questions, encouraging the respondent to think beyond his or her own circumstances (particularly important when investigating sensitive topics). In the specific context of this research, vignettes have at least one further benefit. Once some open codes have been generated in the early stages of GT research, ‘mini hypotheses’ pertaining to the emerging themes are developed (see figure 3.9 in section 3.5.1). Here, these hypotheses can be framed in vignette form, fulfilling two important functions: first, presenting potentially abstract ideas to young people in an interesting and legible format (Barter and Renold, 2000); and second, remaining focused, but flexible enough to allow a range of responses – not just those predicted by the hypotheses.

Further to these specific advantages, more generic merits of vignettes relate to flexibility. For instance, vignettes might be part of the researcher’s ‘arsenal’ of methods in a multi-method approach, enabling them to introduce more interesting and thought provoking techniques should the standard repertoire fall flat. A single vignette describing a substantive story can also be manipulated to investigate the impact of certain variables such as age, sex or

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63 Barter and Renold (2000) recall some of the feedback offered by young people in residential homes in response to their use of vignettes: ‘Yeah, I like these stories, coz they’re realistic’; ‘They’re top’; ‘They’re wicked – better than just talking all the time cause that’s boring’.
ethnicity on a participants' reactions without changing the core theme of the story (Finch, 1987).

One final point should be made regarding the use of vignettes in this study; a point which reaches back to the ontological assumptions of critical realism adopted here (see section 3.4.1). A feature of a good vignette is that it leaves space for respondents to define situations in their own terms (Finch, 1987). It might therefore be expected that responses would be of the "it depends" nature, allowing participants to offer up their own context and describe the type of influencing factors they believe to be acting in a specific situation (Barter and Renold, 2000). Thus, by providing respondents with limited contextual information in a vignette, they are free to elaborate, presenting the researcher with different perspectives on, or interpretations of, the same scenario. The critical realist is then left to explore the range of situational factors offered up by respondents as influencing behaviour in a given situation.

This, in turn, has important practical implications for the creation of vignettes. Finch (1987) claims that 'fuzziness is strength' and 'ambiguity productive'. Hence, there is a fine balance to be struck between providing sufficient information and context for understanding on the one hand, and being vague enough to 'force' respondents to provide background information influencing their judgement on the other. Further practical issues will be summarised shortly, however, for the moment two related problematic issues regarding the use of vignettes in qualitative research – one genuine, the other something of a myth (or, at best, a misunderstanding) – are discussed.

The first, genuine, issue relates to 'social desirability', or the idea that respondents will offer what they think the acceptable moral response would be in a situation rather than what they genuinely feel. Obviously, some vignettes, by their very nature, are more likely to elicit 'socially desirable' responses than others. For example, a vignette presenting a story about theft is more likely to lead the respondent into a socially desirable response than a story about choosing to play for one football team over another. Anticipating this potential
problem, Hughes (1998) suggests two techniques to minimise socially desirable responses. The first relates simply to the type of questions one asks after the presentation of the vignette: whether you ask them what they would do, or what a third party might do. Clearly, if you were to ask what they would do, you are more likely to elicit a socially desirable response than if you asked what a third party would do. The second strategy offered by Hughes (1998) pre-supposes the qualitative use of vignettes. She suggests that respondents' answers to vignettes should be probed to squeeze out socially desirable elements i.e. the researcher should not take the first answer at face value.

The second, mythical, problem regarding the use of vignettes concerns ‘accuracy’. As some researchers have noted when using vignettes: “the data we collected...were hypothetical and may not accurately reflect or predict an informant’s future activities” (Shoenberg and Ravdal, 2000, emphasis added). Barter and Renold (2000) also engage in such hand-wringing over this ‘problem’ of accuracy, stating that: “what people believe they would do in a given situation is not how they would behave in actuality.” Such a problem obviously pre-supposes a realist ontology; an unfashionable position among social scientists currently (notably Barter and Renold themselves). Hence, the concern here is with mapping some sort of reality ‘out there’, not simply with understanding respondents' beliefs about how they would act. Of course, as we have seen (see section 3.4.1), this is a myth precisely because there is always some level of interpretation involved in understanding social reality.

Furthermore, this 'social reality' can only ever be an approximation, often pieced together not from direct observation, but from the collected accounts of research participants. In this sense, it is possible to approach real structures and their effects through the actions of research participants. And, as it is usually impossible to actually place respondents in the situations you pose to them in vignettes, all one can ever hope to understand is the response they give – whether it is an accurate reflection of what they would actually do or not.

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64 It is also possible that one could ask the respondent what they did do (or what a friend did), assuming they (or a friend) have been in a similar situation before.
To conclude, a discussion of more practical matters and how the vignettes used in this study were developed is undertaken. First, there is some debate in the literature concerning the inspiration for developing vignettes and authenticity. It has been argued (Barter and Renold, 2000) that respondents are likely to be more enthusiastic about providing answers when they know vignettes are based on real events and experiences. And, whilst some researchers ignore this particular issue (e.g. Schoenberg and Ravdal, 2000), there is general consensus over the notion of authenticity in the language or vernacular in which vignettes are written. For example, in her study of drug users' perceptions of HIV, Hughes (1998) notes the importance of using language her respondents would be familiar with, such as replacing the word 'needle' with the more acceptable terminology of 'kit', or 'tools'. Such details can make a great difference in terms of how the respondent relates to the situation described in a vignette, particularly so when working with street-wise young footballers. For this reason, in addition to the aforementioned links to GT methodology, vignettes were based on scenarios already described in the data and written, where possible, in vernacular similar to that used by previous participants.

Regarding length and format, age was of central concern. In this sense, the length of vignettes generally increased with age – from 100 or so words with 8-10 year-olds, to around 200-300 words with young adults (as advised by Barter and Renold, 2000) – and the presentation format was also adjusted accordingly (i.e. large cartoon style writing and pictures were used with younger age groups, whereas older groups were presented with more discreet looking cards). Finch (1987) also found that three or more changes in the storyline tended to confuse participants, so stories were kept simple to prevent such confusion.

The questions asked after each vignette tended to change considerably according to the issue under investigation. However, on each occasion, questions were kept simple and efforts were made to find out if the respondent had actually been in a similar situation before – or if they knew someone who had – and if so, the details of what had happened. Questions
such as “what do you think a third party would do in this situation?” were only applied if the vignette referred to a potentially sensitive issue.

The example below explains, in memo form, the process of developing a vignette that was used in the research.

**Developing vignettes from data: a working example.**

The following passage (amongst others) led to the development of a tentative hypothesis that the frequency and type of feedback young people are given, mostly by coaches or teachers, will impact significantly on the degree of marginalisation they feel.

I: What about you Mike, is that the same for you?
M: Last season, just all of it.
I: What was it – not getting picked?
M: Yeah, I played about three games or something.
I: And in comparison to past seasons?
M: I’d been playing al the way through, but just that season he didn’t play me.
A: We had a new manager then.
I: So the new guy came in and didn’t like what he saw? Didn’t he talk to you about it?
D: He dun’t say nothing to yer if yer sat on the bench.
A: He’ll try to ignore you – like if the ball’s gone over there he won’t look.
I: A bit childish?
D: That’s what he does.
(Siddal Moor Year 11 boys)

Also see: Memo – ‘Marginalised’ and ‘Feedback for learning’ (24.09.05)

What I wanted to investigate was the relationship between these two concepts. The participants seem to be alluding to situations where they felt marginalised because a coach or teacher left them out of a team without explanation. In this sense then, I wanted to know if this was more common: does feedback – timing and type – significantly effect the perceived marginalised status of young players. In order to understand this relationship in more depth, I developed the following vignette that could be used to start a discussion on the topic in question.

“Stevie is fourteen years old and has played for Blaydon Rangers for 5 years now. He has loads of friends in the team and together they’ve enjoyed success, winning both the league and cup, in the past few years. However, at the end of last season, a new manager took over the team and began to make some changes. He has left Stevie out of the team for almost the entire season – he comes on as sub sometimes at the end of a game if the team are winning easily. Stevie’s manager has never told him why he is leaving him out and tries to ignore him. He even avoids making eye-contact with Stevie when he’s sitting on the bench.”

What would you do if you were Stevie? OR...
Have you, or do you know anyone else who has been in a similar situation?
Can you tell me a bit more about what happened?
What would you do if you were the coach?
How do you think this might have affected the rest of the team?
5.2.2. Agree/Disagree Statements.

These simple prompts are basic statements, sentences or maxims that can be quickly met with "agree" or "disagree" responses (Fajerman et al., 2004). Of course, the follow-up questions to these comments – e.g. why do you agree? In what circumstances might you disagree? etc. – are of critical importance in attempting to generate interesting discussions. The strengths of agree/disagree statements are therefore twofold: first, in canvassing varied opinions in a short time, thus encouraging immediate disagreement and debate about the subject in question; and second, in eliciting views about the conditions in which people’s responses can be contextualised. In this sense, agree/disagree statements were ideal given the need to test 'emerging' hypotheses in such a way that was easily apprehended by young people, and to understand the context in which responses were formed.

Agree/disagree statements have been used little, if at all, in past academic studies (at least, not as adjuncts to FGIs), but are, apparently, common in classrooms and public policy level research (Fajerman et al., 2004). This does not, however, preclude their inclusion in future studies; particularly so in research where the goal is to generate and develop ideas through the characteristic GT 'flip-flop' between abduction (or retroduction) and deduction. In this sense, the technique should be considered as a fast, effective and child-friendly method of 'testing' hypotheses and eliciting conditioned experiences of clearly defined phenomenon.

In this research, agree/disagree statements would often cause a flurry of initial responses and mini arguments, followed by more careful, considered and reasoned justifications. Sometimes positions would change after discussion, and, inevitably, the familiar retort: "well... it depends" would often be posed causing the researcher to offer counter-questions. For very young groups (i.e. under 12), statements were written out on cards in colourful, bold lettering and passed around a group with each child stating their response as they held the card. For older groups (i.e. aged 13+), the researcher simply read out statements and asked for a verbal response.
The following example describes the process of creating an agree/disagree statement after developing ideas on motivations in football.

**Developing agree/disagree statements: a working example.**

The following interview extract, along with similar comments, caused me to ponder the motivations young people of different ages held to play football: do they play for intrinsic enjoyment or extrinsic rewards? Further analysis led me to believe that younger groups tend to play for ‘enjoyment’ and ‘fun’ whereas adolescents tend to slip into a performance oriented frame of mind. Thus, further questions I developed ran as follows: at what age do extrinsic (or performance related) reasons overtake intrinsic reasons?

D: It's more enjoyment than anything else, but you obviously want to win a cup or something to cap your season off, but really for enjoyment so...
A: (interrupting) But as you get older, you want to win more, I don't know why really... you get more satisfaction that way.
(Siddal Moor Year 11 boys)

I created a memo in which I registered the following idea:

*I think this is worth pursuing in future interviews. Perhaps using an agree/disagree statement along the lines of the following: 'It's no the winning, it's the taking part'. As this is a common maxim in football terms, they will be familiar with its meaning and hopefully able to articulate interesting answers.*

I thought that by creating a simple statement card, I would be able to quickly canvass group opinion and that, by repeating the process across various age-groups, I would be able to identify roughly at what age a change occurs (if at all). Hence I developed the following agree/disagree statement – one I hoped would lead to discussions concerning how motivations change over a ‘career’.

"It's *not* the winning, it's the taking part"

When this technique was actually applied, the most common response was: "it depends", with many young people stressing that motivations were conditioned not simply by age (though this did seem to be a key variable), but also by sex, the level of opposition, the nature of the competition and local rivalries. In this case then, the use of the statement did much more than simply corroborate or refute a conjecture – it opened up whole new avenues of discussion.

5.3. Data Collection and Analysis: The Second Vintage Narrative.

As with section 4.4, this narrative recounts my experiences of data collection and analysis through the second vintage (see table 4.1 in section 4.2 for an overview). Because my aim in this vintage was to focus on important emerging issues, and not necessarily to sample a broad range of participants, the number of interviews I conducted was smaller. The vintage began with a lengthy and fruitful summer (i.e. pre-season) engagement with a ladies' and
girls' club (section 5.3.1) which was followed by two short but intensive visits to secondary schools (section 5.3.2) in November. Running throughout this period and beyond, I became involved with a local boys' club with which I stayed for the duration of the 2005/2006 season. I began working with the U15 team and, since the interview with this group took place in November, it is included here as part of the second vintage. The U10 and U18 teams were interviewed in February and April respectively and will be discussed as part of the third vintage (again, see table 4.1 for an overview).

5.3.1. First Contact with Organised Female Football.
Although by this point I had conducted three interviews with female footballers (and a further mixed interview), these had all been with school players, few of which had played in a club environment. This 10-week visit to Asfordby Amateurs Ladies' and Girls' FC therefore provided me with my first opportunity to investigate this foreign environment in some detail.

Asfordby Amateurs Ladies' and Girls' FC is the female wing of a larger, originally all-male club, that play in a rural and relatively affluent part of Leicestershire. The club is young and has experienced burgeoning growth recently, with the membership expanding from 80 (two years ago) to over 200 at the time of my visit. Much of this growth, I learned, was attributable to the work of the two central club administrators, Jim and Sharon, who worked almost every day, running taster sessions in schools and football festivals in order to promote girls' football in the local community. They also had a successful system of training and employing coaches that ensured the older, more experienced players were passing on their expertise to the younger girls. A number of girls commented on the success of this method in the interviews: the younger girls liked being coached by senior players; and the older girls knew that coaching opportunities were available for them if they wished to become involved.

Throughout my visit, I assisted the regular coaches in delivering sessions and spent some time with the U15s trying to help facilitate the move from small-sided to 11-a-side football. Although I felt it was perhaps a little more difficult
to develop rapport in this all-female environment, the general atmosphere in the club was friendly and this helped when conducting interviews. I worked with three groups at this club: the U12s, U15s and the U18s, with varying degrees of interaction and success (I did most work with the U15s and very little with the U18s). As was noted at the end of the last chapter, gender specific issues were prominent in my thoughts at this time and formed the central topics for discussion in interviews (see appendix H for the full second vintage interview schedule and copies of vignettes). In particular, I wanted to find out a little more on the following issues: early experiences of football; thoughts on mixed football; the place of football in the broader leisure time context; and plans for their future in football.

The interviews were conducted after training in a busy clubhouse, which was not an ideal location since it was noisy and sometimes distracting. However, it did put the girls in a familiar and friendly environment which helped to offset some of the aforementioned negative aspects. The interview guide proved very useful in provoking discussion on the issues noted above and helped sharpen my insight in this respect. They also helped in drawing my attention to issues that had not yet been addressed. Two of the main new ideas generated here were: a) female football identities; and b) the nature of early mixed football experiences and the reactions to organised football.

A number of the girls alluded to perceived separate identities they adopted when in football and non-football environments, which reminded me of Jeanes' (2005) concepts of the 'girlie girl' and 'tomboy' (also see Renold, 1997). This distinction was related, in some ways, to the second issue of early experiences. Here I noted that those girls who seemed secure in holding this dual identity had received 'sheltered' early experiences and had therefore found the movement into organised football much easier (as already mentioned, club coaches were active in local schools creating effective and sustainable school-club links). This is illustrated in the comment (below) from one of the U15 girls in response to the question: how did you first get involved in football?
Sam: I started when I was about eight and, like my dad told me to go see him on a Saturday playing for Mowbray Rangers where they used to come and just watch random matches. And then the person who runs the Rangers said 'Oh we’re starting up a girls team, do you want to join?' so I did. And I stayed then ‘til I was about twelve and then the team didn’t run anymore so I came here. (Asfordby U15 girls, 31.08.05)

I hypothesised, therefore, that early experiences were of particular importance for girls, especially in relation to long-term involvement in organised forms of the game. Hence, questions were built around this issue in future interviews. One further question that was developed as part of this visit concerned girls’ hopes and plans for the future. Again, Jeanes’ (2005) work had sensitised me to the notion that girls see football as something to do when young as part of a varied leisure life, but not necessarily something to pursue beyond adulthood. Indeed, Jeanes’ (2005) young participants spoke (worryingly) of marriage and becoming a housewife, ruling out time to play football. This tentative hypothesis was strengthened after the interview with the U18s where the question was posed explicitly. In this case, even though the young women were all good players in a high performing team, they were far more focused on academic attainment than in developing as footballer players (though one spoke of a desire to continue coaching as opposed to playing).

5.3.2. Teacher for a Week.

Following this lengthy engagement, I made two much shorter but much more intensive visits to two specialist sports colleges in the north of England: the first to St. Joseph’s High School near Bolton; and the second to Knottingley High School near Castleford (both approximately 1-hour travelling time from my temporary base in Huddersfield). These schools were chosen because of their CS development status and the high level of football provision both inside and outside of school hours. Although the two schools were very different in many respects, the PE departments were very happy for me to be around and, in fact, treated me as a member of the team for the duration of my visits. This treatment, and the status it afforded me, was both useful and problematic: useful in that it allowed me to gain fast and meaningful access to the young people; and problematic in that it caused the young people to think
of me as a teacher which I specifically wished to avoid (see the discussions of power in interview situations in sections 3.5 and 3.7.2).

St. Joseph's High School and Sports College is situated in Chorley within a mile of Bolton Wanderers FC's Reebok stadium. They have a strong sporting tradition (some professional players have been through the school), excellent facilities (including an indoor football 'dome') and a full-time director of sport who is well known and highly respected in the area. As such, the PE provision for both boys and girls was excellent, with a number of after-school activities and competitions in a range of sports.

This first week at St. Joe's provided me with two interview opportunities which I conducted in a small PE classroom next to the sporting director's office. I interviewed a group of year 10 boys (all school team players) after spending two lessons and an after-school football session with them; and a group of year 11 girls (again, team players) after helping coach the after-school football practice with another teacher. In neither case did I feel I had developed adequate rapport, though this was the best I could manage in the time permitted. Considering this limited time, however, the interviews were relatively constructive, perhaps due to the careful group 'selection' made by the teachers ensuring the most confident and outspoken pupils were included.

In contrast to St. Joe's fortunate location, glowing tradition and excellent facilities, Knottingley High School and Sports College is located in one of the top 5 most deprived wards in the country (at the time of the visit) and has considerable problems related to this. The first notable problem is the level of discipline required simply to keep the pupils from fighting one another. The second problem is attendance at after-school clubs which is generally poor and inconsistent, despite the best efforts of the staff to restructure the school day around PE and sport. The atmosphere was overwhelmingly one of intimidation (from the students) and strict discipline (from the staff), though neither party could be 'blamed' for this. My fortnight-long visit was therefore a

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65 Rather than a single lesson, PE at Knottingley HS&SC constitutes a whole afternoon of study for each year group, one day per week, followed by after-school clubs and competitions.
difficult one, especially as I consistently failed to create and preserve my desired ‘experienced other’ – as opposed to ‘adult authority figure’ – status.

Over the course of the visit, I was presented with a number of opportunities to engage with various groups of students. Of these groups, I became most familiar with the year 10 boys whom I accompanied on a skiing trip, a climbing trip, two football sessions, a Junior Football Organisers course and an after-school 5-a-side football tournament (which we won). As such, the interview I conducted with this group was perhaps the best of all those I conducted in schools; that is, the responses I elicited were detailed, honest (as far as I could tell) and – uncharacteristically for 14-year-old boys – discursive. The second group I interviewed at Knottingley were the year 8 girls’ football team, which took place following two prior meetings: the first a simple coaching session; the second an impromptu game that I was asked to oversee.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the interviews in Knottingley was the clear competition between football and rugby league in the area. Previous (and subsequent) interviews had all been in areas where football was clearly the dominant sport and where opportunities to play were plentiful. It was interesting, therefore, to see how football was regarded in an area where it wasn’t the dominant sport and where more opportunities – to play and to progress – existed in rugby league. More specifically, the experiences of the young people as related via interviews helped to develop ideas on the following emerging issues: opportunities to play competitively; the nature of a good coach/teacher; physical aspects of the game; the need for rules and discipline; gender equity; racism and culture barriers; and football futures.

One final interesting note to make about this visit concerns the Junior Football Organisers (JFO) course undertaken by the year 10 boys, which I helped to deliver with a senior staff member. This was the first time I had come across

66 The JFO course is similar in many ways to the JSLA which is a common precursor to higher (i.e. level 2) coaching qualifications such as the CSLA. It is a low level course that focuses on developing the basic organisation, planning and communication skills required to run a small football festival (typically). Schools with CS development status must deliver the JFO course – normally to year 10 or 11 pupils – in order to meet the accreditation criteria.
the JFO in action and I was keen to see how the students reacted to taking responsibility for running a real football session. The initial session – which was based around planning for an assessment session with a ‘live’ primary school group the following week – was continually compromised by bad behaviour and fighting. So, although jobs for the next week’s session were given out and some sketchy plans created, I had very little confidence that the boys would achieve their goals without serious problems. To my surprise, the assessment session was a complete success and I recorded my thoughts in the research diary.

What strikes me about this session is the difference in behaviour of the lads from the first. Previously they were acting like unruly children themselves: fighting, ignoring rules, abusing equipment etc, but in this session they were organised, responsible and acted like real coaches. Some of the children were difficult and one had severe ADHD. Given these circumstances, their performance was exemplary and I really felt they derived some pleasure from the whole experience. I also think they got a bit of a shock and learned what it’s like to be on the receiving end of the type of behaviour they were more accustomed to exhibiting than dealing with. More generally, this was an example of how the CSS is working to provide real results in schools: developing the self-esteem and confidence of young people (in this case young people with few opportunities in life) through programmes that benefit all concerned i.e. through school sport partnerships.

However, my initial thoughts on this matter were challenged somewhat during the interview I conducted with this group a couple of days later. Upon asking about their feelings on the JFO course, they told me they thought it was too soon for them to be involved in coaching (they didn’t want the extra responsibility just yet). (Research diary entry: 08.11.05)

The first passage, I think, illustrates the power such courses can have in areas like Knottingley where the aspiration levels of the young people is so unfortunately low. However, as the second passage suggests, such low aspirations (their perceived low responsibility must have been a product of low aspirations since all of the boys had the ability to coach, based on the evidence of the session in question), coupled with perceptions of ‘stretched leisure time’ means that this good work is not always positively received by young people; and that teachers need to think carefully about when and how to deliver the JFO course in such a way as to make it attractive to young people at this difficult age.
5.3.3. An Accidental Ethnography.

The final stage of the second vintage began in the summer of 2005 and extended throughout the whole season into April of 2006. It began with the simple intention of interviewing players from various teams at Loughborough Dynamo Junior FC, though over time it became much more than this. I started my visits to the club during pre-season where I worked with the U15 boys. The team were coached by a father and brother of one of the players, who seemed, at first, to have the squad under control and playing well. This situation was to change dramatically over the season however; leading to my deeper and extended integration with the team in what became a mini-ethnography of sorts.

Loughborough Dynamo Junior FC is (or was at the time of the visit) a CS Development club catering for the semi-rural townspeople with teams from U8-U18 (all male) and a link with the senior club of the same name. They have a long history and a good reputation in the local area for high standards in football provision. Apart from their close proximity, my main reasons for visiting the club were to try to understand issues with transitions from junior to adult football (due to the ‘breadth’ of provision) and also to pursue answers to some of the questions I had developed around coaching, learning and feedback (which developed after the interview). Of course, at this stage, I was still attempting to remain open to new issues arising through interviews whilst using vignettes and agree/disagree statements to focus on specific topics.

In addition to the mini-ethnography with the U15s, I also spent substantial periods of time with the U10s and U18s (4 months and 2 months respectively) though the interviews with these groups formed part of the third vintage and will therefore be discussed in the next chapter. With the focus on the U15s between pre-season and winter break (December), I set about trying to develop rapport in the most natural way possible. That is, I didn’t wish to become involved in coaching too much from the outset, spending time joining in practice and watching games instead. However, despite my best efforts to integrate slowly and carefully, I soon found that this was going to be a difficult and delicate task.
In our early exchanges, the boys challenged me in physical, technical and psychological ways. They seemed to want to drag me into their adolescent world of posturing and proving, testing my patience as a coach, my skill as a player and my knowledge as a supposed football 'expert' (as they saw me). This presented me with a particularly sensitive problem: on the one hand, I wanted to try to converse at their level – to be 'one of them' – which required that I participate in their challenges; on the other hand, I found this socially awkward and wanted to keep a certain distance between us which required that I ignore or decline certain of their challenges. What this meant, in practice, was that every interaction I initiated or found myself in over the early weeks became a delicate game where I tried, with varying degrees of success, to achieve a balance between 'involvement and detachment'.

Although this process was difficult and caused me considerable self-doubt and reflection, it did allow me, with time (roughly 3 months or 25 visits), to get relatively close to a number of the players and parents. By November 2005 I was becoming part of the group: I knew everybody's names; I knew which of the players were close friends; I knew where everybody liked to play and basic information like which football team they supported and which school they attended. By this time I had also established (with the players) that I knew an 'adequate' amount about football and coaching, gaining respect through conducting sessions and assisting at matches. After the first full session I led, I made the following comments in my research diary:

*I take a session on final third attacking play, attempting to look at how forwards and midfielders might work together to create chances and score goals. The session began poorly, with few players present and most messing around and not listening... However, before moving the session forward again, I asked the players what they would like to do - if they were in charge of the session... They told me they wanted to put what we had learned into a game and we discussed between us how we might do this. They also suggested conditions to be placed on the game and then changed them according to the way the game was going. I found they enjoyed the session much more when I asked for their input, and they took the game seriously once they had some control over how it was played. After the session, when the manager asked if they had enjoyed themselves, they all said how much*
better it was than a 'normal' session and also said they had learned a lot of useful information. (Research Diary entry, 22.09.05)

With such experiences, and with the quickly changing team (i.e. many of the 'trouble-makers' were leaving, or being forced to leave, and taking others with them), I found myself becoming accepted, thus presenting the opportunity for an interview. Again, this wasn't an easy process. In fact, it took me three weeks and two failed attempts (one due to terrible weather) to organise and carry out an interview; though when I did it was a rewarding experience – as I noted in my research diary shortly afterwards:

My first interview after a long period of familiarisation with this group takes place immediately after a loss to a team from the division above, 4-2 in the cup. From the outset, the lads are obviously comfortable and at ease with the situation - making jokes, feet on table, flatulence etc. During the interview two things became obvious to me:

1. I felt able to push them for answers on certain questions. In this sense, I don't think I would have dared press previous groups in fear of alienating them in the interview; however, in this case, our rapport allowed me to push without the fear of losing them. 

2. Perhaps because I felt comfortable in pressing the issue here and there, I was able to probe deeper into 'sensitive' issues such as the origin of thoughts about body image and sex.

It has become clear to me that, whilst this is the best way to generate 'good data' - or data on sensitive topics or antecedents of behaviour - it is hardly conducive to my finishing the PhD any time soon. Nor is it practical in any situation where I have limited time to spend in a research setting.

(Research Diary entry, 20.11.06)

Compared to my previous experiences with boys at this particularly difficult age (especially Wallsend and Siddal Moor), this interview was a marked improvement. We all felt comfortable and some of the boys spoke at length about sensitive issues such as body image, sex and maturation. I was able to elicit deep responses to important questions and probe further to understand the antecedents and motivations behind their behaviour. However, although I was happy with the interview and the data we generated, I knew this was attributable to the familiarity I had achieved over many visits. It was becoming clear to me that this compromise - between time and quality - was going to govern, almost completely, the quality of the final research product. It was also clear that no easy solution to this problem was available.
Although I spent a further four months with the U15s, I did not conduct a repeat interview. I had never planned to do this, even though it was possible (and perhaps useful) and the main reason I didn't terminate contact at this point was, in fact, a direct reaction to the way in which the interview ended. In closing the interview, when I asked if anyone had anything else to add, two of the boys immediately asked if I was going to continue working with the team. Their concern was palpable, and even though I had explained the purpose and nature of my visit when I first arrived, I realised at this point that I hadn't reaffirmed my plans to move on after the interview. So, although I hadn't deliberately misled the players, I did feel that I could have planned the exit strategy in a more sensitive manner. Therefore, I continued to work with the U15s on a more limited basis (which I prepared them for and explained the reasons behind) whilst attempting to increase my involvement with other teams at the club (the U10s in particular).

5.4. Limitations of Early Conceptualisation.

Once again, after transcribing the interviews from the second vintage, I analysed the data using N*Vivo software and techniques adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1998) (see section 4.5). I was able to code most of the data into existing concepts, sometimes changing the definition of the properties and dimensions of the concept, only occasionally creating new concepts in response to data. One of the main tasks necessary at this stage, I felt, was to begin higher-order conceptualisation or categorisation (or 'axial coding' in Strauss and Corbin's [1998] terminology) since the existing concepts derived through open coding lacked any real organisation (see appendix G for the initial conceptual map).

Although some early relationships between concepts and ideas for higher-order categories had been noted (for example, between characteristics of a coach, feedback and motivation – see sections 4.6 and 4.7), the research product at this time still felt like a collection of disparate ideas rather than an emerging whole. In a memo created during the second vintage analysis, I set out my thoughts on the matter and suggested some reasons as to why this was the case.
Thinking about how all this is going to fit together, I really don’t see, on my current line of analysis, how I can conceptualise this in a coherent framework. I think I need to look again at the concepts I have generated and perhaps group them according to their properties i.e. are the psychological characteristics of people? Reactions to the behaviour of others? Feelings about ways they are treated? Thoughts about how things should be? etc. By re-conceptualising the scheme in this way I hope I will be able to work out a more fitting way to display the concepts and their relations to each other. That is, I believe my first attempt to group concepts was misconceived - I tried to group concepts by topic area (e.g. pedagogy, motivation) rather than by the intrinsic nature of the concept.

As the memo suggests, having coded the second vintage data into the existing concepts, I didn’t feel the existing subject-based categorisation was appropriate (as noted at the end of chapter 4). Although the sub-headings on the map depicted in figure 4.5 (in section 4.6) were only roughly formulated, they constituted the first attempt at higher-order conceptualisation. In further attempts, I developed different systems of organising concepts, the most useful of which – or the best ‘fit’ – is depicted in figure 5.1 (below). In this scheme my aim was to use the central variables of sex and age to organise the concepts so as to show when, and to whom (male or female), certain issues became important.

The heuristic in figure 5.1 describes those variables which seemed important in either a negative (red box) or positive (green oval) respect. It illustrates the degree of importance each issue held for males and females depending on the proximity to their respective ‘career trajectory arrows’ (i.e. closer = more important); and the stage of life at which the issue becomes more or less important (pre, early-middle or late adolescence). In sum, it attempts to describe the salient factors affecting young people’s decisions to stay in or leave football at various stages of their young ‘careers’. It does not, however, say anything about the details of such processes or account for the fact that boys of the same age will react differently under the same conditions.
For example, those young people who are exposed to football in pre-adolescence (i.e. most of the research participants) make decisions to play based on opportunities and significant barriers (e.g. cultural) in addition to support from family, peers and teachers (the latter two seem to be more important for girls). Consider, for example, a girl at a school which has links to a CS community club who send qualified coaches to conduct regular after-school girls’ football sessions. She also has friends who play and a teacher who is passionate about developing girls’ football. Given this set of necessary (but insufficient) conditions, her propensity to become involved in organised football would be greater than in a case where only one or two of the same conditions were present. In other words, this heuristic only describes the material cause, ignoring the efficient cause, necessary for a specific action to take place.

Moving through the model in a chronological path, the concepts illustrated in green ovals denote factors that are likely to increase enjoyment of, and adherence to, organised football. Conversely, concepts illustrated in red
boxes denote factors that are likely to lead to reduced enjoyment and potentially early drop-out (though again, it is clearly possible that a boy experiencing ‘pressure’ or anxiety in early adolescence would continue playing, with other, positive factors offsetting the negative). As such, figure 5.1 was useful in describing the variation in the data in a meaningful way, but it didn't capture or explain the complexity of the phenomena under study. In order to do this, I needed to completely re-think the ways in which I had classified the data to this point.

5.5. Re-conceptualising the Whole: A New Taxonomy.

From the earliest attempts at data analysis, I had entertained ideas similar to those expressed in figure 5.1, writing notes and memos about ‘trajectories’ and considering the differences between the experiences of boys and girls of varying age. What I came to understand around this time, after reading some of the socialisation literature (see section 5.6 below), was that any explanation of a phenomena as broad as ‘youth football’ would have to be necessarily abstract. I knew, therefore, that I needed to develop an abstract theory to explain the range of experiences I had recorded (at all ages and with both sexes), in addition to smaller explanatory models (still based on, or mapped over, the abstract theory) to explain specific phenomena (such as experiences of coaching) that I had chosen to focus upon. In order to do this, I went back to the full list of concepts and their descriptions (see appendix F) to review their properties and find some unifying characteristics.

5.5.1. From Subject-based to Property-based Classification.

In reading the descriptions of concepts, I soon began to notice common properties that I had ascribed. Some were clearly psychological characteristics of participants – such as enjoy, seek challenges – whilst others reflected specific desires – such as dislike physical – or the influences of significant others, such as coach makes it fun. A memo written at the time describes my predicament and the tentative solution I had in mind (see box below).
[THEORETICAL MEMO]

Today I realised that in order to organise concepts in a legible fashion, some concepts will have to be defined as mediating categories. That is, they condition the outcome of some event as indicated in the data. My thoughts are that these mediating categories will be essentially psychological (personality?) characteristics of young people. They are 'internal' properties of people and help to explain how they react to their environment. Thus, they will help explain why different actions occur in certain environments.

- Concept of fairness, morality
- Dislike, avoid, challenges
- Enjoy, seek, challenges
- Fear of failure
- 'Getting stuck in'

For example:
Those who enjoy, seek challenges (MEDIATING) are more likely to overcome setbacks such as those linked to being marginalised by negative role models, culture barriers or male domination, superiority; or they are more likely to continue playing after early negative experience. Conversely, those who dislike, avoid, challenges are likely to go the opposite way given the same conditions.

Concept of fairness, morality might take on a slightly different purpose, subsuming a number of different concepts that refer to the moral reactions to external influences e.g. dislike swearing, marginalised, gender equity etc.

I didn't pursue the idea of 'mediating categories' any further since I couldn't work out how they would mediate exactly, and between what. However, the idea was useful in clarifying the problem of classification and helped in the development of a solution. After a further period of reading and sorting I developed four basic lists of concepts based on the following classification headings: 1) external influences; 2) personality traits; 3) responses; 4) desires/concerns (see figure 5.2 below).
This new classification, based on the properties of the concepts, seemed sufficiently abstract to explain the variation in that data, yet it clearly needed developing further before specific substantive issues could be mapped onto it. I was also aware that, according to standard GT practice, I had ‘missed a step’ in developing the highest order categories before any specific subcategories. Standard practice is to develop more and more abstract categories from the bottom up; whereas I had jumped from the bottom to the top (and later went back to ‘flesh out’ the system with subcategories). This process is illustrated in figure 5.3 below.
As described in figure 5.3, my first step was to look at the set of 76 concepts and attempt to group them into similar categories. Once I had developed the four higher-order categories, I then went back to look again at the concepts and data in an attempt to define methods of sub-categorisation. This process also involved thinking about the higher-order categories – their properties and dimensions – to ensure the whole system was coherent and consistent. These latter processes, however, were undertaken in the third vintage (denoted by the question marks in figure 5.3) and will therefore be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

5.5.2. Developing Themes in the Second Vintage.

In addition to the general ideas concerning the reclassification of the whole system noted above, the second vintage also provided me with data that I used to develop ideas about specific substantive issues. With respect to coaching, for example, new ideas were generated around the concepts of applying skills and structure and organisation. The following memos
describe my developing thoughts on these coaching related issues and also specify the exact points in analysis when these thoughts occurred.

Memo - Applying Skills 11.02.06

[theoretical and operational memo]

When coding the following data extract, I was reminded of Rod Thorpe's work on TGfU and the long-term retention of skills (e.g. Thorpe, Bunker and Almond, 1986). I know Thorpe (and colleagues) has researched this phenomenon, investigating how long skills are retained for following 'standard' and 'game-based' approaches to coaching (see Kidman, 2001). His argument, I believe, is that standard coaching sessions are designed to achieve short-term (i.e. within session) improvement, whereas the TGfU approach is designed to encourage long-term, deep retention of skills over the course of many sessions.

Stephen: I think about an hour and fifteen training cos then you can put all what you learned in training into a game at the end - what you've learned.
DP: And you get a decent sized game so you can...
Stephen: Sir give us about a five minute match and we can't put what we've learnt in and we forget by next week cos we haven't practiced it, to do it.
Interviewer: That makes sense - yeah. So an ideal session would be if you worked on skills or tactics for one hour and fifteen minutes, then...
Stephen: (interrupting) and then put it into practice for forty-five then you wouldn't forget it and you could do it over next week. But he gives us like two and half minute game, you forget what you're doing, then next week you're just back to normal, back to what you started last week.
(Year 10 boys)

I should consult Thorpe’s work in this area and look again at how the data fits this theory. I should also try to ask this question - or use a vignette or exercise - in further interviews to see if others feel the same way.

Having some sensitivity to the literature in this area, I was able to develop the idea that applying skills was important for learning and retention. The boys speaking here also identified the importance of games and game-based approaches, which also linked to the ideas of Thorpe et al. (1986) and their popular TGfU model. Hence, I noted this as a possible issue for further investigation in third vintage interviews. Another set of concepts related to coaching that received attention in the second vintage were structure, organisation and tactics, like freedom and self expression. The memo below again describes my developing thoughts on the relationships between these concepts following the second vintage interviews.
Memo – ‘structure, organisation, tactics’ and ‘freedom’ 11.02.06

[theoretical memo]

As I was coding Knottingley boys interview, I came across a number of references to this concept. It seems the guys enjoyed sessions that were clearly structured and organised, facilitated by strong coaches who didn’t allow players to mess about. This is something I can sympathise with after my own experiences of coaching at the academy there. My session was completely destroyed by unruly behaviour and ‘messing about’. Perhaps because of the nature of the area and general behaviour patterns of the school pupils? (i.e. they were used to defying teachers and any authority figures. As such, teachers, I noticed, took a much stronger, more disciplined line with bad behaviour, dishing out punishments fairly liberally).

I had previously noted an interesting relationship, or balance, between ‘like freedom’ and ‘self expression’ and ‘structure, organisation, tactics’ (i.e. that sessions should facilitate a feeling or freedom, but not at the expense of overall structure). Clearly, achieving such a balance is difficult in practice (as I found), the particulars of which will vary considerably with age and the nature of the group (i.e. sex, geographical-economic situation). In this case, I think structure may need to be tighter as age increases (perhaps 12+), and more so with male groups than with female groups. The implications for coaching then are clear: encourage freedom and self-expression where possible, but be prepared to increase discipline and structure if the experience becomes counter-productive i.e. if players begin to abuse the freedom they have been afforded.

I also think this may have something to do with past experiences and education. For example, the Knottingley pupils were accustomed to high discipline and frequent punishments (this may have been the case both at home and in school, but I wouldn’t like to stretch too far), which may have ‘conditioned’ them into expecting this in sessions. Thus, their reaction is to test the boundaries placed around them by the coach (or teacher). In other cases, however, particularly with younger children, this behaviour has yet to be learned – they simply want to enjoy football and can do so happily in fairly flexible sessions where they respond positively and constructively to freedom.

In this extensive theoretical memo, two main ideas are prominent, both of which fit with the general idea of complex reclassification outlined in the previous section. The first idea is that not all young people like freedom and that this was, indeed, dependent on conditions such as the immediate context, experience of discipline, which, in turn could be a result of socio-economic status and age. Hence, structure and organisation were seen as necessary for a productive session in the eyes of the boys from Knottingley. However, I further hypothesised (based on previous interviews with younger players) that such ‘testing’ behaviour had to be learned and that young children could be treated differently (i.e. be given more freedom). This difficult task of providing
and controlling freedom is therefore something coaches need to consider, especially when working with males in middle-adolescence.

Unrelated to coaching, but nevertheless interesting, the concept of fitness through football was also developed during the second vintage. Initially the description of this concept was rather basic, simply stating that this seemed to be a motivation for some to play (some as young as 10-years-old). What I wanted to determine, therefore, was why fitness was a motivation for people so young (as explained in section 4.7).

MEMO - football & fitness 2 (06.02.06)

[theoretical memo]

After coding the transcript from Dynamo U15s, I developed more ideas on this concept. The last memo on this topic finished with the following questions:

But where do these ideas come from? Here, body image is prominent; but why does a 10-11 year-old boy care about having a six-pack when he's older? What pressures are young people under today to look good or 'acceptable' (indeed, what is an acceptable body image to them)? Does this differ between girls and boys (I suspect it does, but I'm not sure how exactly)?

Due to the rapport I had been able to build with the U15s, I felt comfortable in pushing them on this issue. That is, I felt I was able to continue asking “why?” when ordinarily I would have not pressed further in fear of alienating the group. A good illustration, I think, of why it is so important to spend prolonged amounts of time building rapport with group of this age in particular. The following data extract helps to shed light on some of the questions I posed earlier:

Interviewer: Well no, I mean a lot of people play sport, when you get older certainly, a lot of people play sport to keep the fitness levels up don't they. But I mean, why do you think that's important? Why is fitness, not being fat, important?
Lloyd: Cos if you get fat, you're never gonna get a shag are yer (laughs), when you're older. If I get fat like my dad I might just kill myself!
Jet: Is that gonna be in your thing when you write it down? Lloyd says 'to get a shag' (laughing).
Lloyd: Oh crap, don't make me say that.
I: (imitating with humility) 'If I don't play football, I might never get a shag' said Lloyd. Actually, I think that's interesting, I just wondered where that message comes from, that idea about fitness being important - where does it come from?
Lloyd: You don't wanna get fat do yer. You wanna get a good girlfriend when you're older.

Though it didn't occur to me at the time, the notion of increasing control in order to protect freedom is one political philosophers have been familiar with for some time. As Popper (1945/1969b: 98) has commented: “The important and difficult question of the limitation of freedom cannot be solved by a cut and dried formula.” Bobbio (2005: 15-16) also discusses similar ideas and the notion of the state as a 'necessary evil' in liberal politics.
Jet: For like image purposes.
I: What, image as in... what kind of image?
Ben: Muscular.
Jet: A fit image, not a fat bastard.
[laughing]
I: So being lean and muscular...
Lloyd: Strong.
I: ...and strong - where does that come from? Where does the idea, the image come from?
Jet: Professional footballers cos they're like role models for a lot of people and they train every day and they're like... the fittest.
I: So because girls idolise professional footballers, then that becomes an ideal body image or thing to do. Would that be fair to say?
All: Yeah.
I: So it's all about sex at the end of the day really?
Jet: Yeah [laughing].
(U15 boys)

Hence, it seems a combination of peer pressure (as exerted by girls) and role models (pro footballers) conspire to generate anxiety about body image and, thus, a desire or motivation to play football to maintain or develop what is perceived to be an 'ideal body image'.

Although the data exert in the memo above is extensive, I think it is necessary to include it in full here since it shows how I was able to continue pushing for a deeper explanation as to why fitness was important for the boys. I ended the memo with the tentative hypothesis that professional players acted as role models for the boys' in a physical sense because they believed that particular image was coveted by girls. Again, this hypothesis was taken forward and helped to form questions in the third vintage interviews.

5.6. Early Engagement with the Literature.
As described in section 5.4, my early attempts to 'conceptualise the whole' had been unsuccessful and had been replaced with a new heuristic model (figure 5.1 above) describing the important factors affecting young people's passage into, through and out of football. This model, too, was considered inadequate, but it suggested that thorough engagement with the literature on 'socialisation' was necessary if I was to gain any genuine theoretical insight into the broad field I was studying. I began this search with a review of the secondary literature (texts and edited books) in order to gain a broad perspective of the breadth of studies, findings and theories relevant to my research.
In a concise review of socialisation research in sport, Coakley (2001: 82-107) attempts to distinguish between functionalist and critical interactionist approaches, reflecting the broader debate in the parent discipline (Scott and Marshall, 2005: 621). Under functionalist (or internalisation) approaches, researchers are commonly concerned with the ways in which social actors receive and absorb the values of their surrounding culture. Conversely, under critical and interactionist approaches, researchers assume that:

...socialisation is not a one-way process of social influence through which we are moulded and shaped. Instead, it is an interactive process through which we actively connect with others, synthesise information, and make decisions that shape our own lives and the social world around us. (Coakley, 2001: 82)

In an earlier review of socialisation research in sport and leisure, McPherson (1986) contended that such functionalist and 'over-deterministic' approaches to socialisation dominated until the 1970s and that, as a result, the 'microdynamics' of socialisation remained relatively unexplored. Research on socialisation in sport and leisure, according to McPherson (1986), should therefore aim to conceptualise interaction as "an active, reciprocal process between self and the environment" with a focus on "the social context, the acquisition and use of power", and "the active role of the individual".

This 'modern approach' is clearly compatible with the critical realist ontological assumptions that underpin this research (see section 3.4.2); especially the assumptions concerning the structure-agency relationship. According to Coakley (2001: 84) researchers should 'seek information about the active decisions people make, what conditions those decisions, and how they connect sports participation to the wider cultural context'. Research on socialisation in sport, therefore, tends to focus on one or more stages of the following 3-stage process:

1. Becoming involved in sport;
2. Staying involved in sport (and developing sporting identity);
3. Dropping out of, or changing, sport.
There are clear parallels here to the process described in figure 5.1, and some of the concepts already discussed in the first and second vintages, such as 'early positive experiences' and 'parental influence' (1); 'football friendships' (2); and 'unsure football future' (3). Indeed, what was created in the second vintage could easily be described as an interactionist account of a socialisation process in youth football.

Empirical studies of socialisation – usually focussed on different stages of the process – have attempted to describe the careers (or critical periods therein) of young athletes. Stevenson (1999), for example, reviewed the stories of elite athletes and concluded that socialisation was an interactive process where the athletes chose to participate in sports they felt competent in and had developed strong friendships (with both peers and coaches). Stevenson (1999) also found that athletes 'developed commitment' over time, based on the negotiation of a web of personal relationships, actively establishing reputations and identities as athletes.

Donnelly and Young (1999) studied young rugby players and rock climbers and suggested that becoming an athlete was a four-stage process:

1. Acquiring knowledge about the sport;
2. Associating with people in the sport;
3. Learning how those people think about their sport and what they do and expect from each other;
4. Becoming recognised and fully accepted as a fellow athlete.

Becoming involved in sport, then, depends on being able to 'talk the talk, and walk the walk' as a means to achieve social acceptance, which is a continuous rather than a discrete process (Donnelly and Young, 1999). Being able to establish and maintain social connections and, thus, acceptance in sport is, on this analysis, a salient variable affecting long-term involvement.

Such insights – e.g. that acquiring knowledge and associating with people are interrelated – once again helped to provoke theoretical interpretation of the
findings of this study. For example, in some interviews the issue of gaining or possessing football knowledge was clearly important for both boys and girls in developing friendships. However, in primary schools providing mixed football, the comparative lack of knowledge girls felt they had about football (mostly due to their upbringing and social networks) appeared to cause distress and feelings of inferiority, which, in turn, had clear implications for their continuing participation. Support for such hypotheses can also be drawn from research by Hasbrook (1999), who found that girls' perceptions of inferiority often became manifest in low self confidence, despite their often equal ability, and resulted in them avoiding physically challenging situations.

Having reviewed 'dozens of studies' on drop-out or changing participation, Coakley (2001: 88) makes the following points of relevance to this study: first, when people drop-out of sport they often move into different, less competitive sports or roles (e.g. coaches and administrators); second, drop-out is usually associated with broader processes or changes occurring in people’s lives, such as leaving school, getting married or getting a job 69; finally, drop-out is not always associated with negative experiences, though increasing stress and decreasing fun do lead to burnout (Coakley, 1992). Again, there are clear parallels here to the ideas or hypotheses about 'unsure future' and 'pressure and expression' that were being developed at this stage of the research.

Further reviews of the sociological and psychological literature on socialisation and sport (Coakley, 1986; Brustad, 1992; Mannell and Kleiber, 1997; Côté and Hay, 2002) appear to confirm the notion of a clearly 'staged' process. Brustad (1992), for example, refers to socialisation into, via and out of sport; whereas Mannell and Kleiber (1997) speak of socialisation 'into' and 'through' leisure, followed by 'transitions into adulthood'. And, of course, Côté and Hay’s (2002) 4-stage process of socialisation has already been reviewed (see section 2.5). Broad agreement about ontological assumptions is also clear.

69 This point can be explained with reference to the 'focal model' (Coleman and Henry, 1999: 18) which predicts that participation and performance in activities (e.g. sport, exams) decreases proportionately to increases in the number of life transitional events (e.g. parents divorce, moving house, leaving school, getting a job) a young person experiences.
The social-psychological approach of Mannell and Kleiber (1997) suggests socialisation is an “interactive process” where $B=f(P, E)$ (where $B$ is behaviour, $P$ is the person and $E$ is the environment). Similarly, Brustad (1992) understands socialisation to be a “reciprocal process” where developmental (i.e. genetic or maturation) factors shape and affect the extent of, or perceptions of, social support received by young people in sport, which, in turn, have consequences for motivation and future levels of involvement. Both advocates clearly have much in common with Coakley’s (2001) “critical interactionism” and McPherson’s (1986) “new wave” that aims to consider “the interaction between the biological, personal and social systems” in sport.

To summarise, many of the reviews noted above make explicit recommendations for future research. A number of these recommendations are clearly relevant to the evolution of this research through the third and final ‘vintage’. First among these is the sensible proposal to integrate and synthesise theories from sociology, psychology and developmental studies (McPherson, 1986; Mannell and Kleiber, 1997; Brustad, 1992) in a multidisciplinary analysis of youth sport socialisation. Second, longitudinal – or, at worst, non-cross-sectional – approaches focusing on the dynamics of “participation careers” (Coakley, 1986) are also recommended (McPherson, 1986; Coakley, 2001: 105). Third, studies that attempt to understand the social world from the child’s perspective are desperately needed (McPherson, 1986; Brustad, 1992). Finally, and with an implicit nod to critical realism, Coakley (1986) concludes that: “research is needed to specify the types of changes occurring within and child’s participation career as well as the conditions leading to those changes”.

This early and incomplete engagement with the socialisation literature opened the path into the third vintage in two ways. First, empirical studies (e.g. Hasbrook, 1999) helped to stimulate my thoughts on existing hypotheses concerning specific substantive processes (e.g. the dynamics of mixed mini-soccer and the problem of early negative experiences for the ‘careers’ of girls). Second, the theoretical literature (e.g. McPherson, 1986) supplied explicit recommendations regarding the conceptualisation of the broader
process, helping me to develop my solution to the problem of ‘re-conceptualising the whole’.

To return to this problem briefly: I had felt that the descriptive ‘career trajectory’ heuristic (figure 5.1) was probably inadequate as a final explanation of the variation in the data (see section 5.5); though, potentially, still useful when accompanied by a more abstract theory of a socialisation process. This is the tentative solution I began to develop at the end of the second vintage (see section 5.5.1), made possible by an explicit sensitivity – derived from the literature – to the idea that any theory of socialisation must account for the following: the environment (social structures, significant others); how this ‘context’ is perceived differently by individuals; the impact this has on sporting behaviour; and the reciprocal effect this behaviour can have on the ‘environment’. The continuing development of this solution therefore required engagement with theories and concepts from a number of disciplines: cognitive-behavioural psychology; child development; social-psychology; and sociology.
CHAPTER 6:
THE THIRD VINTAGE: APPROACHING SUBSTANTIVE THEORY

"We are not students of some subject matter but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the boarders of any subject matter or discipline."

- Sir Karl Popper
6.1. Introduction to the Third Vintage.

The logical point of departure from the second vintage into the third was the development of a solution to the problem of re-conceptualisation summarised in the previous section. However, there were also a number of mini-hypotheses, developed in memos throughout the second vintage, which I proposed to 'test', again with the assistance of agree/disagree statements and vignettes (see figure 3.10). These dual aims formed a clear twofold focus for this final vintage which was, once more, abbreviated due to the increasingly limited nature of the research – a natural characteristic of grounded theory.

Since no new data collection or analysis methods were developed at this stage, the first section of this final vintage chapter resumes the narrative I began in section 4.4 and continued through section 5.3. Once more, my aim here is to faithfully describe the experiences of data collection and analysis, with particular emphasis on a limited set of substantive phenomena and the development of a substantive theory.

The substantive issues I chose to explore in greater depth in this vintage – usually due to personal interest and perceived importance – are explained in section 6.3. The substantive theory of socialisation in football (incorporating specific and abstract elements), which I developed more fully after a period of reading and reflection, is presented in section 6.4 providing something of a preface to the general discussion that follows (chapter 7).


Following from the second vintage narrative, this section describes the final acts of the data collection and analysis phase of the research (see table 4.1 for a summary). As part of the 'accidental ethnography' I started in the summer of 2005, two further teams from Loughborough Dynamo JFC (U10s and U18s) were 'theoretically sampled' to participate in the study. The first section recounts my experiences of working with the U10s, along with a later...
visit with a group of U9s from Rochdale. These visits, though occurring some
time apart, are discussed together here (section 6.2.1) due to the great
similarities in the issues that emerged (mainly concerning the influences of
parents). My interactions with Dynamo’s U18s are described separately
though they occurred simultaneously (section 6.2.2). In the final part of the
narrative I describe a ‘mini-ethnography’ with a multicultural group of U14
boys from an inner-city club which took place between January and March of
2006 (section 6.2.3).

6.2.1. First Contact with Mini-Soccer

It was the autumn of 2005 when I began to make regular visits with
Loughborough Dynamo’s U10s, overlapping somewhat with my continuing
activities with the U15s (for a description of the club context, see section
5.3.3). The U10s consisted of two squads – greens and whites – where
players were allocated to a team based on ability. I spent the majority of my
time with the green squad – generally the better players – assisting the coach
in midweek training and occasionally refereeing (or watching) weekend
games. Prior to this visit I had interviewed both boys and girls of the same
age, but always in a school environment. I hoped, therefore, to better
understand the competitive element of mini-soccer and, in particular, to see
how young people at this age interacted with coaches and parents.

My initial observations were positive. The players were much better than I had
anticipated: they appeared well organised and cognisant with some complex
tactics; they approached training in a serious manner; and they clearly held
respect for their coach (also a parent) who appeared to take great pleasure in
coaching the team. It didn’t take long, however, to become acquainted with
the darker side of mini-soccer. It was after the first game I watched, in fact,
that I made the first of a series of notes to this end in my diary:

I am surprised by the quality of play but also by the behaviour of the coaches
and parents who line the pitch. I am reminded of comments I have read

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70 Mini-soccer is a small-sided (7-a-side in this case), mixed-sex variation of association football lasting
30 minutes (2x15 minute halves). It is designed to make football "fun and meaningful" for children under
the age of 10, with a playing area and goal roughly one third of the size of the 11-a-side game.
(Pitchford et al., 2004) about mini-soccer resembling a boxing match in the way that the (small) pitch is surrounded by spectators, all shouting encouragement and sometimes even instructions or abuse. It must be an intimidating and pressurised environment for these kids, most of whom are just nine years-old. I was also shocked at the conduct of the coaches, both of whom shouted (both positive and negative comments) for virtually the entire game. This worries me because I wonder how the lads feel, or rather, how their feelings transfer and manifest in future play i.e. are they afraid to try things or play freely in the future if this type of play is criticised? (Research Diary entry, 23.10.05)

Clearly these observations were coloured by my developing ideas on the relationship between anxiety and enjoyment, or 'under pressure' and 'self expression', though prior to this incident I had not considered the role parents might play. In subsequent games and training sessions, the environment in the team became increasingly performance oriented with a strong emphasis placed on winning by the coach and by a number of parents. The relationship between competition, pressure and enjoyment therefore seemed to me to be of central importance to the success of mini-soccer (given that it was introduced specifically to promote fun and participation) and interview prompts were created around this issue.

As results became increasingly important to 'the greens' – or rather, to the coach and some influential parents – so the team's performance suffered and, over a period of 3 weeks, adult relationships became strained. Public arguments between the coach and some parents concerning their boys' playing time eventually saw the resignation of the coach, leaving me picking up the pieces in subsequent weeks. Fortunately, I was extricated from this awkward and difficult position by the manager of the white team and another parent who quickly salvaged the situation, enabling me to return to my 'researcher' role.

The continuing problems related above meant that I found it difficult to schedule an interview in the first 2-3 months of involvement with the U10s. However, the extended observations and 'impromptu' interviews I was able to make during this time heightened my sensitivity to issues of importance among the boys, ultimately improving the quality of the interview I was finally
able to conduct. For example, in a game observation I recorded shortly after
the coach had left I made explicit notes about potential interview questions:

One parent, the father of one of the more talented players, stood out among
those shouting instructions (and abuse at the referee). At half time, when the
players usually get together in the middle of the pitch for a huddle, he made a
point of pulling his son out and taking him away from his team mates. He
proceeded to castigate the boy in front of the bemused watching crown,
before sending him back into the huddle with tears streaming down his face. I
made a point of watching how the lad played in the second half. And, as I
expected, he virtually disappeared from the game, often playing a ball first
time or miss-controlling it completely. He is clearly suffering from a lack
confidence which I think it is safe to assume stems from the ‘dressing down’
he received from his dad at half time. I wonder if his dad thinks he played
better in the second half, for that, I assume, is the reason he took him out of
the huddle i.e. to list his mistakes so that he wouldn’t repeat them. An odd
theory, but one that appears common with many parents I have seen
(Research Diary entry, 29.01.06)

In the interview that followed I was able create an agree/disagree statement
that provoked discussion on the issue of parents, anxiety and performance.
The boy in the scenario above had enlightening comments to make about his
parents, their conduct and its impact on his performance.

Very similar issues became the focus of my research once again during a visit
to Middleton Colts U9s later in the year (approximately 3 months later,
between 6th-18th April). The club lies on the outskirts of Rochdale – considered
to be a relatively poor, working-class area – and has the honourable
distinction of being one of the first clubs in the country to achieve Charter
Standard Community Club status. At the time of my visit, they had just
unveiled a new £1.6 million training facility: the product of a joint bid to the
football foundation between the club and the local sports college. However,
due to lingering disagreements about usage, most of the teams were still
training at a local junior school with dilapidated changing facilities and
sometimes 4-teams to a pitch (which, by this time of year, were unmarked and
consisted more of mud than grass).

Due to the limited time I had to spend with the team, I tried to attend and get
involved in all training sessions and games over the two-week period. At the
final game I attended, I was asked to referee since the league had failed to send an official. Although refereeing ran counter to my desired ‘interested other’ status, I felt an obligation to help where possible. I had also previously found refereeing to provide a unique ‘insider’ perspective which was valuable when trying to understand young people’s experiences from their point of view. At this point, I was already sensitised to issues of parental pressure and abuse in mini-soccer and I wanted to use this opportunity to test some of my nascent hypotheses. In this respect, the experience of refereeing a game in this new context proved most useful, as I noted in my research diary:

As the game begins, a typical mini-soccer 'chase the ball', few fouls affair, I become aware of the comments being made by parents. The boys and girls are just out enjoying playing, but as play continues and chances are carved out by both sides, parents and coaches become increasingly passionate and, in some cases, angry. It is also obvious that some players are confused with the mixed messages coming from the sideline - often the coach and 2 or 3 parents are shouting conflicting orders: "get back in defence", "get up and attack", "stay there". On one occasion I see that one boy is almost physically being pulled in different directions as he tried to decide on which of the commands to respond to. All the time he is oblivious to what is actually happening in the game (Research Diary entry, 16.04.06)

Although qualitatively different from what I had previously experienced, the on-pitch atmosphere remained pressurised and performance orientated. In particular, I was interested in the effect the conflicting instructions were having on the players as my observations suggested they were a cause (both direct and indirect) of anxiety. It was with such hypotheses that I entered the interview situation, which took place following the game in the changing room.

Following the analysis of interview data and reading of relevant literature, I developed further ideas about the possible theoretical relationship between ‘under pressure’, ‘self expression’ (or competitive anxiety and creativity) and subsequent enjoyment. A theoretical memo, clearly informed by psychological literature, captured my emerging ideas about this important aspect of youth football.
MEMO - Pressure and expression 2, 01.06.06

A theoretical explanation for this relationship has been proposed by James and Collins (1997) who, drawing heavily on the work of Leary (1983; 1992), investigated the causes of competitive stress in sport and concluded that ‘self-presentation’ theory could offer some answers. They also suggested that significant others, self doubt and the nature of the competition were the most popular sources of stress. That is, young athletes become sensitive to the social consequences of poor performance through the expectations of significant others (e.g. family).

In this respect, James and Collins (1997) corroborate the tentative findings made here that pressure is applied mainly by significant adults (coaches and parents), and offer a possible explanation as to why, within the individual, this is related to self-presentation motivations (i.e. wishing to appear competent, not making mistakes).

Since this was my final interview, I was unable to test and therefore further develop (or refute) this hypothesis. However, it does appear to ‘fit’ the data and provides a useful point of departure into the literature on stress and competitive anxiety in youth sport. Further elucidation and explanation of this phenomenon is reserved for the next chapter.

6.2.2. Transitions from Junior to Senior Football.

Formalising the transition from junior to adult football is one of the central policy aims of the CSS. By creating fewer, larger, better administrated clubs, with a range of teams across all age-groups, the FA hope to address the well documented ‘drop-out’ problem which appears at this crucial time (i.e. between the ages of 15-18). A number of hypotheses – both sociological and psychological – have been extended to explain the ‘drop-out’ phenomenon in sport. Some of these explanations had already been reviewed after the initial engagement with the literature (see section 5.6) and thus constituted the sensitising concepts informing my ideas when I first made contact with Dynamo’s U18s – a successful team on the cusp of disintegration as they neared the end of their final season in junior football (see section 5.3.3 for a description of the club context).

My visits took place over a period of eight weeks immediately prior to the end of the season (i.e. late April/early May). I attended and participated in training sessions (sometimes as a player, occasionally as assistant coach) to
familiarise myself with the team, a process I found much easier with more mature players (most were 18-years-old). The team were clearly very close, both on and off the pitch, a product of their consistent membership and presence of their coach who was highly qualified and well respected in the area. They were also extremely successful, having won their league for the previous 3 years with many players who had been close to winning professional contracts (though none had been successful).

Aside from the obvious issues of ‘football future’ and ‘stretched leisure time’, I wished to explore the players’ experiences of coaching, in particular their ideas on ‘structure’ and ‘freedom’ that had been developed following analysis of second vintage data (see section 5.5.2). Because of the quality of the coaching they had received, coupled with the fact that many of them had coaching or leadership qualifications, I anticipated some considered responses to questions on coaching. Two of the interviewees were also active referees in mini-soccer, thus providing me with an opportunity to gain different perspectives on the issues noted in the previous section. The interview took place in the clubhouse after the final game of the season. The venue was social yet sufficiently private, and the timing was perfect in that it presented a natural point for reflection on the season and their youth football ‘careers’ more generally.

Two hypotheses were extended following the interview: the first concerning coaching, self-expression, structure and freedom; the second concerning the players’ futures. Tentative hypotheses had already been formulated and posed as questions in the interview (see appendix I for interview plan). However, the discussion allowed me to reformulate these hypotheses more carefully and with greater precision. The memos below were created shortly after the analysis of this data. Both memos are slightly abridged versions of the originals, with only the most important text fragments retained.
The following passage is taken from a discussion about the ability to express yourself in football.

S: I think that comes down to the... how the coach and the team want to be sort of thing. If the coach wants to have a team that's going to do well, wants to learn to play football, then at training he needs to be: "Okay this is how we're going to do it - short passing and everything". But if the coach is just like: "Yeah, I just want you to have fun", at that age, they should just let 'em get on with it... I've heard him (U10s coach) telling them: "Just remember, y'know, short passing, one-twos and things, simple". I think it should be encouraged that the flicks and things aren't needed, and that... I think if the coaches cut flicks out y'know... I think the standard of football, as you go up, I think it becomes so much better because they're learning to play football much earlier.

I: So learning the way they're going to play in the future?
S: Yeah.
C: It's not about enjoyment then though, so it's a fine line...
S: (interrupting) Yeah, you gotta get that balance haven't you.
C: So if you're saying they're doing it for enjoyment, then they shouldn't really be being told not to do this and not to do that, but, to be fair, if you want them to play good football then you need to tell them don't you.
(U18 boys)

What interested me here was the interaction of a number of different concepts and how they might develop or change in their nature with age. There seems to be an essential tension between 'structure' and 'expression' and that 'proper football' is more closely aligned with the former. I think there is a much to say on this matter. For example, it seems to me that YP are subjected a number of external influences such as pro players ('social learning'), who, like their hero Ronaldinho, encourage expression, and coaches ('constrained by coach') and parents ('under pressure'), who are more likely to restrict the freedom they have to 'express themselves'. The battle between these socialising influences - depending, of course, on the individual - is likely, over time, to force YP into a particular mould. And as Craig and Luke admit (below), as you get older, self expression in football is slowly beaten out of you through negative reinforcement.

C: Like you still get quite a lot of people shouting, like: "No flicks" and stuff.
I: And does that sort of change the way... like has that, over time - every time you've tried a flick or something to express yourself, something a bit different, and every time you do that there's this voice from the sideline that's like: "Don't try that"...
L: Yeah, you can hear it in your head though, you know it's coming!
I: So does that, over time, ultimately shape you as a player and stop you from...
C: I suppose.
L: Yeah, it dies down. You start off as a kid - like it's every lad's dream to be a football player...
S: Yeah, and you wanna do what you see on TV...
L: That's the... soon as you're on that pitch it's all flicks and overhead kicks. And then as you progress, you realise you aint no Rooney or you aint no Henry, so you never try a flick, you just play it simple and get on with it.
C: That's true.
(U18 boys)
This memo marked the culmination of many of my ideas about the interrelated issues noted in the text, particularly the abbreviated concepts of 'structure', 'pressure', 'expression' and the changing influences of coaches (and parents) with age. A full explanation of this compound hypothesis (incorporating relationships between many concepts) is offered in section 6.3 (below).

MEMO – Unsure/Clear football future, 30.05.06

Whilst coding the Dynamo U18s interview, much discussion was generated around the topic of where they would continue to play football in the future. Only one of the interviewees had an idea of where he was going to play the following year; another had almost resigned himself to dropping out:

L: That's our last game, so we ought to know what we'll be doing next year.  
S: Half the team - apart from the 5 that are going to University and will be able to carry on playing football there - but then we've got a squad of like 20, 21, what about the other 15 or 16 - they haven't got a clue!  
S: There's like 11 or 12 players now who are like: 'Well, where am I going to go? What am I going to do? Is that it? Is football over for me?' sort of thing.  
L: That's how I feel at the minute. No Dynamo. My football team's gone!  
l: Yeah, all of a sudden.  
l: So... I'll be getting drunk every night of the week now (laughing).  

Clearly this club, despite being a CS development club, had problems facilitating the transition from junior to adult football. It seems in this case the guys believed it was an internal management and communication issue. This is a concern because in many other respects (e.g. movement from U17s to U18s) this club were a good example to others (see below).

I: This is something I'm concerned about because with this Charter Standard thing. There's 3 levels of clubs and Dynamo at the moment are the middle level, or Development club, and Development club dictates that there should be a clear link from junior to adult football, but it just says: "clear link", there's nobody says what this link should be. So clubs can get away with just going: "Well, we've got a senior team, we've got a junior team - and under 18s team - and some of the under 18s are signed on with the senior team and that's it". Y'know, whether it actually works or not is another thing so...  
l: Yeah.  
s: But there definitely needs to be [a better junior-adult link]... I think the main problem at this club is the link between 18s upwards.  
l: I think younger-wise it's great. Cos at every age-group there's someone for, someone working with them developing them. But that's the fault, if we had to pick one, with this great football club.  

In this case, the problem appeared to originate with the senior side and their lack of interest in bringing in the U18s. It must be noted that the senior side were ambitious and perhaps felt the U18s weren't able to step into the level of football they competed in. However, this being the case, few opportunities were open in the reserves and no links with other local adult clubs had been forged, thus leaving the current U18s without an outlet for football beyond this, their final season.
Once again, the young people seemed constrained by the structure of the club and by the decisions of some central adult actors. It was also clear that, like many of the other social phenomena, players confronted these constraints in very different ways: some felt unable to act in the face of such problems; others were more proactive and had created clear plans to continue playing. Also of special interest here was the conflict between what the club was expected to provide (under the criteria set out by the CSS) and what the players experienced. From a policy perspective, the difference between 'outcomes' (e.g. clubs receiving CS status) and 'impacts' (e.g. clubs failing to actually create a meaningful junior-senior link) was becoming an important and significant distinction to make.

6.2.3. Multiculturalism and Football.
Since the first vintage ideas I had developed around race and ethnicity and subsequent 'marginalisation' from football I had been trying to gain access to a club that would enable me to explore such issues. This winter visit to Leicester Nirvana JFC (between January and late March, 2006) provided the perfect opportunity to spend time in a multicultural club with an excellent reputation for producing talented Asian footballers in an ethnically diverse community. My research diary recorded my initial impressions of the club:

The club lies in one of the most deprived and ethnically mixed areas of Leicester (the club has players speaking a total of 28 languages with a number of asylum seekers having moved to the area recently). It is a Charter Standard Development club but struggles to attract girls and women and also has problems with transitions to senior football. In an initial meeting with Dillip, the club secretary, I am told that the club has a strong tradition of bringing up good Asian footballers. However, more recently, the club's senior structure has crumbled and the older youth age-groups have begun to falter also. The youth section is, however, particularly vibrant at mini-soccer level and Dillip hopes that investment in facilities will see the club returned to its former position. I agree to work with the U14s who are winning their league comfortably. I get the impression Dillip wants me to see the best side of the club as I later find out that the U14 coach, Darren, is considered to be the best in the club. The facilities I see are admittedly awful, with decaying dressing rooms and pitches ruined through overuse and misuse (e.g. dog dirt). However, the players are enthusiastic (for 13-14-year-olds anyway) and initial training sessions are generally impressive (Research Diary entry, 28.01.06)
Despite having to coach in my early meetings with the U14s, and the quite obvious socio-cultural differences between me and them\(^1\), I nevertheless developed a good rapport with a number of the more gregarious players. As with past experiences, the players tested my ability when participating in practices and my knowledge with probing questions during breaks. However, with some conscious yet subtle modifications to the way I spoke, my body language and my approach to coaching, it took around eight sessions before I felt comfortable enough to conduct an interview. The central issues I set out to explore here were coach behaviour and player learning and the cultural issues (i.e. institutional racism, integration or separation) that became prominent in the first vintage (see table 4.3). I did so using comparative vignettes (of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ coaching) and agree/disagree statements (e.g. “football is a racist sport”) respectively, followed by probing questions.

Although no new hypotheses – and, hence, no new memos – were developed following this interview, it was useful in terms of ‘testing’ some tentative ideas relevant to young people of this age and range of cultural backgrounds. In particular, my ideas on the nature of a good coach were supported with positive responses to the vignette illustrating a ‘good’ coaching session (see appendix I). I was also able to differentiate between perceptions of institutional and individual racism and align these ideas with a broader critical realist understanding of race (Carter, 2002). Here, ‘race’ and ‘racism’ are seen as ‘essentially contested’ (Lukes, 2005: 110) socially constructed concepts that can be rendered ‘real’ if social actors’ experiences of them are real (or perceive their consequences as real). In my discussions with the young Nirvana players, they gave examples of racism and what they saw as racist incidents in football. Some were overt and clearly intended whilst others were more subtle and perhaps the result of more deep-rooted, institutionalised ideas of race. The (critical) realist conception of racism propounded by Carter (2002) therefore helped me to distinguish between the experiences of the

\(^1\) ‘Streetwise’ is probably the best adjective to describe the players. They spoke in a vernacular I clearly wasn’t able to reproduce and enacted unfamiliar customs in their interactions. They were mostly from extremely deprived areas and few of them had positive attitudes towards education. As a white, middle-class university student from Yorkshire, I had little in common with them. As such, empathy – an emotion central to developing rapport – was difficult, but not impossible, to establish.
Nirvana players in their particular social context and the experiences of players (and non-players) from earlier vintages who had discussed similar issues. Again, a more detailed discussion of young people's perceptions and experiences of racism will be taken up in the next chapter.

6.3. Products of the Third Vintage.

After the final analysis of the empirical data, in addition to some substantive and theoretical reading, three main 'products' of the third vintage were defined. First, the third vintage analysis helped to solve some of the conceptualisation problems noted at the conclusion of the second vintage. The first product was therefore a tentative theory explaining a range of broad experiences related to the socialisation process in youth football (see section 6.3.1 below).

Second, the descriptive heuristic initially created during the second vintage (figure 5.1) was revised and developed. Although the problems noted in section 5.5.1 remained\(^{72}\), the revised heuristic was considered useful (in an instrumentalist sense), and especially so for policy makers who may require a more basic and abbreviated explanation of youth football experiences. The new heuristic does, indeed, describe a set of hypotheses concerning the different variables important to football participation and performance for girls and boys at different stages of their 'careers'. In short, it presents a short-hand, single-page description of the main issues that appear important for young people and their enjoyment of the game (see section 6.3.2 below).

Finally, a series of tentative hypotheses were created to explain the relationships between concepts in some important areas. These hypotheses were mapped over (i.e. theoretically consistent with) the tentative theory of football socialisation experiences, therefore providing examples of how the theory might be applied to explain a range of issues young people tried to elucidate during the data collection. They are also explicitly informed by, and

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\(^{72}\) Briefly stated, the problems were that individual differences in motivation and personality were not accounted for (i.e. only material causes were modelled), and that complex processes (such as the interconnected nature of stress, enjoyment and learning) could not be explained.
mostly consistent with, existing theories in relevant fields. In some areas these hypotheses expand on, or fill gaps in, existing theories and are therefore novel or original. However, even where they are unoriginal these hypotheses should be considered to be more ‘ethical’ (see section 1.6 for justification) than those belonging to existing bodies of work where scaled questionnaires have been the predominant mode of data collection (see section 6.3.3 below).

According to the GT canon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998; Charmaz, 1990) theorising about ‘social processes’ is a core activity of sociologists. For Strauss and Corbin (1998: 163), social processes are ‘sequences of evolving interactions in which changes can be traced to structural conditions’. Coding for process therefore involves looking at interactions over time to note changes and attribute them to structural conditions where possible. In many cases, ‘social process’ can be an “organizing thread” of a grounded theory; it can be the difference between a “snapshot and a moving picture” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 179). During the third vintage, this understanding of ‘social process’ became instrumental, not least as a way of negotiating the conceptualization problems experienced earlier.

As explained at the end of the second vintage, the central concern with data analysis in the latter stages of the research was solving the problem of ‘re-conceptualising the whole’ (see section 5.5). The revised 4-category taxonomy has already been described (see section 5.5.1). It is worth repeating, however, that this re-classification focused on the properties of the concepts created during the first and second vintages rather than the substantive issues they referred to. This was illustrated in figure 5.2 (above) where the 76 ‘free nodes’ created during open coding were placed into four broad categories: external influences; personality traits; responses and results; desires and concerns. The somewhat irregular (i.e. not in keeping with GT conventions) process of creating these new categories, and later subcategories, was described in figure 5.3 (above). However, the processes labeled ‘step 2’ and ‘step 3’ in figure 5.3 still require explanation.
Once the four broad property-based categories had been generated, the next step (step 2 in figure 5.3) was to return to the concepts populating each category, read the descriptions and look for similarities and differences. Sub-categories were therefore created to ‘fit’ the variation in the original concepts and help explain the nuances of the parent category (step 3 in figure 5.3). For example, in the case of 'external influences', the sub-categories had proximity (coach-parent-peers-society-environment) and evaluative (positive/negative) dimensions. In the case of 'desires and concerns', the sub-categories had temporal and proximity dimensions (session-programme-social context-future). The four tables below (6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4) illustrate how the sub-categories took the form of 'tree nodes' in N*Vivo. They are accompanied here with memos that help explain the reasoning behind their creation.

Table 6.1. Tree Node: External Influences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Higher-order category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Coach shouts at us'</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constrained by coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachable, respectable coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback for learning</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach makes it fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise improves confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male superiority, domination</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>External Influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer influence</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making, keeping friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental/family influence</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectator abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Culture barriers'</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Societal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced to decide on football</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No female role models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative role models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Only one team to play for'</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate facilities/equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space to play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEMO - External influences 30.05.06

This category - group of concepts - describes the context in which young footballers act. Significant others, environmental and societal factors can be broadly termed positive or negative influences, the details of which are described in some concepts. [For example, 'making, keeping friends' refers to the influence friends have over participation in football (particularly in the case of girls). This is broadly a positive influence in that friends are frequently cited as a reason to play football and often help socialise young people into teams and groups.]

This category has a number of sub-categories devised with reference to individuals (coach), groups (family, peers), space (environment) and broader societal context (society). These different levels of influence will often combine to form a conditional complex (or set of necessary and insufficient conditions) that forms the youth football context and affects actions therein.

Table 6.2. Tree Node: Personality Traits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Higher-order category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dislike, avoid challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tests as threats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Tests as</td>
<td>Personality Traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy, seek challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td>challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Getting stuck in'</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of fairness, morality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMO - Personality traits 30.05.06

...Personality traits act as a filter of sorts, conditioning different responses to certain events and external influences... Harter’s competence motivation theory (1978, 1981) was instructive here:

“...individuals who perceive they are competent and in control of outcomes in a particular achievement domain [i.e. football] are more intrinsically motivated to pursue a high level of challenge in that domain and are more persistent and less anxious during their involvement”. (Brustad, 1992)

“Harter contends that significant others, particularly parents, through the feedback they provide for children’s mastery efforts in the academic, social, and physical domains, are the primary influences upon children’s emerging and self-related perceptions”. (Brustad, 1992)

For example, a number of girls suggested that they started playing football to ‘prove to the boys that they could play’. They enjoyed the competitive side (‘getting stuck in’) and believed that pitting themselves against boys helped them improve and build confidence. Conversely, some girls, after exposure to mixed football, expressed feelings of being marginalised and wanted separate football that was less challenging. Hence, it is possible to link the concepts ‘Enjoy, seek, challenges’ and ‘Getting stuck in’ to high competence motivation. There is, however, little data to suggest that this is a result of parental influence.
Table 6.3. Tree Node: Responses and Results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Higher-order category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social learning skills</td>
<td>Positive emotional connotation</td>
<td>Direct and</td>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring garners adulation</td>
<td>Positive connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride, representation</td>
<td>Negative emotional connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let down by teammates</td>
<td>Positive connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike swearing</td>
<td>Negative emotional connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike selfishness</td>
<td>Positive connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football first</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming setbacks</td>
<td>Positive connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football friendships</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self expression</td>
<td>Negative connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early positive experience</td>
<td>'Under pressure'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escaping the house</td>
<td>'Can't wear it in a ponytail'</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender rivalry</td>
<td>'Under pressure'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being victimized</td>
<td>Early negative experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian stigma</td>
<td>Positive after injury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalised</td>
<td>Injury problems (fear)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Under pressure'</td>
<td>Journeyman</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early negative experience</td>
<td>Clubman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive after injury</td>
<td>Stretched leisure time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury problems (fear)</td>
<td>'Can't wear it in a ponytail'</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Unrelated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMO - Responses and results 30.05.06

This category contains concepts whose properties can be broadly defined as being 'responses or results' based on a mixture of structural conditions, personality characteristics and desires.

My first attempt at sub-categorisation was difficult. I found it hard to come up with any way of grouping these concepts and eventually decided on a scheme based around the complexity of conditions that gave rise to a response. Sub-categories are therefore 'direct/specific' to denote fast responses to 'simple' influences. 'Conditional' responses are those that develop over time (i.e. not immediately) and in relation to a complex of influences. 'Unrelated' responses are just as important to the scheme as
the other, but they occur in relation to structural influences that have not been conceptualised in this study.

### Table 6.4. Tree Node: Desires and Concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Higher-order category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy learning skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training with balls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety in training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of training matches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike physical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure from teamwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need rules and discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like freedom, dislike constraints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplary coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Like sportsmanship'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Losing sucks'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, organization, tactics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Winning trophies'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Big stage incentive'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'It's the taking part'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough football</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender separation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness through football</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism - identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration or separation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial, cultural equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear football future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure football future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table represents various desires and concerns categorized under different sub-categories and broader categories.*
This category contains concepts that can be broadly defined as having properties that constitute desires and concerns about football. Sub-categories - immediate (session), programme, social context and future - have a proximal-temporal dimension. That is, some concepts refer to immediate desires concerning, for example, an enjoyment of learning skills in practice; whereas others refer to desires on a much broader, long-term scale (e.g. 'unsure football future').

Desires are the outcome of an interaction between potential external influences, an individual’s personality traits or disposition, and particular responses that are generated as a result. An example might run as follows:

A coach might exert a restrictive influence on a female player in a mixed football session ('constrained by coach') which is reinforced by 'male superiority, domination' more generally [this is assuming there is, in the first instance opportunity and space to play and a team to play for]. This context is 'filtered' by the individual - their perceptions of competence and confidence - where, if they are of a 'challenge seeking' attitude may identify the situation as a challenge in which they have to work even harder to prove to the coach and the boys that they deserve to play. Their response to this 'gender rivalry' may result in the desire for 'gender equity', i.e. that boys and girls should compete equally against one another in the belief that such competition helps them to improve and develop self-confidence.

With the creation of these categories and sub-categories, the overall theory explaining young people’s socialisation experiences in football began to take shape. Almost all of those concepts created through open coding ‘fit’ within this system of categories (see sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2). The system also had the virtue of creating a more process-based understanding of youth football experiences. This was important since the short review of socialisation literature had already highlighted the need to focus on process and change in youth sport ‘careers’ (see the conclusion to section 5.6), which is only possible when one adopts a more abstract and longitudinal perspective.

In ontological terms, critical realist assumptions – particularly with respect to causality and the S-A relationship – clearly informed the creation of the model depicted in figure 6.1 (below). This model attempts to explain the nature of the relationships between categories and sub-categories, accounting for their reciprocity and the conditional nature of social processes in youth football. More specifically, the model attempts to highlight the fact that material causes (external influence) are necessary but insufficient to bring about a defined social action. Only by accounting for efficient cause (personality traits) can
predictions or hypotheses concerning particular outcomes (or responses) and desires be made. The model also attempts to illustrate the assumption that young people are ‘powerful particulars’ (Harre and Varella, 1996) by suggesting that their responses to external influences (and subsequent desires and concerns) can sometimes play a role in (re)shaping the social context they inhabit (see sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 for a more detailed explanation).

Figure 6.1. Socialisation Processes in Youth Football.

Consistent with the GT explanation of social process in figure 3.4 (from Strauss and Corbin, 1998), this model summarises the broad and abstract process over which most youth football experiences can be mapped. As such, figure 6.1 meets numerous intellectual demands. First, it meets the demands of sociologists (cf. Coakley, 1986; 2001; and McPherson, 1986) calling for a "new wave" in socialisation research in that it considers the critical interaction between biological and social systems as conditions in young people’s football careers. In a similar vein, the model meets standards set out by critical realists (cf. Nash, 2005) who claim that the most complete explanations in the social
sciences have "a structure-disposition-practice" scheme. Here 'the structural properties of emergent social entities, the dispositional properties of individuals, and the actions performed by individuals should all be included in the explanatory narrative (Nash, 2005).

Second, it meets the demands of some sport psychologists who call for the development of new theories about youth sport experiences:

The sport psychologist must not only test existing theory but also develop new sport-specific theories that better explain the complex interaction of personal and environmental variables in the naturalistic youth sport field settings (Gould, 1996: 413).

Finally, and crucially, the model also meets the overarching and fundamental demand that such theories should attempt to understand the social world from the child's perspective (see section 5.6).

More specifically, figure 6.1 begins by highlighting the context in which young people's experiences are shaped. Since all social action must logically take place in a predefined social context (see Popper, 1972: 47) it makes sense to begin explaining socialisation experiences from this point. In this research, parents, coaches/teachers and peers constitute the most important contextual elements, and they may all exert positive and negative influences.

Whether such external influences (or significant others) are perceived as positive or negative depends, to a degree, on the personality (and motivation or self-esteem) of individuals. In line with previous findings (cf. Smoll and Smith 1996) two general personality types\(^73\) were identified: challenge seeking; and challenge avoiding. Challenge-seekers are likely to have positive responses to situations challenge-avoiders find threatening. Put another way, young people exhibiting challenge-seeking behaviour may have higher levels of perceived competence than those exhibiting challenge-avoiding behaviour (Harter, 1981; Brustad, 1992).

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\(^{73}\) These are, of course, ideal types; and, in the Weberian tradition, they may be used for the purposes of empirical comparison and theoretical brevity (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994).
In addition to being broadly positive or negative, responses can also be subdivided by complexity. That is to say, some responses are simple and direct (i.e. more predictable since fewer conditions combine to produce them) whilst others are complex and highly conditional (and therefore more unpredictable).

Over time, responses to external influences produce within young people desires and concerns which have spatial and temporal dimensions. More specifically, responses may bring about desires regarding the immediate environment of a young footballer, concerning, say, the behaviour of the coach prior to a session. Desires and concerns may also pertain to much more abstract aspects of football such as the nature of the football programme or the broader social environment encompassing their clubs and schools. It is in this respect that desires and concerns may bring about actual social change (hence the feedback arrow between ‘desires/concerns’ and ‘external influences’ in figure 6.1).

For example, a challenge-seeking girl may relish the test that mixed football presents in a school environment. She may see such ‘gender rivalry’ as a positive aspect of the sport, producing the desire for ‘gender equity’. This desire, if made explicit, may cause a teacher to change their own perceptions of girls’ football and, as a consequence, increase the opportunities for mixed football within the school (as was the case in certain scenarios related throughout the research). Conversely, a challenge-avoiding girl, working through an analogous yet opposite process of reasoning, may end up developing a desire for ‘gender separation’. In this case, football in school may remain a sexed activity with the inaction of girls perpetuating the belief that ‘girls can’t play football’ (a belief held by some boys and teachers). Such a scenario illustrates the hypothesis (see Lukes, 2005: 29-37) that children and young people may still exercise power in their environments, if only through making non-decisions.

Examples to further elucidate the nature of the relationships between categories and sub-categories will be offered in section 6.3.3 (below). These examples are styled as tentative hypotheses concerning some of the more
common and interesting issues arising throughout the research. They were created to explain more specifically the important social processes experienced by young people during their football 'careers'. These issues and processes are abbreviated in the heuristic presented in the next section; the intention of which is to describe where, within young people's football 'career trajectories', such issues are likely to come to prominence and the effect they might have (broadly speaking, positive or negative).

6.3.2. A Descriptive Heuristic\textsuperscript{74} for Policy Makers.
As noted previously (see section 5.4), this heuristic is designed to provoke questions about football issues thought to be important by young people. At its most ambitious, it offers tentative hypotheses about how certain variables affect young people's propensity to participate. However, it is more appropriate to think of the heuristic as a rough 'route map', to be replaced by more specific hypotheses once the reader has achieved 'orientation'.

\textsuperscript{74} The term 'heuristic' is used here in Kant's sense. For Kant, scientific (or 'reasonable') ideas were 'heuristic' since they helped in asking questions, not in giving answers (the term is therefore contrasted directly with 'ostensive').
Figure 6.2. Youth Football Careers: A Heuristic.

As with figure 5.1, this heuristic is intended to show at which point in a youth football career certain variables or issues assume importance, and the type of impact they may have (green bubbles = positive; red rectangles = negative). The proximity of the bubbles and boxes to the arrows denotes their relative importance to males and females respectively. Some issues were only cited by (or relevant to) one sex and these are placed above the male arrow and below the female arrow to denote this exclusivity. As a note of caution, and due to the practical limitations of data collection, some issues were only explored with particular age groups. In other words, the knowledge presented here is highly conjectural. As such, some issues could be relevant across a greater age range than is indicated (i.e. the ‘bubbles’ could be elongated). Further research would be required to ‘test’ such hypotheses and provide a more accurate picture of important factors impinging on youth football ‘careers’.

A policy maker interested in this research might therefore use figure 6.2 either as a ‘quick reference’ tool or as a stimulus for thinking about policy related
issues. In the former case they may then refer to the more detailed hypotheses (formulated here as models) in the next section to gain a greater understanding of issues of particular interest (e.g. a policy maker responsible for coach education at U11 may be interested in 'self expression' and 'freedom' and the relationship with 'under pressure' and 'structure'). In the latter case they may consider only the factors bringing about potential negative responses and reflect on the extent to which policies can mitigate, or contribute to, their existence (all policies will have intended and unintended consequences). Whatever the case, figure 6.2 is intended only as a point of (easy) access into the more sophisticated and conditional hypotheses formulated in the previous and following sections.

6.3.3. Some Tentative Hypotheses.

By way of introduction, table 6.5 (below) illustrates the evolution of ideas and hypotheses over the course of the three vintages. The table attempts to summarise the product of each vintage, culminating with a rough formulation of some prominent hypotheses developed at the conclusion of the research.
### Table 6.5. The Evolution of Ideas by Vintage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Vintage</th>
<th>Second Vintage</th>
<th>Third Vintage</th>
<th>Tentative hypotheses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept(s)</td>
<td>Question(s)</td>
<td>Concept(s)</td>
<td>Question(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues</td>
<td>Separate or mixed football for girls?</td>
<td>Developing a stable football identity (girls)</td>
<td>Do positive early experiences lead to more stable identities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural issues</td>
<td>What forms does racism take? Separation or integration?</td>
<td>Not pursued</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretched leisure time (stay/leave?)</td>
<td>What makes young people stay in or leave football?</td>
<td>Stretched leisure time (girls vs. boys)</td>
<td>Why do girls seem to ‘sample’ for longer than boys?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness through football</td>
<td>Is this a core motivation and is it linked to body image?</td>
<td>Fitness as motivation (boys and notion of ideal body image)</td>
<td>How important are role models and peers respectively in this process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalised and feedback</td>
<td>How does timing and type of feedback affect motivation?</td>
<td>Not pursued</td>
<td>Coaches who understand the importance of feedback, especially around sensitive events (e.g. being dropped), will provide a more enjoyable and constructive environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure and self expression</td>
<td>How does anxiety impact on performance?</td>
<td>Structure and organisation vs. freedom, self expression and enjoyment</td>
<td>How do these concepts interact and what is the perfect balance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age and motivation</td>
<td>Do extrinsic motivations become more important with age?</td>
<td>Not pursued</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation remains important throughout a young ‘career’, but extrinsic motivation increases in mid-late adolescence with greater socialisation into adult-dominated environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of a good coach</td>
<td>What behaviours lead to greater enjoyment and learning?</td>
<td>Learning and applying skills</td>
<td>Do players learn more effectively through games and questions than drills and instructions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75 The first column of this table is an abbreviated version of table 4.3 from the conclusion of the first vintage chapter.
The main aim of this section is to expand parts of the third column in table 6.5: the tentative hypotheses generated at the end of the third vintage. Each of the following models – created to ‘fit’ both the data and the broader theory of socialisation process in youth football (figure 6.1) – therefore aims to explain the nature of relationships between concepts and, in some cases, to describe the processes at work in salient football experiences. The models are explained only briefly here since a full discussion – incorporating explanations of how these hypotheses conform and/or conflict with extant research findings – is reserved for the following chapter.

![Figure 6.3. Stress and Enjoyment in Youth Football.](image)

Due to the initial lines of questioning taken in this research ('likes/dislikes'), factors affecting enjoyment became a popular area of discussion. Figure 6.3 attempts to describe the causes of, and impediments to, enjoyment in football and explain the process through which enjoyment is curtailed over time. This hypothesis is applied here only to pre-early-adolescent male footballers (see figure 6.2), since females and older boys made little reference to such experiences.
In figure 6.3, the feeling of being 'under pressure' (or anxiety) is experienced by young people of a 'challenge avoiding' personality disposition in response to a combination of (necessary yet insufficient) conditions. The first, and most stable, of these conditions – due to its biological nature – is the ontogenetic development of adolescent neuropsychology.

According to Schweinsburg et al. (2005) and Shaw et al. (2006) the adolescent brain, though similar in size to the adult brain, has an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex: the part of the brain responsible for functions underpinning planning and voluntary behavior (i.e. decision making). In stressful situations, where there are lots of stimuli and possible options for action, the adolescent prefrontal cortex appears to work much harder than in adults (Schweinsburg et al., 2005). This can be explained by 'synaptic pruning', a process which enables adult brains to 'delegate' decision making to other areas when under stress, thus retaining collaborative yet endogenous behavioral control (Sabbagh, 2006). This is not possible in the adolescent brain, so in the same situation exogenous (i.e. unplanned and reactive) behavioral control takes over.

The implication of this is that, if unexpected situations occur in an already stressful environment (potentially hundreds of times in every football match), adolescents exhaust prefrontal cortex resources and make mistakes due to impaired executive functioning. Their decision-making behavior, in short, appears thoughtless, slow or capricious. These problems are likely to be exacerbated with an increase in task difficulty and increased interference from environmental stimuli (Sabbagh, 2006).

Further conditions affecting anxiety are significant others: especially coaches and spectators (usually parents). The process of 'social evaluation' has been found to cause stress in young elite athletes (Stratton, 1995; Gould et al., 1993), though there is no research that echoes these findings in grassroots sport. In this case, social evaluation (manifest in the form of instructions and abuse) certainly appeared to contribute to feelings of being 'under pressure', at least for 'challenge avoiding' children.
Not all aspects of the social context, however, had negative consequences for enjoyment. Young people also cited professional role models (usually skillful, intelligent and creative players) and good coaches as influences on enjoyment. That is, they liked to try to recreate the moves of players like Ronaldinho and were occasionally encouraged to do so by coaches. Working in conflicting directions, these 'external influences', interpreted through individual personalities, tended to bring about the desire for increased freedom and self expression.

Young people tend to associate self expression with enjoyment, which is only possible where they are free (physically and intellectually) to do so. Anxiety appears to be an impediment to self expression, though the reasons for this were not articulated. It is possible that anxiety causes inhibition though 'perceptual narrowing', thus increasing fear of failure in some children. Of further relevance here are the well-known concepts of 'flow' (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) and 'funktionslust' (Buhler, 1930) both of which help to explain why, and in what circumstances, young people enjoy sport (further discussion is reserved for the next chapter).

What is clear, however, is that if young people continue to express themselves — i.e. to execute difficult, creative or precise skills, often at speed — over time they are likely to make mistakes and meet with further abuse and shouting. This feedback mechanism, should it continue, is likely to reduce enjoyment of football or change the very nature of what young people perceive to be enjoyable. That is, children become indoctrinated into a world of boring, formulaic football, validated by the use of labels such as 'adult' or 'proper' football (cf. Wall and Côté, 2007).

As described in figure 6.2 (above), the issues important to young girls during their introduction to football are somewhat different. Figure 6.4 (below) attempts to explain how and why girls' early experiences of football were so different, and the consequences of this. Once again, the hypotheses presented here are 'mapped over' the abstract theory of socialisation introduced in figure 6.1 (above).
Inhabiting the social context of young female players were parents, friends, coaches and teachers. Strong female football role models were notably absent. Taken together, these external influences combined to create a historically rooted, cultural belief (or 'cultural item'\textsuperscript{76}) that football was and is a male dominated sport. This belief was pervasive among all the female participants. As a result, they felt marginalized, often from their earliest point of contact with the sport (usually in school).

Consequently, a 'gender rivalry' was often described, whereby boys and (especially) girls believed they were engaged in a battle for ownership of the game. Those of a 'challenge avoiding' disposition, having engaged in mixed football, developed a desire for 'gender separation'; whereas those of a 'challenge seeking' disposition actively sought out opportunities to test themselves against boys, believing it would improve them as players.

\textsuperscript{76} Such a common and historically rooted belief may be termed a 'cultural item' (Carter, 2002) in that it becomes 'objective' i.e. anterior to specific social actors. In this sense, the notion of 'male domination' can be conceptualised as a 'world 3' object, in Popper's (1981; 1994) sense, since it is open to the interpretations and criticisms of social actors and may therefore change in response to them.
Some data suggested that the desire for 'gender separation' or 'gender equity' was dependent on first contact experiences of football. Girls who appeared to have 'challenge seeking' personalities, for example, had often been exposed to girls-only sessions at first contact. This means they were able to develop confidence in a football environment before being exposed to the 'rough-and-tumble' of mixed-football. As in previous models, the 'feedback' arrows indicate the potential for the desires and concerns of young people to change aspects of their social context. An explicit demand for gender equity, for example, may cause a teacher to include girls in a boys' football team; whereas an explicit demand for gender separation may cause a teacher to create a girls-only team to play in girls-only leagues (as was the case when female football was part of the 'active sports' agenda in England in the late 1990s and early 2000s).

--- Staying In ---

--- Dropping Out ---

Figure 6.5. Female Football: Staying In and Dropping Out.

Unlike the other models in this section, figure 6.5 (above) is not 'mapped over' the 'parent' theoretical model of socialization depicted in figure 6.1. It is, rather, an extension of the lower half of figure 6.2 (heuristic for policy makers) designed to illustrate the factors affecting females' propensity to participate as
they move through their football 'careers'. The central arrow denotes the age of participants whilst its shading and size are meant to illustrate the general fact that participation decreases and becomes more transient with age.

In order for girls to become involved in organized football, a particular set of conditions are often present (necessary but insufficient). In short, and drawing from the explanation from figure 6.4 (above), they will have had positive or 'sheltered' early experiences, perhaps through a formal programme (e.g. active sports or TOPS), and developed a desire for 'gender equity'. They are therefore likely to be of a 'challenge seeking' disposition.

Once in a club or school programme, a competing set of factors affect their propensity to continue participating. The green arrows and red arrows denote positive and negative factors, respectively; and their position and proximity denote the relative importance of each factor at a given point (roughly defined) in a youth football career.

Around pre- and early-adolescence, having fun within sessions and having plenty of opportunities to play are paramount. With these factors present, girls are likely to continue participating and, if in a club environment, begin to develop a 'football identity'. This is achieved when football-specific friendships are developed and girls begin to define themselves as footballers. If football identities are developed by early-middle adolescence, girls are likely to put 'football first', prioritizing participation over a range of other social demands placed on their leisure time.

Conversely, if girls do not develop 'football friendships' they are more likely to be concerned by the 'lesbian stigma' and 'lack of female role models' that still accompany the sport. If coupled with an increased 'stretching of leisure time' in middle to late-adolescence, part-time female players are unlikely to perceive football as being important for social acceptance (also see Adler and

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77 The concept 'can't wear it in a ponytail' describes a situation where girls have a well developed football identity and are able to separate this from other identities such as 'girlie girls', where it is considered social suicide to wear one's hair in a ponytail (apparently).
Adler, 1998). With these factors present, the propensity to continue playing football is likely to be very low.

With respect to coaching and learning, figure 6.6 (above) outlines some of the positive and negative qualities of a coach and their impact on the quality of a club-football experience. The coach is an important actor within a wider social context, where a series of necessary but insufficient conditions (space, facilities etc.) contribute to the creation of a positive learning environment. Some widely cited qualities of a good coach are noted in green. It is notable that three of these central positive attributes (praise, feedback, questioning), and one of the negative attributes ('coach shouts') are related to communication skills. Hence, good coaches are also good communicators, providing regular positive feedback and using questions to create a fun and challenging learning environment.

Of course, individuals have different preferences concerning coaching, but these qualities were found to be favoured almost unilaterally, regardless of the age, sex or experience of participants. Reactions to these external influences
brought about a range of desires and concerns: about the football ‘programme’ – or the values and opportunities inherent within it – and about the practical conduct of specific sessions.

First regarding opportunities, the rather simple desires for ‘progression’ and ‘competition’ were popular. Young people wanted to play in a club where a clear pathway of progression was laid out before them. Not all young people were aware of such a pathway (even in CSDCs and CSCCs) despite the fact that this is a central objective of the CSS. The greatest concerns arose, as might be expected, at the point where junior and adult football met (or were supposed to meet). The desire for competitive opportunities was also strong, especially among mid-late adolescents. More specifically, young people wanted regular and local competition, against teams of a similar standard, where they could express their competitive spirit. Not unlike professional sports, especially in North America, they wanted games with high ‘uncertainty of outcome’ and leagues with high ‘competitive balance’ (cf. Leeds and von Allmen, 2002: 250-258).

Concerning values, there was a curious conflict between the importance of ‘taking part’ and an emphasis on ‘winning’. That is to say, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were considered important by most young people (especially boys). Some evidence suggested that extrinsic motivation increased with age, with simply ‘taking part’ no longer considered sufficient motivation to play. Striking a practical balance between these motivations within a football programme is, however, notoriously difficult to achieve.

Young people also expressed a desire for ‘structure, organization and tactics’ within a programme. That is, they felt it was important for the coach to maintain control over sessions, to prevent people from ‘messing around’, as they put it, and to ensure teams were organized with clear tactics and roles defined. This expression, though common, also conflicted with a desire for ‘freedom’ at the session level, demanding another delicate balancing act. The desire for freedom, as has already been alluded to in figure 6.3 (above), is related to enjoyment in that it encourages self expression. Within a session
or game, this means allowing players to make choices, play in preferred positions and generally retain autonomy over their participation. As noted earlier, the use of questions by the coach necessitates granting a certain amount of freedom to the players. In addition to this, players enjoyed variety in training sessions, with frequent use of balls and small-sided games to increase involvement. Closely related to this was the combined desire to learn and apply skills. Young people didn’t simply want to play; they wanted to learn new things, to improve and to be able to demonstrate this in controlled or conditioned situations. Certain coach behaviors were, of course, necessary conditions in bringing such situations about in practice.

Figure 6.7. Multicultural Youth Football.

The final model (figure 6.7 above) attempts to explain the relationships between concepts that pertain to multicultural football. Although the experiences of black and minority ethnic (BME) players were important in generating these hypotheses, young people from a range of backgrounds had opinions to express on the subjects of racism and the integration or separation of BME players. As with the most of the other models in this section, figure 6.7
is consistent with the underpinning theory of socialization processes in youth football.

In the social context of BME players a number of constraints were elucidated. First, 'culture barriers', incorporating family influences and a lack of role models, inhibited football participation. For young people from families of south-Asian origin, sport in general, and football in particular, was not considered a constructive use of leisure time. Academic progression (for boys) and home-making (for girls) were the dominant cultural adult norms to which young people were expected to conform. The lack of role models is likely to be a consequence of the fact that many families, particularly Muslims, are, at most, three generations old. Hence, it may take another 20-30 years before traditional stereotypes are broken down. Second, the paucity of opportunities available, especially for young people from Muslim communities, was also a significant barrier to participation (though this is directly related to a lack of demand, creating a 'chicken and egg' situation in such communities).

The dominant response to such external influences was for young people to feel marginalized, a feeling they explicitly connected with perceived racism. As noted earlier, concepts of 'race' and 'racism' are best understood as 'cultural items' (Carter, 2002) or world 3 artifacts (Popper, 1994). As such, some identified racism as being 'institutional', whilst others thought it was perpetuated by 'individuals', thus illustrating the fact that competing concepts of racism are being actively (re)defined. In both cases, the response was a desire for equality. And, analogous to the situation in female football (see figure 6.4 above), the desire for equality was expressed in different ways: as a desire for integrated football in some cases; and a desire for separate but equal football in others (e.g. Asian-only teams and leagues). There was some evidence that these desires, if voiced explicitly, could bring about changes in the social context, especially where girls were concerned (the popular film, 'Bend it Like Beckham' was a common example from which young Muslim girls drew inspiration).
CHAPTER 7:  
DISCUSSION: YOUNG PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCES OF FOOTBALL

“But I shall let the little I have learned go forth into the day in order that someone better than I may guess the truth, and in his work may prove and rebuke my error. At this I shall rejoice that I was yet the means whereby this truth has come to light.”  
- Albrecht Dürer
7.1. Introduction to the Discussion.
Throughout this chapter, the substantive theory of socialisation processes in youth football (figure 6.1 above) is applied to four specific realms of experience. It is the aim of the first two sections (7.3 and 7.4) to present hypotheses on the psychological and environmental aspects of youth football. More specifically, the first section illustrates the hypothetical relationships between stress, enjoyment and learning (figure 6.3 above) and discusses the literature pertaining to cognitive experiences in football. The second section describes the ideal football environment, focusing on coach behaviour, programme values and session conduct (figure 6.6 above). Again, this section concludes with a critical review of the literature connected with these phenomena.

The final two sections (7.5 and 7.6) take a sociological turn, theorising the football experiences of two marginalised groups: females and British Asians, respectively. The section on female experiences attempts to synthesise the hypotheses set out in figures 6.4 and 6.5 (above), thereby explaining how young women become acquainted with football before discussing the factors affecting propensities to participate as they get older. The final section briefly investigates the experiences of young people from BME communities, focusing specifically on barriers to participation and the causes of, and reactions to, different forms of racism (see figure 6.7 above). Necessarily limited literature reviews are, once again, conducted at the end of each section (as explained in chapter 2.1) in order to compare the findings to extant hypotheses.

At present, the popular socialisation process of Côté and Hay (2002) appears to be the ‘theory’ of choice for those researching youth sport experiences (MacPhail et al., 2003a; MacPhail and Kirk, 2006). As explained in section
2.5, this 4-stage process has been developed following empirical research with a range of sports. The authors contend that such a 'grounded' theory of socialisation is better suited to accurately describe youth sport careers than prescriptive frameworks such as the LTAD (cf. MacPhail and Kirk, 2006). This much may be true (as noted in section 2.5). However, it is argued that Côté and Hay's (2002) process is simply descriptive; not least because it fails to account for the motivational and personality characteristics of individuals – a necessary component of any socialisation theory (Coakley, 1986; McPherson, 1986; Nash, 2006). Moreover, it also fails to propound hypotheses concerning the factors affecting participation at different stages of development and the possible causal relationships between them. Côté and Hay's (2002) descriptive device is therefore of little use to those interested in the quality of youth sport experiences; or to those with aspirations of bringing about positive change.

The theory and the heuristic introduced in the previous chapter (figures 6.1 and 6.2) might therefore be considered as improvements on the work of Côté and Hay (2002), in that both have greater predictive power. The more abstract theory of socialisation processes (figure 6.1), for example, proposes a series of hypotheses incorporating environmental and individual differences, and the reciprocal relationships between them. Though abstract, the theory is ontologically robust, and can be applied to a range of specific phenomena to predict the consequences of interactions between social structures and individual agents. This will be demonstrated throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The small collection of 'grounded' theories discussed below also has the virtue of being generated through fundamentally 'ethical' research (see sections 1.6 and 3.8). They are rooted in the interests and voices of young people whose agendas drove, to a certain degree, the generation of the hypotheses that follow.
7.3. Stress and Enjoyment in Youth Football.

The relationship between stress (or anxiety) and enjoyment was an important one for young players, especially pre-early-adolescent boys (though girls alluded to it also). That is to say, enjoyment was linked to experiences of ‘freedom’ and ‘self expression’, with stress appearing to inhibit such experiences. It was further hypothesised that players expressing themselves (and making mistakes) – a consequence of wishing to emulate professional players – would elicit ‘abuse’ (shouting and instructions) from parents and coaches. Over time, this process would cause players to become more mechanical and less creative; slowly conforming to a mode of play defined as ‘proper’ or ‘adult’. The following section aims to illustrate these hypotheses with the comments of the young research participants.

7.3.1. Illustrating the Model.

In table 7.1 (below), the main concepts from figure 6.3 (see section 6.3.3) are listed and illustrated with data fragments from FGIs where these issues were discussed. Relationships between concepts are also explained in some of the fragments. It is hoped that, by reading the fragments in the table in order, the reader will understand the nature of the hypothesised relationships between concepts as set out in figure 6.3. The short explanation, in the form of a hypothetical example, that follows table 7.1 should further elucidate the meaning of the model.
### Table 7.1. Stress and Enjoyment in Youth Football.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept or process</th>
<th>Illustrative data fragments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Evaluation ('coach shouts at us')</td>
<td>Georgina: Well, if you do the wrong thing, sometimes the coach shouts at us. I: And that's something you don't like then? Georgina: No. I: And how does it make you feel when the coach shouts at you? Georgina: Erm, well, you get down and... it's not just at us but he feels like he's let us down as well so he feels bad like we do. (U12 girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(constrained by coach)</td>
<td>Chelsea: Well, there's this teacher who can't play football, and she can't run but she does it. But there's another one - Miss Clayton who's out there - she can play but she doesn't normally take it which I think is a bit stupid... you know, she can teach it and play it but this other teacher can't... and she can't manage us as well. She doesn't encourage us or anything does she? (to the others - agreeing). (Year 9 girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(spectator abuse)</td>
<td>Sam: I personally think more should be done to... for the kids to enjoy it, to do what they want and still develop their own sort of way. I mean, reffing on Sundays, sometimes I don't enjoy it because of what the parents do. And I just think that sometimes they put so much pressure on some of the little lads and everything. I mean, there's one of the little lads in the under-10 side, and I think his dad just... sometimes he's on the pitch and he's almost crying cos his dad just drilling him and it's just like: 'Let him get on with it' sort of thing. And I think it sometimes spoils it. (U18 boys) Daniel: I know what, sometimes they (spectators) tell us to do stuff and then we... because we're getting confused we make a mess of it, and then they start shouting at us saying: &quot;what did you do that for&quot;. They start shouting at us at half-time don't they. (U9 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning (professional role models)</td>
<td>Sam: I just see em on telly and that. When I watch football games on telly I try and do em... like soccer am and 'showboat'. Liam: Yeah, that's wicked. Matt: Then you try it in the back garden when it's finished. (Year 6 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(coach makes it fun)</td>
<td>I: (reading) Training. Nice coaches. What do you like about your coach? Chloe: 'Cos, Becks is funny... I: Do you think you've learned a lot from her? Chloe &amp; Amy: Yeah. Chloe: Erm, she doesn't make it so serious. (U12 girls)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Avoid challenges | Ryan: But sometimes when you don't pull the skill off then... you don't feel very well cos...  
Matt: If you don't practice it enough then you get it wrong and the other team get on the break, then you feel a bit sick...  
(Year 5 & 6 boys) |
| Under pressure | I: What is it in particular that makes you feel under pressure?  
Callum: Erm... if I don't play well, erm then... I always get yelled at. My mum and dad just don't really... they always like shout at me and stuff and say that I don't play well so I always feel under pressure to play well.  
(U10 boys)  
I: What about this: 'being put under pressure'. What does this mean?  
Will: When I used to play up front for school, so if I hadn't scored any goals after a game then I'd feel like a bit...like I haven't done my job...and when I play centre-back at club level, if you like make a mistake then you feel like...  
I: Is that something that comes from you - do you put yourself under pressure?  
Will: Well, you can put your self under pressure but... if you like miss a chance and everyone's like: 'Oh, why didn't you score it?'
I: Is that like your team-mates or...  
Will: Well it could be your team-mates or people on the sideline.  
(Year 6 boys) |
| Self expression | I: What do you mean by expressing yourself?  
Will: Cos you can just...when you're playing well...you can just play how you want to, play and it's dead good unlike...  
I: When do you feel like that?  
Will: Just when you're playing well, and then you just get more confidence other than sometimes when you’ve got pressure on you than, y’know, you don't want to do anything to make a mistake.  
(Year 6 boys) |
| Like freedom | Tom: So he (the coach) let us play where we want, where he knows we are good...  
Callum: (interrupting) In our natural positions.  
(Year 7 & 8 boys) |
| Acts of self expression likely to instigate... | Sam: Well I think at the younger age, they're sort of looking up to the van Nistelrooys and the Henrys and everything, they're looking at the role models, what they do. But then I think as you get older, you realise that - you might do that in training, little flicks and things - but then you realise in a game, you can't do those sorts of things, because you need to be...  
Craig: Like you still get quite a lot of people shouting, like: "No flicks" and stuff.  
I: And does that sort of change the way... like has that, over time - every time you’ve tried a flick or something to express yourself, something a bit different, and every time you do that there’s this voice from the sideline that’s like: "Don’t try that"...Luke: Yeah, you can hear it in your head though, you know it’s coming! You start off as a kid - like it's every lad's dream to be a football player... as soon as you’re on that pitch it’s all flicks and overhead kicks. And then as you progress, you realise you aint no Rooney or you aint no Henry, so you never try a flick, you just play it simple and get on with it.  
Craig: That's true.  
(U18 boys) |
The data fragments in table 7.1 are intended to ‘animate’ the process described briefly in the previous chapter (section 6.3.3). By way of example, the process might begin with a pre-adolescent boy of a ‘challenge avoiding’ personality. It may be that he has low perceived competence and fears failing on the football pitch due to the influence of coaches, team-mates and spectators or parents. This ‘social evaluation’ – manifest in the coaches’ shouting, lack of encouragement and instructions from parents and spectators – creates an expectation to play well, to perform. In short, the boy feels ‘under pressure’ to present himself favourably on the football pitch.

At the same time, having watched Ronaldinho making ‘no-look’ passes on Soccer AM’s ‘Showboat’ feature, he feels a desire to ‘express himself’ through attempting similar skills. This desire is supported by a teacher who, unlike his coach, tries to make football fun and provides players with plenty of freedom to try new things and make mistakes. However, these influences are not as strong as those noted above. That is to say, they have less power over, and proximity to, the boy than his coach, parents and team-mates.

Ultimately, the desire to play without constraint – to ‘play how he wants to’, naturally and in comfort – is mitigated by the anxiety resulting from ‘social evaluation’ and a lack of perceived competence. Over time, as the boy tries to express himself he inevitably makes mistakes. These mistakes are criticised by coaches, spectators (maybe parents) and team-mates, increasing anxiety (reducing perceived competence), and thus diminishing the boy’s desire to ‘express himself’. Over the years the boy begins to conform to the mould parents and coaches wish to place him in. Eventually the boy ‘realises he ain’t no Rooney so he never tries a flick; he just plays it simple and gets on with it’.

7.3.2. Comparisons with Extant Literature.
Over the past 20 years, enjoyment has been consistently recognised by numerous researchers as the most important aspect of young people’s experience of sport (Wankel and Kreis, 1985; Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986; Brustad, 1988; Scanlan and Simons, 1992; Weiss, 1993; Orlick and Zitzelsberger, 1996; Chalip and Green, 1998; Green, 2005; Weiss and
Amorose, 2008). Enjoyment is a broad concept (often used interchangeably with the term ‘fun’ in the literature) which encompasses other psychological concepts such as ‘flow’ and ‘intrinsic motivation’. As such, this discussion will begin by investigating the causes and consequences of enjoyment before focussing on the related and more relevant concepts of ‘flow’ and ‘intrinsic motivation’.

Early research on sport enjoyment was largely descriptive (cf. Wankel and Kreisel, 1985); focussing on the simple causes of ‘fun’ which young people deemed important (Garn and Cothran, 2006). However, sport psychologists have since begun to conceptualise enjoyment more carefully: mapping its causes and consequences; and hypothesising its relationship to a range of other psychological variables (e.g. anxiety and motivation). Following the seminal work of Scanlan and colleagues (Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986; Scanlan and Simons, 1992), Weiss and Amorose (2008) have developed such a conceptual model, the intention of which is to describe the various sources and consequences of ‘sport enjoyment’ (see figure 7.1 below).

Figure 7.1. Schematic of the Sources and Consequences of Sport Enjoyment (adapted from Weiss and Amorose, 2008: 151).
Although simplistic in its explanations, figure 7.1 clearly highlights the wide variety of sources of enjoyment: from social recognition and friendships, to skill mastery and competence. Previous studies support these hypotheses with perceptions of competence and skill mastery, positive interactions with significant others ('being with friends', 'being on a team'), and movement sensations ('doing skills', 'excitement of playing the game') all cited as important sources of enjoyment (Wankel and Kreisel, 1985; Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986; Scanlan and Simons, 1992; Coakley, 1986). These findings appear to be stable regardless of age, sex or cultural differences (Weiss and Amorose, 2008), though further research is required in this respect.

Of all the sources of enjoyment described by Weiss and Amorose (2008), the concept of 'flow' is the most widely investigated; probably due to its compound nature (i.e. it explains a wide variety of phenomena with a simple hypothesis). It is also the most relevant to the findings of this research since it pertains specifically the hypothesised relationship between stress (anxiety), self expression and freedom (see figure 6.3).

'Flow' is experienced in sport when perceived challenge and perceived skill level are in harmony (Stavrou et al., 2007). The experience is marked by fun and enjoyment and is often accompanied by: feedback about positive performance; concentration on the activity; and having a sense of control over one's performance (Gould et al., 1992; Jackson and Kimiecik, 2008). According to Jackson and Roberts (1992), "by perceiving a balance between the demands of the situation and his or her capabilities, an athlete is freed from concern about the outcome". Hence, two central and related features of flow can be discerned: a) perceived competence to meet sporting challenges; b) perceived control over performance.

According to Harter (1978), significant others play a central role in shaping perceptions of competence in young people. More specifically, adults and peers can have positive or negative influences on perceptions of sporting competence. The direction of this influence is often related to self-esteem (Weiss, 1993). More specifically, where significant others are positive and
supportive, children are likely to have greater perceived competence and higher self-esteem than in situations where significant others are punitive and negative (Brustad, 1988; Holt and Dunn, 2004; Weiss and Amorose, 2008). It is in this respect, then, that competitive stress is related to flow, since children with low perceived competence and low self-esteem are more likely to experience anxiety in competitive sport (Passer, 1983). This reciprocal relationship between enjoyment, flow and stress can be extended to further illuminate the findings of this study.

According to the research on competitive stress and anxiety, 'social evaluation' (especially parental expectation) is the main cause of worry for young sports performers (Partridge et al., 2008; Smoll and Smith, 1996; Brustad, 1988). Two popular theories can be offered to explain this dynamic. First, Eccles’ (1993) expectancy-value theory suggests parents shape their children’s self-perceptions about: their sporting ability; gender stereotypes; and the value of participation in particular achievement domains (academics, sport, music etc.) That is to say, parents shape the motivational characteristics of their children (Partridge et al., 2008). James and Collins (1996) go further and propose that ‘social evaluation’ is underpinned by self-presentation concerns.

In their research with young athletes from a range of sports, James and Collins (1996) found that around 65% of reported sources of stress could be explained by self-presentation theory (SPT). Under Leary’s (1992) original formulation of the theory, self-presentation goals include: a) accruing social and cultural capital; b) self-esteem maintenance; and c) the development of identity. These goals are, of course, related. That is, in accruing social capital (e.g. praise and adulation from team-mates), one develops high perceived competence and self-esteem and, with success over time, a stable athletic identity. So, according to SPT, “expectations to perform” and “top-dog pressures” (Passer, 1983) can be conceptualised as expressions of a desire to present one’s self favourably in the presence of significant others (the power and proximity of individuals are important factors here). On this view,
then, making mistakes and looking bad can be both a cause and symptom of stress (James and Collins, 1996).

Research has established that anxiety occurs when perceived challenge outweighs perceived skill (Stavrou et al., 2007), or when there is an imbalance between perceived demands and resources (Smoll and Smith, 1996). Given the earlier definition of flow, it can therefore be suggested that "anxiety is the antithesis of flow"; or that "an athlete cannot experience flow in a state of high anxiety" (Jackson and Kimiecik, 2008). This hypothesis corresponds closely to the findings of this study, where stress inhibited 'self expression' and 'freedom'. That is to say, the concepts 'self expression' and 'like freedom' are held to be synonymous with flow, and are therefore necessary conditions for enjoyment (Deci and Ryan 1985; Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

As we have seen above, significant others are of central importance in the shaping of the perceptions that influence both anxiety and flow. Parents and coaches have the power to both create and alleviate stress in shaping the child's 'horizon of expectations' (Brustad, 1988) and evaluating their performance (James and Collins, 1996; Holt and Dunn, 2004). However, a simple 'top-down' (or classical socialisation) relationship should not be assumed here. Indeed, the intervening variable of 'personality traits' in figure 6.3 proposes that the influences of significant others – whether objectively positive or negative – are perceived differently by individuals. As Smoll and Smith (1996) explain:

...all of the components [of stress] can be strongly influenced by personality and motivation factors. Individual differences in personality and motivation influence... the ways in which people attempt to cope with the perceived situation.

Indeed, consistent parental pressure (e.g. shouting instructions and evaluations), applied over a long period, may cause high trait anxiety in individuals (Brustad, 1988), increasing worry about negative social evaluations, potentially becoming manifest in the 'challenge avoiding'...
personality type hypothesised in this study. As noted earlier, this is a ‘vicious circle’ where mistakes become both a symptom and cause of stress.

Some simple summary statements can be made concerning the sources of stress and the relationship with flow and enjoyment. First, stress or anxiety appears to be a consequence of a perceived competence-task (or skill-challenge) imbalance. Low perceived competence is a joint product of negative social evaluation from significant others and low self-esteem (or high trait anxiety). The direction of this relationship can be reversed, however, when coach and parent involvement is positive and supportive (Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986; Brustad, 1988; Partridge et al., 2008). This phenomenon has already been reported in youth soccer in a study by Ommundsen and Vaglum (1991). They interviewed young (12-16-year-old) soccer players in Norway and found that low soccer self-esteem was related to high competition anxiety, especially in the younger players. Conversely, they also found that high perceived competence correlated strongly with positive parent/coach involvement, leading to greater enjoyment and sustained sport commitment (also see Holt and Dunn, 2004; and Weiss and Amorose, 2008).

Second, flow is a central source of enjoyment for young sports participants. Anxiety and flow are antithetical since flow can only occur when an individual feels that their skills match the sporting challenge before them. For flow (and enjoyment) to occur, then, the following necessary conditions must be present: tasks must be closely aligned to skill level (coach responsibility); parents and coaches must offer positive emotional support and reinforce perceptions of competence; and coaches and parents must allow young people to feel ‘in control’ of their performance. Interestingly, Chalip et al. (1984) found that challenges and skills were positively correlated with enjoyment during informal sports where no adults were present; whereas

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78 In their study of elite young footballers, Holt and Dunn (2004) found that ‘parental pressure’ was deemed a central obstacle to becoming an elite player; and those who managed to overcome this obstacle (i.e. those who has “resilience”) were better placed to succeed than others.

79 As noted in section 6.3.3, recent research in neuropsychology suggests that adolescents are ontogenetically predisposed to greater stress in competitive sporting situations than adults due to the underdeveloped nature of their prefrontal cortex (cf. Sabbagh, 2006). This ‘biological background’ should also be accounted for in any theory on the causes of stress in young people.
perceived challenges outweighed skills (and thus enjoyment) during organised sports and PE lessons (i.e. with adults – and social evaluation – present).

Third, flow and enjoyment are not synonymous (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Rather, flow should be recognised as part of a wider enjoyment experience (see figure 7.1). Additional hypotheses concerning the sources of enjoyment may therefore be instructive in illuminating the findings of this study. For example, a number of authors suggest “being with friends” in sociable and recreational sporting environments (both clubs and schools) is an important source of enjoyment (Weiss and Amorose, 2008; Smith and Parr, 2007; Wankel and Kreisel, 1985). The concepts ‘football friendships’, ‘pleasure from teamwork’ and ‘It’s the taking part’ (see figure 6.6) appear to fit with such an explanation. Furthermore, enjoyment from ‘movement sensations’ along with ‘freedom/autonomy/control’ (Scanlan and Simons, 1992; Coakley, 1986) appear to mirror the concepts of ‘self expression’ and ‘like freedom’ respectively. In his famous theory of child development, Karl Buhler (1930) used the German word ‘funktionslust’ to describe the pleasurable, non-goal directed aspects of children’s play. It may be that the desire ‘for self expression’ – to express physical and technical talent – is also somewhat analogous to ‘funktionslust’ (the obvious links to coaching and learning are explored in the next section).

The final part of this section focuses on the final hypothesis set out in figure 6.3: that negative social evaluation (especially punitive comments), over time, inhibits the desire for ‘self expression’, forcing players to adopt a conventional, unadventurous style of football. A style associated with “getting serious”, “moving up” and playing “real soccer” (cf. Chalip and Green, 1998).

Various authors have noted that younger participants tend to enjoy sport more than their older counterparts (Wankel and Kreisel, 1985; Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986). This finding corresponds with the observation, also made during this study (see figure 6.2), that extrinsic motivation – e.g. “getting rewards” and “wining the game” – becomes more important with age (Wankel and Kreisel, 1985; Weiss, 1993). This should be expected since intrinsic
motivation is strongly correlated with enjoyment, as we have seen (Jackson and Roberts, 1992). It is interesting to note, however, that some authors suggest no relationship exists between results and enjoyment (Brustad, 1988). As Smoll and Smith (1996) aver: "The inverse relation between fun and anxiety is independent of victory or defeat... It is not simply the case that winners have more fun than losers". It is possible to conclude, therefore, that motivation orientation alone cannot predict enjoyment. In this case, further hypotheses can be considered.

Côté and Hay's (2002) process of sport socialisation has already been described in figure 2.4 (chapter 2.5) and contrasted with the LTAD framework currently popular in England. According to this process, sports participants\(^8^0\) move through four distinct stages: sampling (6-12); specialising (13-15); investment (16+); and recreation (13+) (Wall and Côté, 2007). Côté and Hay (2002) coined the term 'deliberate play' to characterise activities occurring during the sampling years and contrasted this with 'deliberate practice' which tends to assume precedence in the specialising and investment years.

Deliberate play is important in the early stages of development because it provides opportunities for young athletes to develop fundamental motor skills (running, jumping, throwing etc.) through activities that are intrinsically motivating and designed specifically to maximise enjoyment in sport (Côté and Hay, 2002; Wall and Côté, 2007). Deliberate practice, on the other hand, is characterised by instrumental activities such as 'bare' aerobic or strength training and is often repetitive and dull. It has been hypothesised that early transitions from deliberate play to deliberate practice (around 12-13 years) may account for a large proportion of drop-out in early-middle adolescence (Butcher et al., 2002; Wall and Côté, 2007). So much would be expected given that deliberate play is designed to be intrinsically motivating and, therefore, enjoyable.

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\(^8^0\) So far, the 4-stage process has been found to be consistent with participation 'careers' in rowing, tennis, basketball, netball, triathlon and ice hockey. Elite gymnasts tended to specialise earlier and experienced less enjoyment than non-elite participants (Wall and Côté, 2007).
With respect to the findings of this study, a premature focus on performance was observed (at least from parents and coaches) and related to an increase in stress (through social evaluation) which inhibited 'self expression' or flow. Concurrently, as coaches begin to focus on results rather than enjoyment, practices are likely to become more deliberate and less playful. If freedom, autonomy (sense of control), play, self expression and 'funktionslust' are, indeed, what young people desire from sport (cf. Côté and Hay, 2002 and Pitchford et al., 2005) early transitions to deliberate practice may well be to blame for receding enjoyment and early drop-out (see figure 7.1, above).

Another potentially important contribution of 'deliberate play' is innovation and creativity. As suggested by Bjorklund and Pelligrini (2000), children’s play 'has been seen as a source of creativity that may eventually lead to new ways of solving old problems'. Because of the youthful tendency toward play and experimentation, it is likely that innovations will be introduced by the young rather than adults.81 Even when this is not possible – i.e. in adult-only environments – play may still be ontogenetically important:

> Although it is unlikely that important cultural innovations will be made through the play of human children, the discoveries children make through play may serve as the basis of later innovations or true creativity, which become important in later life (Bjorklund and Pellegrini, 2000).

So even if youthful, unstructured play and 'self expression' is not immediately useful or instrumental, it may be that those who engage in such activities become more creative or innovative in later life.

One final source of enjoyment of relevance to the next section is the learning (or mastery) of new skills (Weiss and Amorose, 2008). Although it is unclear whether technical development is primarily a consequence or antecedent of enjoyment (Scanlan and Lewthwaite, 1986), a correlation certainly appears to exist between 'having fun' and learning. To this end, Bengoechea et al. (2004)

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81 Bjorklund and Pellegrini (2000) relate the story of a troop of macaque monkeys studied by Japanese ethologists in the 1960s. The monkeys lived almost exclusively on potatoes which they exhumed from sandy soil near the river. The sandy potatoes were unpleasant to eat, but the monkeys persevered. Eventually, an adventurous young monkey scamped down to the river and washed his potato in the water. Soon after, other young members of the troop began to copy, as did the females. Interestingly, only the adult males stubbornly continued to eat the sandy potatoes.
have hypothesised that practices designed to encourage optimal ‘flow’, where learning tasks are matched perfectly to skill level, are also likely to generate maximum enjoyment (also see Mandigo and Thompson, 1998). This hypothetical relationship is subject to discussion in the next section.

7.4. Coaching and Learning in Youth Football.
Following from the previous section, there are a number of overlapping themes and issues here. As something of an artificial but useful divide, where the previous section focussed largely on cognitive aspects of experience, this section focuses on structural and behavioural aspects of the football environment. However, where clear and useful overlaps appear – for example, between ‘freedom vs. structure’, enjoyment and learning – they are noted and discussed with as little repetition as possible.

Many of the discussions conducted with young people rounded on the subject of coaching and learning which appeared to be central to the quality of football experienced. The desires and concerns young people expressed were categorised as three main aspects of the football environment: the coach and their behaviour; the programme (specifically, the opportunities and values therein); and the weekly sessions they experienced.

More specifically, a democratic coach with positive and effective communication skills who emphasised “fun” rather than performance was the preferred ‘model’ for most young people. Further, such coaches were expected to operate in programmes where opportunities for competition and smooth progression (into elite or adult football) were provided. The tricky dichotomies of ‘structure-freedom’ and ‘performance-participation’ were also discussed, with young people demanding a finely tuned balance that might alter with age (e.g. balance tipped toward ‘freedom’ and ‘participation’ for younger players). Finally, desirable sessions were those focussing on skill learning, using footballs in small-sided games which were varied to maintain interest.
7.4.1. Illustrating the Model

As in the previous section of the same title, the following table (7.2) is designed to ‘animate’ the model presented in figure 6.6. Data are presented to illustrate concepts and explain the nature of the relationships between them. Taken together, these hypotheses reflect the nature of the football environment from a young player’s perspective: its central features; the values inherent within it; and, most importantly, the ways in which football sessions are actually delivered and experienced. Following the table, a series of hypothetical (or ‘ideal type’) examples are used to further illustrate the meaning of concepts and processes described in figure 6.6, to which table 7.2 directly corresponds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept or Process</th>
<th>Illustrative Data Fragments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SOCIAL CONTEXT** | Martin: Erm, so (reading) "nowhere to play". Shazad put that, but I don't know, but he said there's not many places for people to go play in.  
                        Chris: Yeah, there's always "No ball games" signs everywhere.  
                        (U18 boys)                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| (Space to play)    | Joe: We need a new pitch! And new changing rooms.  
                        Farooj: This could fall down at any time you know!  
                        Joe: We do that thing yeah, we warm up over there and the pitch is mostly mud and it has all dog-shit on it. [laughing] Yeah, we can't even afford to paint the goals. We have to wrap tape round it! That's how poor we are.  
                        (U14 boys)                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| **COACH BEHAVIOUR**| I: Is there something in particular that's fun about football here?  
                        Emily: Err, the way that they train us; the way you don't get told off when you do something wrong.  
                        Hannah: Yeahhh, it's not strict. It's not strict.  
                        Alex: Unlike some other places, like school... people take it really seriously.  
                        (U12 girls)                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| (Focus on fun)     | Hayley: Cos, even... Like I don't think I'm that good at football but no matter how good you are, you're always encouraged, and it's just really confidence boosting.  
                        (Year 11 girls)                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| (Praise improves  | Luke: Personally I think questions are better, because it develops your own mind as well. It gives you a footballing mind: if you can solve that while it's happening - you don't have to be on the pitch to do it - if you can do that, you can tell someone else...  
                        confidence)                                                                                                                                            | Craig: Yeah, you don't have to have your coach telling you, if you've probably done it before.                              
                        I: You think it's better to work things out for yourself...                                                                                             | Craig: (interrupting) Yeah, definitely helps out in a game situation as well. Like you obviously need to be told as well, but if you can realise it quicker yourself, it's only gonna help you isn't it.  
                                                                    | (U18 boys)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| (Use of questions) | Tom: I'm a centre midfielder and my manager put me up front for one game... and then he said after the game, I said 'why did you put me there' and he said 'so you can feel what its like to receive balls from a midfielder - cos I normally play balls to the striker - I can feel what it's like. So as a striker, I want a certain ball so when I go back into midfield I know what ball to play.  
                        I: Ahh, that's the idea with the Ajax system I think.  
                        (Year 7&8 boys)                                                                                                                                                                                             |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAMME Opportunities (Progression)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: And they have an adult team there - there's a link between the two clubs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan: Yeah, it's like with Clarence and Heyleigh Bridge... they get a trial with Heyleigh Bridge next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash: Next season, we're (Clarence) changing our name to Heyleigh Bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: So the team you play for at the moment, how high do their age groups go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash: Under sixteens, then we get a trial to go with Heyleigh. Our team's gonna be rubbish though - they're (Heyleigh) gonna take over all our youth teams. (Year 11 boys)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Competition)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nivi: There's this league we're in, it's just the same league, so you playing the same teams... There should be a league to get promoted to and a league to get relegated to, cos then it'll make it a bit more like, competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: So at the moment you can't get promoted or relegate from your league?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivi: No. So you can be bottom with no points at all, like we're bottom at the moment, but you don't get relegated...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt: So you don't think like 'Oh no, we better buck up our ideas or we'll get relegated'...</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Year 10 boys)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Values (&quot;Winning trophies&quot;)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica: No but I hate playing with the boys because...you seem rubbish when you're playing with the boys, but when you're playing with loads of girls you seem really good; and I don't mean cos all the other girls are rubbish, it's because they're all like the same as you, but the boys are all better than us. (Year 6 girls)</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>(&quot;Taking part&quot;)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dan: It's more enjoyment than anything else, but you obviously want to win a cup or something to cap your season off, but really for enjoyment so...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley: (Interrupting) But as you get older, you want to win more, I don't know why really...you get more satisfaction that way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Year 11 boys)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Structure, organisation, tactics)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: When do you think the change is? When do you think it goes from playing for fun, to playing for competition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet: As you get older, you become more passionate about your football, so you want to work on it more. So it's not like a sudden change, but it sort of progresses as you get older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd: Well it was like, we changed our opinion of football when we changed to eleven-a-side. Like it got more competitive then, cos before it was less serious. (U15 boys)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(&quot;Taking part&quot;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: So do you prefer that sort of environment where it's not 'win at all costs'...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah: Yeah, that's what it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam: Yeah, that's why I come so...it's like fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U15 girls)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Structure, organisation, tactics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephen: No, he [the coach] wasn't strict, he just let people mess about so nawt got done and then everyone just didn't listen and messed about and all that so it were a bit rubbish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Year 10 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SESSION (Like freedom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Learning and applying skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Small games)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in table 7.2 (above) are intended to expand on the brief description of coach behaviour and player learning offered in figure 6.6 and section 6.3.3. The ideal social/environmental context for youth football, according to young people, is one where there are sufficient, well equipped spaces to play and formal methods of entry into, and progress through, clubs (e.g. school-club links). The presence of positive role models – especially coaches – is also an important condition leading to an increased propensity to participate. Of all the external factors discussed, however, coaches’ behaviour and their central influence on football programmes and sessions was most frequently discussed. The following example aims to highlight some of the salient issues in coaching and learning.

A young girl has recently joined a ladies’ and girls’ football club following some enjoyable taster sessions in her school. Her immediate concern is with ‘fitting in’ and demonstrating basic football competence (see section 7.3.2); and the first and most important individual she comes into contact with is the coach. Having recently qualified, the coach is conscientious and aware of the impact of their actions on learning and psychological well-being. They place an overt emphasis on fun in sessions, with lots of praise and positive feedback regardless of the ability or performance of the young girls. Sessions are structured around learning fundamental skills in the first instance, but this is achieved through participation in conditioned games designed to be inclusive and overload a particular technique. Players are given lots of time and space to try out skills and make mistakes without punishment. However, when players start to mess about and distract others, the coach is quick to challenge this behaviour and bring them back in line.

In this environment, the young girl finds herself learning rapidly and enjoying the sessions immensely. Since learning new skills was the main reason she joined the club, she is immediately content and begins to make friends with some of the more established players. Over the following weeks and months she begins to take note of the wider context: the opportunities open to her and the values of the club she has joined. She learns that the club has a tradition of producing talented female players and that they have two adult teams.
playing throughout the region. Some of the adult players also act as coaches for the junior teams, having completed their coaching qualifications with the help of club funding. She begins to think coaching would be an enjoyable way to spend her time later in life.

Comfortable in her football environment, believing the club to be doing an excellent job, the girl continues playing and improving. Her team competes in a girls’ league and the competition within and between teams is strong and well-balanced. As a consequence, the girl slowly develops a competitive spirit, though still believes fun and friendships are the most important aspects of her football experience. Responding to this subtle switch in motivation orientation (i.e. from participation to performance), the coach begins to introduce more challenging tactical concepts into sessions and uses open questions to further empower the players. With consistent application, the girls begin to understand and apply complex tactics in games, ultimately developing what the coach calls ‘game intelligence’.

7.4.2. Comparisons with Extant Literature.
According to Jones (2006), educational or pedagogical relationships are central to the sports coaching endeavour. Coaches must therefore act, if only implicitly, with a theory of learning in mind; though common sense theories of learning are often erroneous and founded on ignorance (Jones, 2006; Bailey, 2000: 76-78). By way of introduction to this section, it is therefore necessary to sketch a theory of learning upon which to draw when discussing more specific aspects of coaching and learning. The theory of learning presented here is consistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions set out in chapter 3.

In their coach-oriented review, Wikeley and Bullock (2006) suggest that most models or theories of learning remain inadequate as explanations of cognitive growth and development. They do, however, single out Kolb’s (1984) four-stage ‘experiential learning’ cycle as a popular and useful theory for coaches to consider. According to Kolb (1984: 41), “learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through... the combination of grasping and transforming
experience” (emphasis added). Unfortunately, though philosophically sound (for the most part) and experimentally successful (cf. Charalampos et al. 2002), such a theory of learning suffers from unnecessary technicality and a related opacity. Indeed, as with most of the learning theories grouped under the umbrella term ‘constructivist’ (e.g. Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978; Moon, 2004), it is often unclear what is meant by “grasping and transforming” (Kolb, 1984), “assembling and ordering” (Entwistle and Walker, 2002) or “assimilating and accommodating” (Piaget, 1950) experience.

With common intellectual roots to the theories noted above, Popper’s psychological theory of learning, by contrast, offers a sharp, lucid and logical answer to the question: how do people learn? According to Popper (1981: 341-361), learning begins with anticipations which are coordinated, tentatively, with the ‘material’ of our receptions. Following a process of ‘informed’ trial and error elimination, unsuccessful anticipations (or theories) are rejected, leaving a flexible cluster of tentatively held, ‘successful’ hypotheses, or ‘cognitive structures’ (Moon, 2004: 17). These tentative hypotheses constitute ‘human knowledge’ and help us form expectations (or anticipations) which are tested against future experiences. This theory of learning is precisely analogous to Popper’s theory of the growth of scientific knowledge introduced in section 3.4.4.1 and figure 3.6.

This so-called ‘searchlight’ theory of learning (which Popper contrasted with the ‘bucket’ theory of association psychology) was designed, after Kant, to emphasise the priority of theories or hypotheses over observations in the

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82 According to Berkson and Wetterson (1984) and ter Hark (2004), Popper’s theory of learning, developed whilst studying in Vienna in the late 1920s, has its intellectual roots in the Wurzburg school of Oswald Kulpe and Karl Buhler. Unlike the behaviourists (Pavlov, Skinner, Thorndike), the Wurzburg school accepted Kant’s solution to the problem of induction. As such, the starting point for their theories of learning was the assumption that all observation is theory laden (or that a priori valid knowledge precedes sensory experience). Otto Selz (1924) developed a successful theory of learning in this tradition based on his notions of ‘trying out behaviour’ against ‘schematic anticipations’ (cf. ter Hark, 2004: 140-142). Presaging Piaget and Popper, Selz suggested that knowledge was based on “intellectual reactions” rather than “receptions and associations”.

83 For Popper (1990), the vast majority of human knowledge is genetic. That is to say, ‘anticipations’ in this scheme are in-born. Thus Popper’s theory avoids the chicken-egg infinite regress.

84 See ter Hark (2004: 148-152) and Berkson and Wetterson (1984: 3-22) for more detailed descriptions.

85 It also lies at the heart of his theory of emergent human evolution (Popper, 1994: 47-78) and political philosophy (Popper, 1945). Indeed, this breadth and coherence is a central feature of Popperian thought which makes it so useful to practitioners in a range of disciplines (Magee, 1973: 10; Bailey, 2000: 2).
process of acquiring knowledge (ter Hark, 2002: 149). It also recast the role of experience in learning: from a source of knowledge (under the inductivist view) to a means of eliminating false knowledge (in the Popperian view) (Bailey, 2000: 102). Furthermore, because learning consists largely in the elimination of expectations, all knowledge, under this theory, is held to be tentative or fallible.\(^{86}\)

There are, therefore, at least two profound consequences for coaches accepting the ‘searchlight’ theory of learning. First, young people must be regarded as active participants in the learning process (Bailey, 2000: 102; Williams and Hodges, 2005; Piggott, 2007), generating their own solutions to sporting problems and learning from mistakes. Second, our knowledge about successful sporting techniques, tactics, training methods and psychological responses is extremely small and always conjectural. Coaches therefore need to avoid clinging dogmatically to ‘received wisdom’ and ‘folk pedagogies’ (Jones et al., 2004) and, like their players, engage in a critical educational process in order to learn and develop.\(^{87}\)

Two further supplementary comments can be made concerning the functions of play and repetition in Popper’s theory of learning, both of which are of relevance to this study. Play has been defined as ‘behaviour engaged in for fun and enjoyment with no abstract or utilitarian goals in mind’ (Chapman, 1978). In a similar vein, Bailey (2000: 98) suggests that ‘the essence of play is the dominance of means over ends’. Definitions aside, researchers continue to debate the functions of play. Some believe it is immediately beneficial to children and specialised to the niche of childhood; others hold that play is a rehearsal or sorts for adulthood (Bjorklund and Pelligrini, 2000).

Reconciling these two views, Bailey (2000: 97-99) suggests play has two complimentary functions: anticipation and selection. The anticipation function

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\(^{86}\) Indeed, this was Popper’s main innovation on Kant. That is to say, Kant believed synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge was absolutely valid or certainly true (he was enamoured with the explanatory power of Newton's laws for example); whereas for Popper it is fallible and genetic and can be criticised as ‘problematic unfounded anticipations’.

\(^{87}\) See Piggott (2007; 2008) for more on the practical implications of the searchlight theory.
holds that children try out a range of human traits or behaviours in a 'safe' environment that may be needed in later life (e.g. looking after dolls). The selection function of play, on the other hand, gives children opportunities to test, adapt or eliminate solutions to problems that may be of immediate relevance to them (e.g. learning football skills to apply in a game). In a related sense, the selection function may be important for 'economisation', where unnecessary or unsuitable movements or behaviours are eliminated (Bailey, 2000: 97). It is in this respect, then, that the role of repetition in learning is also recast.

With respect to the selection function of play, repetition, under the Popperian theory of learning, leads to the 'abbreviation' of behaviour (not the association of experiences, as in empiricism). That is to say, repetition cannot create habits; it can only make something which is not useful disappear (Bailey, 2000: 92-93). The function of repetition, then, is to eliminate the conscious control of behaviour; to relegate control to a 'physiological' level (Popper, 1972: 43). This may happen when skills (or motor programmes) are 'cognitively linked' to existing knowledge structures (Moon, 2004: 17), and thus become automatic or 'autonomous' (cf. Fitts and Posner, 1967).

Having set out this theory of learning, and the related hypotheses regarding the functions of play and repetition, the remainder of this chapter is split into three sections. Each section aims to examine the literature relating to findings from this part of the study. The first section focuses on coach behaviour; the second on sports programmes (specifically opportunities and values); and the third on the conduct of coaching sessions (specifically content and pedagogy). Throughout this discussion, it is assumed that the theory of learning introduced above is, at present, the best explanation available.

In developing a model of the antecedents and consequences of coach behaviour, Smoll and Smith (1989) suggest that players' perceptions and

88 Its merit can be judged against the principles of 'versimilitude' (or truth-likeness) and 'excess corroborated content' (over rival theories) (see Popper, 1981). In both cases, Popper's theory (derived from Selz's theory, and extended by Piaget, Kolb and Moon etc., though in slightly different directions), may be adjudged superior to any inductivist or behaviourist theory of learning (Bailey, 2000: 80-94).
reactions are likely to be affected by 'normative expectations' and 'personality variables such as self-esteem'. Such a view is consistent with the theoretical explanation of responses to coach behaviour offered here (see figure 6.6); though some relatively stable desires and concerns can be noted.

With respect to coach behaviour, there are some consistent findings in the literature as to what makes an effective coach. In a concise review of the coaching literature, Horn (2008) lists a series of behaviours that have been found to facilitate player development. Foremost among these are high levels of "social support" and "positive feedback" (also see Pitchford et al., 2004; Williams and Hodges, 2005; Hoigaard et al., 2008). Coaches who exhibit these behaviours are more likely to promote enjoyment since they help increase their athletes' levels of perceived competence and, therefore, frequency of flow experiences (Smoll and Smith, 1996; Côté, 2002; Horn, 2008). The use of positive and frequent feedback was also identified as a central feature of "good coaching" according to the participants of this study.

Although such conclusions concerning the use of feedback are frequently arrived at by coaching scholars, subtle differences in the use of feedback are also recommended. For example, Côté (2002) adds that effective feedback is usually immediate, corrective and contains relevant information; and should meet the athlete's perceptions of performance in order to be effective (also see Potrac et al., 2002). Williams and Hodges (2005) support the gentle 'fading-out' of feedback as soccer skills improve. Players have been found to become over-reliant on feedback from the coach and struggle to achieve autonomy in competitive situations as a result. It is for this reason that Williams and Hodges (2005) encourage a 'question and answer' approach to feedback as players become older and more skilled. Questioning was, indeed, another coaching behaviour favoured by the young players in this study: they believed it helped them become more independent and develop 'game intelligence'.

It is perhaps a little unexpected, then, to find that most coaches depend heavily on purely instructional pedagogies. Indeed, systematic studies of
coach behaviour have consistently found that around 50-60% of session time is spent delivering instructions, with just 3% spent asking questions (Claxton, 1988; Potrac et al., 2002; Smith and Cushion, 2006; Morgan et al., 2008). A number of explanations have been offered. Potrac et al. (2002), for example, draw on Goffman’s ‘dramaturgy’ theory to suggest that the use of instructions is part of a coaching ‘performance’ designed to control players and maintain a position of power in performance driven environments. Under this view, asking questions is a sign of weakness on the coaches’ part since it means they must concede they do not know certain things about football – a problem for those who believe ‘omniscience’ to be a central coaching attribute (Jones, 2006).

These findings are supported by Morgan et al. (2008) who found an inverse relationship between the use of questions and player age in professional football academies. That is to say, as players get older, more skilful and knowledgeable (i.e. closer to the level of the coach), the coach must work harder to maintain their ‘appearance’ as the more knowledgeable, powerful individual in the group. In this sense, giving players more power and autonomy via a questioning pedagogy is viewed as a ‘cardinal sin’ for the coach concerned with their own ‘performance’ and that of their team (Potrac et al., 2002). This situation is problematic since the use of questions (especially well-timed open questions) has been found to be effective in facilitating the learning process – as explained above – especially with young people (Butler, 1997; Bailey, 2001: 91).

Two further reasons may be offered to explain football coaches’ reluctance to ask questions. First, it is possible that coaches are unaware of their own behaviour, as studies have shown that the congruence between perceived and actual behaviour is poor (Smoll, 1996; Smith and Cushion, 2006).

Second, it may be that coach education courses are predicated on inductivist theories of learning and, therefore, instructional pedagogies (Potrac et al., 2002; Cushion and Jones, 2006; Cushion et al., 2006). Or, in the absence of formal education, ‘common sense’ views of learning and coaching tend to be

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89 U12s coaches (instructions: 58.3%; questions: 3.85%); U15s coaches (instructions: 59.45%; questions: 2.91%); U18s coaches (instructions: 62.1%; questions: 1.2%).
perpetuated though indoctrination into a coaching culture heavily dependant on drill and instruction (Lemyre et al., 2007).

A final point on the use of questions and instructions may be made to bring the present discussion to a close. In addition to advocating the use of questions in coaching, some reviews also suggest that a high frequency of instructions should be used in teaching situations (cf. Côté, 2002; Horn, 2008). Such recommendations are based, however, on a flawed logic that runs something like the following: “good coaches use lots of instructions, therefore all coaches should teach this way”. For example, Côté (2002) observes that “the predominant behaviour of a youth sport coach in training is to provide instruction”, then goes on to make the following recommendation: “In sum, instruction should be the most dominant behaviour of coaches in practices, and it should be brief simple and clear”. Unfortunately, such conclusions are common in coaching research (also see Smith and Cushion, 2006; Lemyre et al., 2007) and are founded on an ‘ethical positivism’ whereby the researchers conflate facts with values (Popper, 1945/1969a: 71-72).

That is not to say, however, that instructions should not to be used in coaching. On the contrary, according to the Popperian theory of learning introduced earlier, dogmatic views – perhaps transmitted via instruction – are necessary precursors to a critical education. If there are no cultural norms (e.g. ways of executing techniques or defending in a 2v1 situation), there is nothing for the players to be critical of. Therefore, first dogma (instructions) and then criticism (questions) are necessary components of an effective learning experience (Bailey, 2000: 189-191). The particular blend of dogma and criticism a coach might employ may change as players get older (e.g. more critical and questioning), or in response to different situations (e.g. more dogmatic and instructional in games where decisions need to be made.

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90 A full review of this position and some philosophically robust alternatives is taken up in the first part of the next chapter (section 8.2. A Comment on Facts and Values).
91 According to Gopnik and Schulz (2004), by the age of five, most children have extensive causal knowledge in the form of intuitive theories and are able to learn by subjecting these theories to criticism. It is therefore possible that questions might be effective even with very young children.
quickly); though there are no clear indications, as yet, as to how effective different techniques might be. Such solutions will not (indeed cannot) be found in descriptive sociological research; though such research will be necessary once prescriptive theories have been advanced in order to subject them to criticism.

Returning briefly to Horn’s (2008) review, “democratic and autonomy supportive” coaching behaviours were also found to facilitate development. Such behaviours are, of course, related to the use of questions – as discussed above – and could be consistent with the desire for ‘freedom’ and a dislike of coaches who ‘shout’ and ‘constrain’ as expressed by the young participants of this study (see table 7.2 above). In a football context, a number of authors have found these behaviours to be desirable and effective. At an elite level, Hoigaard et al. (2008) found democratic behaviour to be a preferred leadership style, especially among young players and regardless of victory or defeat. Similarly, in a British context, Cushion and Jones’ (2006) year-long ethnography revealed that oppressive, autocratic and sometimes abusive coaching behaviours had detrimental effects on both the performance and psychological wellbeing of young academy players.

Such behaviour is perhaps expected (and therefore tolerated) in performance environments where winning is the primary outcome, though similar findings have been made in grassroots football too. For example, Pitchford et al. (2004) interviewed hundreds of young footballers in amateur clubs and identified similar experiences. Once again, young people identified a “good coach” as somebody ‘who listened to them’ and made football sessions ‘fair and inclusive’. It is clear, therefore, that coaches can (and often do) overemphasise winning at all levels, not just the elite. And it is often this emphasis on winning that leads a coach to adopt an autocratic approach (Naylor, 2007) as they try to bring all variables that may effect a result under their control (Smith and Cushion, 2006). In addition to being impossible, this approach has the effect of reducing player autonomy and, by extension, limiting enjoyment and learning, as discussed above.
In their myth-busting article on football coaching, Williams and Hodges (2005) summarise the challenge that lies ahead for coaches wishing to facilitate learning and enjoyment:

The challenge for coaches is to determine how best to create practice opportunities for players to learn on their own... The [coach's] role needs to be re-defined so that there is greater awareness of how coaches can shape and guide rather than dictate the learning process.

In practical terms, this means listening to young players; allowing them time and space to make and learn from mistakes; offering timely, appropriate and positive feedback; and using a blend of instructions and questions depending on age, experience and situational considerations (cf. Allpress, 2005; Piggott, 2007; Morgan et al., 2008). Such coaching behaviours, according to the participants of this study, form some important necessary, but insufficient, conditions for effective learning in youth football.

Young people expressed a range of desires and concerns about the football programmes they belonged to, pertaining broadly to either the values or opportunities therein (see figure 6.6). Among the desires and concerns about programme values, two central conflicts or tensions were identified: first, between 'winning trophies' and 'taking part'; and second, between the desire for 'structure, organisation and tactics' and 'freedom'. Each of these conflicts will be discussed in turn below.

Drawing once again on Côté and Hay's (2002) process of socialisation, winning and success tend to become increasingly valued as young people move into the specialising and investment years (i.e. in mid-late adolescence). If this shift in values – from enjoyment to performance or from 'deliberate play' to 'deliberate practice' – should occur prematurely, young people are likely to become bored and drop out (Côté and Hay, 2002). This hypothesis is well supported in the literature (cf. Smith and Smoll, 2003; Pitchford et al., 2004; Naylor, 2007), but it is also a little too simple to explain the variation in the views expressed by the young players in this study.
Broadly speaking, a noticeable change in motivation orientation – from internal to external – took place as young people moved from pre- to early-middle adolescence (see figure 6.2). However, this change was not uniform and many young people appeared to express mixed or confused views on the matter. There was also a difference in the perceived importance of competition and winning between male and female players. Some of these inconsistencies, along with the general shift in orientation are described in figure 7.2 (below).

![Graph showing the change in motivation orientation from pre- to early-middle adolescence.]

**Illustrative Data Fragments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking Part</th>
<th>Winning Trophies</th>
<th>Bits of Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: Okay, so maybe if it's an important game, like a final or something, then it's important to win, but you don't think it's important...</td>
<td>Dan: [I play for] enjoyment really...You love the sport of football, and you can talk to your mates and stuff and enjoy a game of football.</td>
<td>I: Would you say it's more social than performance oriented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe: (interrupting) Not normally, no.</td>
<td>I: So it's like to play for 'intrinsic' reasons rather than 'extrinsic' reasons?</td>
<td>Craig: Has been for a while...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon: It's the taking part because... I mean you really wanna win but at the end of the day it's the taking part.</td>
<td>Dan: It's more enjoyment than anything else, but you obviously want to win a cup or something to cap your season off, but really for enjoyment so...</td>
<td>Sam: It can be yeah. It sort of differs: when you need to perform, you perform; and when it's a bit social, it can be quite social.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Does anyone else agree with Leon? Jordan does, Charlie...</td>
<td>(Year 11 boys)</td>
<td>I: A bit of both then?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(U10 boys)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sam: Yeah, a bit of both really.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Craig: Well, at this level...you're not gonna be a pro!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(U18 boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.2. Mixed Views Concerning Motivation Orientations.**

The data fragments in figure 7.2 highlight a general trend of mixed motivation orientations across age groups. For most young people, intrinsic motivations (enjoyment, friendships etc.) appeared more important than extrinsic, and participation seemed to take precedence over performance. However, when presented with the explicit statement “It’s not the winning, it’s the taking part”,...
many young people found it difficult to agree and often introduced caveats like “it depends on the situation” (e.g. rivalry games or cup finals). There did seem to be agreement on the general suggestion that competition and winning becomes increasingly important with age and that this change probably occurs in early adolescence.

I: When do you think that age was where you wet from just wanting to play to actually starting to think about winning games?
Stephen: Teenage.
Adam: When it starts to become competitive, when there’s like leagues…
Craig & Danny: Under twelves.
Mark: Like when you’re a teenager you start getting bigger and it starts getting a lot more competitive - if you’re not big enough then you can’t compete… and you get stuffed.
(Year 10 boys)

I: When do you think the change is? When do you think it goes from playing for fun, to playing for competition?
Ben: Age of ten.
Jet: As you get older, you become more passionate about your football, so you want to work on it more. So it’s not like a sudden change, but it sort of progresses as you get older.
I: Yeah, so you couldn’t say there was a specific time… when it changed, but it’s just a kind of evolution, going from playing for fun to…
Lloyd: Well it was like, most of it like, cos we changed our opinion of football when we changed to eleven-a-side. Like it got more competitive then, cos before it was less serious.
(U15 boys)

Such findings are consistent with the literature, as noted above, but a sharp distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is not evident and has been questioned. Naylor (2007), for example, highlights a tension between ‘coaching for development’ and ‘coaching to win’, which must be constantly (re)negotiated as players get older. Focussing solely on performance and results, according to Naylor (2007), creates “an environment of alienation and reduces player autonomy” (and, by extension, enjoyment). Indeed, winning and technical development (and enjoyment) are not mutually exclusive (Smith and Smoll, 2003), and can be balanced with “hard work” and “mental flexibility” from a considerate coach (Naylor, 2007).

In order to circumvent the negative connotations associated with “competitive” sport, Bompa (2000) simply switches terminology. In this case, “challenging”
is preferred to "competitive" since it helps focus on the need to place young athletes in such situations without switching to an external motivation focus. Challenge, according to Bompa (2000) is ‘essential during certain stages of development’ (i.e. puberty). Coaches striving to develop athletes must allow challenge to happen and allow athletes to learn from all competitive opportunities “regardless of what the scoreboard says” (Bompa, 2000).

In a similar vein, Smith and Smoll (2003) advocate a 4-part philosophy towards ‘winning’ in youth soccer: first, they note that winning is not as important to children as it is to adults, and that coaches need to focus on developing self-esteem and competence rather than results; second, they point out that failure is not the same as losing; and third, that success is not synonymous with winning; finally, they propose that success is to be found in striving for victory and that effort and commitment are of primary importance. Therefore, a football coach should attempt to recognise, reinforce and reward effort as much as performance or results. Then, as far as winning is concerned, “if athletes are well-trained, give maximum effort and are free of performance-disrupting fears of failing, winning will take care of itself within the limits of their ability” (Smith and Smoll, 2003).

The aforementioned tension between ‘taking part’ and ‘winning’ may therefore be considered somewhat enigmatic. As noted above, young people were generally unable to distinguish clearly between these motivation orientations and consistently suggested that both were important (with caveats dependent on age, sex and situation). Given that the literature treats the distinction as artificial, proposing instead an interdependent relationship between ‘taking part’, enjoyment, technical development and winning (or performance), it seems sensible to conclude that both values are necessary aspects of a youth football programme. Achieving an effective balance between the two, however, may well be “hard work” for a youth coach (Naylor, 2007) who must exhibit prudence (i.e. looking beyond the short-term goals of performance and winning, towards the long-term goals of development and enjoyment). The second of the two conflicts in programme values lay between the desire for ‘structure, organisation and tactics’ and ‘freedom’ (at the session level).
This apparent conflict or tension was manifest in young people's comments concerning the need to be free to express themselves, and, at the same time, not suffer from the disruption caused by players 'messing about'. With regards structure and organisation, many young people found completely free and unstructured sessions problematic:

I: What were it like at Cas [football club]?  
Stephen: A bit crap 'cos no one listened and we just messed about.  
I: So the coach himself - were he any good or...  
Stephen: No, he wasn't strict, he just let people mess about so nawt got done and then everyone just didn't listen and messed about and all that so it were a bit rubbish.  
(Year 10 boys)

Greater structure and discipline were therefore desirable where a coach (or teacher) failed to facilitate clearly organised sessions. However, too much structure – usually accompanied by an autocratic leadership style, drills and an instructional pedagogy – was not desirable and may have mitigated the enjoyment young people derive from freedom and self-expression (as discussed in section 7.3). A political analogy may be useful in highlighting this interesting and important tension.

According to Popper's (1945/1969b) criticism of the political theories of Plato and Marx, there can be no freedom unless it is protected by the state. In practice, 'unfettered freedom' only guarantees the "freedom of the strong man to bully one who is weak and rob him of his freedom" (p. 124). Therefore, under Popper's theory of liberalism, a minimal state is a 'necessary evil' and should intervene in social affairs only insomuch as is necessary to prevent the weak from coming to undue harm at the hands of the strong (or powerful, or rich etc.) Since there is no 'cut and dried formula' for prescribing the degree of intervention required for the protection of freedom (Popper, 1945/1969b: 97), politicians – and, by analogy, coaches and teachers – must constantly renegotiate this balance, through a process of trial and error. Politicians should be watchful of allowing intervention to grow beyond what is necessary. Indeed, exercising the 'Liberal Razor' requires that those in power never allow...
interference to exceed the minimum required for the protection of freedom (Bailey, 2000: 138).

Such a conception of freedom may be useful in understanding the desired balance between structure and freedom in football programmes and sessions. The principle of the 'Liberal Razor' implies that a coach or teacher work continuously to increase freedom – to play, explore, create, express and make mistakes\(^92\) whilst defending carefully against anarchy (i.e. 'messing about')\(^93\). Such a view seems consistent with the desires of young people, though, of course, different groups and, indeed, individuals will have particular preferences for more or less freedom. Achieving such a balance in practice, however, may be extremely difficult (Fine, 1987: 42; Bengoechea et al., 2004; Cushion and Jones, 2006).

Further support for this thesis can be drawn from self-determination theory (Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2007), which posits that humans have three fundamental needs. First, the need to feel ‘competent’ (i.e. our interactions with the environment, and the problems therein, are effective). Second, the need for ‘autonomy’ (i.e. our behaviours are freely chosen and originate within us). And third, the need for ‘relatedness’ (i.e. we are connected with those around us and have a sense of belonging). Under this view, young people are more likely to enjoy sport and develop positively if they feel competent, autonomous and part of a group (Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2007). The latter two ‘needs’ (or desires) appear to be consistent with the conclusions reached above: that maximising individual freedom, limited by the broader needs of a community or group, should be the goal of youth sports programmes.

If it can be agreed that continuous negotiation is required to preserve and protect ‘freedom’ in football, further explanation as to how such protection might be enforced is required.

\(^92\) Bailey (2000: 138-139) warns that the word ‘freedom’ may be simply empty verbiage unless one is prepared to specify the exact context in which it is to be understood (e.g. freedom to do what?)

\(^93\) Fine (1987: 42-43) discusses a similar problem in little league baseball where coaches try to mediate between spontaneous play (or flow) and what they call the 'work' of baseball (deliberate practice).
One such explanation has been offered by Seifried (2008) who has taken up a philosophical defence of punishment as a special form of discipline in sport. He argues that punishment is permissible because it is a ‘necessary condition for learning’ (Seifried, 2008). That is to say, in sport, learning frequently requires interactions and cooperation in games and drills. Therefore, punishment may serve as “a communicative, retributive and reformative” tool in that it presents players with an opportunity to explicitly reform their behaviour in response to wrongdoing.

One strategy that might be used to achieve this is the ‘sentencing conference’, where the team decide on the nature and extent of the punishment to be undertaken. Such a strategy, Seifried (2008) avers, presupposes a ‘responsible offender’ (i.e. a player capable of understanding the reasons for punishment94) who has “a right to punishment”; or, put differently, a right to accept punishment in order to return to the group. Two further conditions for punishment need to be added: first, that is only to be used where there is no other alternative; and second, the punishment should always match the magnitude of the crime. The aim of punishment, then, according to Seifried (2008), is to restore balance between the three main parties involved: the abuser, the victim and the team/society. In other words, the aim of punishment is to protect the freedom of the group.

In addition to these two main tensions concerning programme values, young people also wanted the opportunity for ‘competition’ and ‘progression’ in football. ‘Competitive opportunities’ can be subdivided into two distinct desires: first concerning participation in organised leagues and tournaments, allowing them to express their ‘competitive spirit’; second, and more specifically, concerning the degree of ‘competitive balance’ in particular games and tournaments. Examples of both desires are expressed below to illustrate the nature of this difference:

94 The concept of ‘fairness, morality’ – categorised here as a ‘personality trait’ – suggests young people do have a relatively sophisticated understanding of right and wrong. Indeed, they were able to identify deviant behaviour in professional players and knew these weren’t examples they should follow. In this sense, the young footballers displayed similar abilities to the little league baseball players in Fine’s (1987) seminal study in interpreting, quite independently, moral messages communicated by adults.
I: So have you played in a tournament with the school then?
Joseph: Yeah, five-a-side.
I: So was that good, would you like to do more of it?
Jacob: Yeah, that'd be cool.
Will: I think we've improved as well... I like a proper game on a field and stuff... seven-a-side's good on our field...
Tom: You feel better cos you're actually playing for your school and it's... you're playing for your school in a tournament, but with seven different teams so...
(Year 6 boys)

I: When do you remember football being quality?
Ash: When we won the cup, cos after the game - I think we was twelve at the time - we had champagne and sprayed it all over in the changing room. And then when the presentations come up and then you get to celebrate.
I: So what was it about that particular time that makes it stand out?
Michael: It was the closeness - like last year when we won 14-0, it were pointless, not like a final...
Dan: More like a training game.
I: So the fact that it was tight, unpredictable...
(Year 11 boys)

Such findings are consistent with those of Pitchford et al. (2004) who concluded that, although winning didn't appear to be important for young people, competitive balance led to the most enjoyable settings. With reference to the earlier discussion of enjoyment and flow (see section 7.3.2), creating situations to achieve “optimal challenge” in sport have been found to promote flow (Bengoechea et al., 2004; Mandigo and Thompson, 1998). Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that optimal uncertainty of outcome (in games) and competitive balance (in leagues) would promote more flow experiences (and therefore enjoyment) than in sub-optimal situations.

Shifting focus to the desire for progression opportunities, young people simply wanted a series of progressive ‘stepping stones’ laid out for them. In the example below, progression is conceptualised simply as age-group progression, though in special cases it referred to ability-level progression (e.g. opportunities to move into professional academies).

Hannah: I don’t think it’s a good idea [playing eleven-a-side], ‘cos if someone gets tackled and injured then you’re not going to have any substitutes.
Emily: Yeah, so that means we could get more players...
Hannah: But it’s hard work, you’d be like this at the beginning (gasping - imitating being tired).
Georgina: I think that we should carry on playing seven-a-side now, I mean, it's okay at the moment, then when we get older, we could play ten-a-side or something and build up to eleven-a-side for when we're big enough. (U12 girls)

According to the sport commitment model devised by Scanlan et al. (1993), opportunities to progress in a particular sport are likely to increase 'sport commitment' as 'involvement alternatives' (rival non-sporting activities) are ignored. In the busy ‘market place’ (Côté and Hay, 2002) of children’s lives, sports need to attract ‘personal investments’ from young people if they are to retain participants (cf. Green, 2005). Large programmes with clear progression opportunities are therefore more likely to retain participants. Green (2005), however, presents an alternative view based on ‘undermanning’ theory. According to this view, smaller programmes with a high ratio of opportunities – especially for making significant contributions (e.g. starting or being a captain) – will increase athlete commitment to a greater degree than in single, large integrated programmes. Whatever the case, concerns about progression (conceptualised as ‘unsure football future’) appeared to be frequent and serious, especially among older adolescents.

Within the ideal football programme, as described above, young people expressed a series of more specific desires concerning the conduct of individual sessions. The desire for ‘freedom’ has already been examined at some length in previous sections and serves to contextualise the forthcoming discussion about learning and applying skills, especially in varied, game-oriented practices.

The most important desire young people expressed about their football sessions was for learning skills. Again, this is a familiar finding in the literature. For example, in a youth football context, both Jones (2002) and Strean and Holt (2000) discovered that ‘developing skills in a game context’ was a central source of fun. Similarly, in physical education classes, Smith and Parr (2007) found that young people enjoyed the learning of game- and sport-related skills and knowledge, particularly so in Key Stages 3 and 4 where there is often a heavily instructional, skills-based approach to PE. In a related sense,
Bengoechea et al. (2004) and Martens (2004), suggest that variety and innovation in training has been found to promote fun and enjoyment, whilst Williams and Hodges (2005) report that 'practice sessions should mimic the range of variations experienced in a [football] game'.

It is reasonably clear, therefore, that the central desires about football sessions expressed in this research are consistent across a number of different contexts. However, there is also some suggestion that coaches, so far, have struggled to facilitate such sessions. Both Strean and Holt (2000) and Bengoechea et al. (2004), point out that many youth coaches make a false distinction between learning skills, winning and fun. That is to say, most coaches believe these aims to be mutually exclusive. Consequently, sessions designed to foster skill development tend not to be fun, as coaches use games (scrimmages) as rewards for learning skills rather than as part of the learning process itself. Garn and Cothran (2006) and Cothran and Ennis (1998) describe similar scenarios in their studies with teachers. Here, “fun” was often a primary goal for most teachers when planning sessions, but they were confused as to whether “fun” was a process or a product outcome.

A final point can be made regarding the role of games in sessions. As noted above, games are often used in sessions as ‘rewards’ for enduring a series of drills designed to develop skills. The reluctance to use games as a central vehicle for learning may be attributed to the dominance of traditions in coaching (Martens, 2004; Launder, 2001) and the fact that designing effective games is a challenging and time consuming task (Thorpe et al., 1986; Kidman, 2001). Despite these challenges, games-based approaches to coaching have been growing in popularity with variations of the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model (Thorpe et al., 1986) now popular in North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (cf. Launder, 2001; Kidman, 2001; Butler, 2006).

Throughout this study, young players often discussed the role of games in their sessions, suggesting that they played an important role in both enjoyment and learning:
Ashley: When I go training, I like it when we get to play little games and stuff, but it’s still learning us things.
I: What, like games where you work on a specific skill within a game? Ashley: Yeah, y’know like how you can play games to do with dribbling and all these things… and we have like two teams and things like that.
I: So not games of football, but fun games where you’re learning a skill? Ashley: Yeah, can I write that down?
(Years 8&9 girls)

I: Why do you think doing games like that, like little games, is better than doing just drills?
Joe: Improve your touch and that.
Abdulay: Well you can do drills, but you should play a game at the end init.
I: Why?
Faroj: So you can put the drill into the game.
Abdulay: Well, so you can have a bit of fun.
Faroj: Put the drill into the game at the end…
Joe: (interrupting) Yeah the drill we being using.
Faroj: Cos there’s no point in us doing it in training, then we go tomorrow (to the game), then we’re gonna think: ’Ohh, how do you do it again?’ But if we do it in a game, we know that, oh yeah, this person’s gonna do this and that…
(U14 boys)

Again, research in football environments tends to support these hypotheses, suggesting that games may promote both fun and learning due to their open, flexible and often exciting nature (Williams and Hodges, 2005; Strean and Holt, 2000). In a succinct summary, Pitchford et al. (2004) surmise that, for children in grassroots football, “the desire to engage in competitive matches… appears to relate to a perception that they can express themselves more freely, and with less intensive adult supervision, in game situations”. The effective use of games might therefore be considered as one of many important elements in creating the ideal youth football programme.

So, to summarise, it appears there are problems with coaches’ understanding of the relationship between fun, skill learning (the use of games) and performance. More specifically, they are conceived as being unrelated or, at worst, antithetical. This research has so far suggested that they may be, in fact, interdependent (i.e. fun is an outcome of learning and applying – or experimenting with – skills in games, and performance improves when players enjoy themselves). It has also been hypothesised that enjoyment and learning are best facilitated in environments where players feel free of stress, perceive themselves as competent to meet challenges and have sense of autonomy.
over their decisions and behaviour. The corresponding coach behaviours favoured by young people are the use of open questions to facilitate learning; frequent, timely, appropriate and positive feedback; and support of autonomy through a supportive and democratic leadership style.

7.5. Into, Through and Out of Female Football.

Despite many similarities, the experiences of male and female footballers were sufficiently different to warrant the generation of hypotheses specifically to explain the socialisation experiences of girls. In the previous chapter, figure 6.4 explained the process through which girls are socialised into football, whilst figure 6.5 described the potential factors affecting their propensity to participate. When combined, these two hypothetical models may contribute to an understanding of female football careers.

One of the most striking differences between the discussions held by boys and girls was the prominence of sex and gender related issues. Boys almost never discussed girls, unless prompted; whereas girls almost always discussed boys and their influence on their own football experiences. The perception of 'male domination' was certainly strong, especially among pre-adolescent girls who were actively engaged in mixed football. This perception was a historical, cultural product – a world 3 item – perpetuated by significant others (especially parents, teachers, coaches and boys). Some girls – often those who had had sheltered early experiences of football – appeared to enjoy this challenge and believed mixed football helped them develop confidence. Girls of a challenge avoiding personality, however, felt boys were 'spoiling' their football experience and wanted to drive a wedge between male and female football.

Once in a formal football environment (school or club), girls appeared to have similar desires and concerns to those discussed in the previous section. However, as they moved into middle to late-adolescence, a series of critical factors appeared as either barriers to, or facilitators of, continued participation. Developing a football identity, based upon stable friendships within a competitive football team, facilitated the prioritisation of football over
competing, non-sport activities of growing relevance (e.g. going out with mates). Without this football identity, few girls indicated a strong desire to continue participating, with academic work and ‘having a career’ assuming far greater importance. The lingering stereotypes of homosexuality and a perceived lack of desirable role models may also have contributed to the common perception that football was little more that a childish diversion.

7.5.1. Illustrating the Model.

The data in table 7.3 (below) serve to illustrate the processes described in figures 6.4 and 6.5 from the previous chapter. Since the two models explain female introductions to and journeys through organised youth football respectively, they are discussed here together. The ‘ideal type’ example which follows is intended to describe a ‘successful’ female football career and, in particular, the necessary conditions contributing to this success.

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95 For many girls, even those who had developed a stable football identity, playing football and having a career were considered incompatible. They could not conceive of a future in which they had a successful career and played football. Boys, on the other hand, never mentioned such a problem.
### Table 7.3. Into, Through and Out of Female Football.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept or Process</th>
<th>Illustrative Data Fragments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(No female role models)</td>
<td>Uzman: We came to the conclusion that there were &quot;fewer role models for girls&quot;. Y'know, as boys, we've got Beckham to look up to, Ronaldo, Owen, whoever. But for the girls there's not as much they can look up to as role models. Aveass: Yeah there is: Kelly Holmes. Sakander: And Paula Radcliffe! Uzman: But those are Olympic athletes. (Youth Parliament aged 15-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Male domination, superiority)</td>
<td>Lisa: Yeah, Bernie [AOTT] what he does is - I know he only comes for a football match - but he'll come and he'll like, the boys will know everything because they go like training and everything; and then the girls he say like: 'girls, what are you doing?' and he'll tell us to do something but we don't know how to do it cos he doesn't like... teach us anything... Yeah, and then the boys run up and down shouting: 'Switch! Switch! Switch!' What does that mean? Jess: I thought switch meant pass? I: Do you think the boys know what it means? (Collectively): No! Natalie: What does it mean? (Year 5&amp;6 girls) Max: Well, I did start when I was about six and I went to this place in Loughborough and I was like, I trained there for a bit but it was mostly boys and they bullied me so I left. And then... (laughing). I: So was it a club? Max: Yeah, but... but all the boys used to say (mimicking) 'Ohhh, girls can't play football' so I left. (U15 girls) Amy: It's not really football that I don't like, it's in school like, if somebody says: &quot;Ooh, what you doing on Friday?&quot; I'll say I've got football training after school, especially if it's lads, you get lots of sexist comments, or I do anyway. I: From other mates or... Amy: No, it's usually lads who say it like, &quot;oh you can't play football&quot; - and my dad does it as well (laughs)... He says that &quot;you can't play football&quot; and you should fancy boys (laughs nervously). I: So your dad says that you shouldn't play football? Amy: He encourages me a lot, and I think he's only joking when he says it, but he still says like loads of sexist comments about it. (Year 11 girls)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gender rivalry)</td>
<td>I: Let's have a look at the not so good things then: (reading) 'should be a boy and girl team'? Alex: Yeah, cos we'd like Daniel Cooley, Trevor, Jack... (rest descend into laughter) Hannah: They're all rubbish: they're boys!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I: Do you think the boys would help you improve? Or...
Alex: I think they wouldn't like it but we would.
Hannah: Nooo, cos they hog the ball.
Lauren: Yeah, they hog the ball.
I: So you think playing against the boys would be a good thing?
Alex: Yeah. No not against them, so that we're with them.
Hannah: No, I've got a strong opinion!
Emily: Hannah, calm down.
(U12 girls)

Natalie: The bad thing about football is though, on Friday...cos erm, it's good when it's just the girls team cos we pass to each other, but it's the boys who just pass to each other, they only pass to the girl if you're the closest to them...
Laura: (interrupting) It's not even then. (Laughing)
Natalie: We have to get the ball for ourselves...
Lisa: They all look around, and they still don't pass to you.
(Year 5&6 girls)

**DESIRE AND CONCERNS**

**(Gender separation)**

Anna: Yeah, I think girls should be able to play with other girls at school. Not forced to play with the boys - that would just put them off.
Vicky: I had a bad experience at school where the boys wouldn't pass to me and teased me. I almost gave up because of that.
(U18 girls)

Tammy: I want to play football for a team, but I don't want to play with the boys.
Abbie: Yeah, that's what I mean, I would. Like I want to play with a team but I don't want to play with the boys and there ain't a girls team around here. I played with Rockway girls but then we folded cos we didn't come to training.
(Year 8 girls)

**(Gender equity)**

I: So do you like it being girls vs. boys or would you like it mixed?
Emily & Georgina: Mixed.
Hannah: Yeaaahh!
Georgina: It's easier for the young team...if they have a small one then...boys have got more touch, but when I go up to a boy and tackle, then I get more confident in how to tackle...and you get more confidence from the boys, like, you won't be scared to tackle anybody.
I: Playing against the boys is good for confidence then?
Georgina & Hannah: Yep.
(U12 girls)

**DEVELOPING IDENTITY**

**(STAYING IN)**

**(Football friendships)**

Vicky: I think, like, socialising and football are the same for me. I mean, I tend to socialise around football, after training and stuff.
Becks: Yeah, that's right. They're basically the same thing for us.
(U18 girls)
| (Can't wear it in a ponytail) | Anna: It's like I have two groups of mates: my football mates and my girlie mates. You know, they're all bothered about their hair and stuff (laughing). Becks: Yeah, I've got a bunch of mates from school who I hardly see any more. I do go out with them sometimes, but we never talk about football or anything... Vicky: Oh god, I can't imagine talking about football with my mates! Anna: They don't know what the offside rule is or anything. It takes ages to explain stuff like that to them. (U18 girls) I: So do you find it easy to switch personalities, or interests, when you're with your girlie mates? Do you have to act differently to how you are here? Anna: Well, yeah. I just don't talk about football, and change my hair - you can't wear it in a ponytail when you're with your girlie mates. Vicky: It's good though. I mean, good that you've got different mates with different interests. I: Do you like the fact that you can change - or adapt - depending on the group you are with? Vicky & Becks: Yeah, definitely. Becks: It just means you have more mates. I think I spend a lot more time now with the football guys. We're always texting each other and going out and stuff. Like, when you're in town, I always see someone from the club. (U18 girls) | Football first | Ali: Well, I love playing football, but I like doing other things as well. I play football whenever I can, but I like watching rugby (other laughing), erm, and lots of other sports. Like I play rounders and netball at school. I: But do you think those are up there with football, or second or third? Ali: No. Further down the list. (U15 girls) |
| FOOTBALL NOT REQUIRED (DROPPING OUT) (Lesbian stigma) | Ash: We've had two women referees: lesbians. Dan: They were together... I: How did you know? Dan: They local - everybody just knows. I have to speak to them - cos I referee - I have to speak to em. (Year 11 boys) | (Stretched leisure time) | I: So do you think in the future you're gonna carry on playing football or do you think it might sort of lose out to rugby or something? Jade: I think it'll lose out to rugby because erm, there's more people playing rugby and netball and things like that than football. I: Yeah, so you don't think you're gonna carry on playing football much? Jade: No. (Year 9 girls) Max: Well, I don't know really because I enjoy playing football but if there was something more important, 'cos like, I do a lot of drama stuff. So if say my drama started becoming above matches I'd stop playing, but I would like to still come training and stuff, but probably not be as serious as I am now. I: And you think that might overtake and stop you from playing football? Max: Yeah. But I always like playing - I'll try and play for as long as I can, but... (U15 girls) |
By way of example, consider the career of a young girl, now on the fringes of playing elite senior football. She began her career in year six at school where her teacher created a girls’ team as part of the active sports programme. Her early experiences were positive and fun. She liked football because it was different to other sports: she especially enjoyed tackling and ‘getting stuck in’. As girls’ football at the school became more popular, coaches from a local club came to offer taster sessions. Having enjoyed learning new skills from the coach, the girl and some of her friends decided to join the club. This act elicited some grumblings from the girl’s dad – “football’s not for girls” – and some of the boys at school teased her when she played in the yard. However, this just made her more determined to prove them all wrong.

Having spent three seasons at the club, the girl began to develop strong friendships with other players. They hung out together after training and occasionally at weekends too. She could talk about football with her ‘footie mates’, something she found increasingly difficult to do with her school friends – her ‘girlie mates’. After another two seasons, she had become a popular member of the club where she spent three nights each week, training and playing and helping to coach one of the junior teams. She had begun to dress and act differently around her ‘footie mates’, developing a stable football identity which she could switch in and out of depending on the friends she was with. At this point she had also started playing for the senior ladies’ team, some of whom she would meet around town for drinks at the weekend. In the future, she plans to go to university and train as an architect. She’d like to continue playing football, but doesn’t know if the university has a team, and knows she may have to focus on work if she is to be successful.

7.5.2. Comparisons with Extant Literature.
When asked about how they first became involved in football, girls drew on a range of explanations and cited numerous influences (cf. Harris, 2007). Consistent references were made, however, to the negative influence of boys and the pervasiveness of ‘male domination’ in their football experiences. Parents, peers (especially boys) and teachers or coaches were all recognised as perpetuating this view, though it is questionable whether they were doing
so consciously or deliberately (the three corresponding data fragments in table 7.3 serve to illustrate this). One teacher, for example, allowed mixed football teams to be picked by the children, thus allowing a recognisable pattern to be established:

I: What about: (reading) 'getting picked last'?
(All in turn) That's me that!
Jessica: Natalie gets picked first from the girls cos she's like the best. It's the boys first then Natalie, Lisa, Me, Aoife then Laura.

Such inaction may be the consequence of a powerful discourse excluding women and girls from sport, especially football (Mean, 2001). Indeed, many authors have made reference to 'hegemonic forms of masculinity' suffuse within the culture of football in Britain which serves to exclude females (Renold, 1997; Clark and Paechter, 2007; Harris, 2007). The nature of this 'male hegemony' is such that those who perpetuate it are also unaware of it.

As Bourdieu (2001: 141) explains: 'the effectiveness of male domination is enhanced by being disguised or rendered invisible'. A further property of the concept of hegemony, however, is the notion that male domination is never complete or fixed; rather, it is complex and changing and forever open to challenge (Hargreaves, 1994). Female footballers are not therefore 'caught in the net' of male dominance, and may challenge and resist the male hegemony (cf. Harris, 2007).

So, although young girls recognise and lament male domination, they also possess the power (albeit latent in some cases) to challenge it (Paechter, 2001). In their study of playground football in primary schools, Clark and Paechter (2007) found that boys tended to dominate by 'playing rough' and withholding 'permission to play' (also see Adler and Adler, 1998 and Pitchford et al., 2004). Harris (2007) also reported that his female college players had suffered from boys' playground domination and jibes such as "you can't play, you're a girl". However, in both cases, girls found a way to resist such

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96 Under Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, 'the power of the dominant class rests not in physical force and coercion, but on ideological leadership exercised through pervasive and persuasive institutions'. Similarly, according to Foucault's (1980: 86) analysis of power, 'its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms'. Lukes (2005: 140) summarises this common understanding of power rather neatly when he suggests, 'power is most powerful when it is least visible'.

299 | P a g e
exclusionary behaviour, either by playing on the fringes of 'male space', or by deliberately intervening (e.g. stealing the ball) (Clark and Paechter, 2007). Such behaviour, from both boys and girls, was consistent with that reported by participants of this study.

I: Like at your school, do the girls get the same chances to play?  
Luke: Girls play football at my school!  
Daniel: At school, I don’t let the girls play.  
I: You don’t let them play?  
Daniel: No.  
I: But they’re allowed to play?  
Daniel: Yeah.  
(U9 boys)

I: What kind of skills have you learned do you think?  
Laura: Erm, dribbling better.  
Natalie: Defending. Tackling the boys.  
Lisa: Being able to sort of...get past the boys.  
Jessica: Heading.  
Laura: I’m not as scared to run up to the boys and get the ball off them now.  
(Years 5&6 girls)

Clearly then, girls derived enjoyment from challenging the ‘male hegemony’ and, indeed, it seems those who did so (the ‘challenge seekers’) were more likely to enjoy mixed football and go on to more formal modes of participation. Conversely, ‘challenge avoiding’ girls (potentially those with little experience) suggested that football should be separated so as to allow girls to participate fully (i.e. not just in goal or passively in defence).

Consistent findings were reported by Clark and Paechter (2007) who attributed girls’ marginalisation to a combination of factors. First, girls lacked the experience of the boys, placing them at an immediate skill and knowledge disadvantage (also see Hasbrook, 1999). Second, even when girls did participate, they lacked the desire to attack and dribble with the ball. This lack of desire is attributed to the dominant male ideology – a powerful cultural item or world 3 artefact – which ‘thwarts women’s rights to desire things and take possession of them’. Hence, Clark and Paechter (2007) conclude that ‘the only way to develop and support girls’ interest and skills in football is to give exclusive, coach-led time and space to girls-only play’.
This ‘solution’ was posed explicitly to girls in this study and was often met with approval (see ‘gender separation’ in table 7.3). However, some girls (usually confident players in organised teams) suggested that mixed football could be confidence enhancing, especially when they were allowed to play with, rather than against, the boys (see ‘gender equity’ in table 7.3). As such, Clark and Paechter’s (2007) recommendation should be treated with caution and girls wishing to test themselves against boys should be able to do so, within the laws of the game (i.e. over the age of 12, girls are forbidden by law to play mixed football).

Finding theoretical support for this conclusion, Bailey (2000: 190-191) draws on a Popperian theory of learning (see section 7.4.2 above) to suggest that sheltered early experiences are perhaps necessary for learning. Young children, Bailey (2000: 190) avers, ‘urgently need discoverable regularities around them’. Variation, challenge and unexpected situations benefit older children, but only if a certain amount of confidence is developed in infancy.

Initially, the infant is provided with an ordered, regular world, in which she can explore and test her environment... At a certain point, she enters an environment that is highly structured, yet challenging, so that her development can continue to intensify (Bailey, 2000: 191).

If the theory holds, it may be that girls initially require a female-only environment in which to develop confidence (particularly in possession of the ball in attacking positions – Clark and Paechter, 2007). Once they have done so – and confidence may well be developed at different rates – girls should be allowed to enter mixed football (mini-soccer) to further test their growing skills and knowledge.

Once involved in football, girls often cited friendship and socialising as a main source of enjoyment and motivation. Such findings are, once again, consistent with the literature in youth sport and physical education (cf. Wankel and Kreisel, 1985; Weiss, 1993; Pitchford et al., 2004; Cox et al., 2006; Smith and Parr, 2007). Côté (2002) suggests that ‘social support’ from peers and ‘affiliation with others’ are core factors in continued participation in sport.
Corresponding values such as ‘companionship’ ("hanging out") and ‘having things in common’ were noted, especially by girls, as positive dimensions of sports participation (Weiss et al., 1996; Cox et al., 2006). Similarly, in their qualitative study of children's gendered sport experiences, Coakley and White (1992) also noted that same-sex friends were mentioned much more often by adolescent girls as motivation for participation than was the case with boys.

In addition to friendships, girls’ early experiences of football were also marked by similar desires and concerns to those of boys (see figure 6.5). That is to say, like boys, girls wanted a participation-based environment with a focus on play; they wanted to have fun, under a coach who listened to them; and they wanted to learn new skills in game-like practices (see table 7.2 for example data). Beyond this, a complex combination of conditions appeared to pull girls either into, or away from, football (as illustrated in figure 6.5).

Foremost among these conditions was the development (or lack) of a ‘football identity’. Previous studies have found ‘sporting identity’ to be the strongest predictor of sporting commitment and stable participation (Lau, et al., 2006). Green (2005) for example, claims that the new role identities sport can provide are influential in decisions young people make to maintain participation. In a more relevant context, ‘establishing a distinct identity as a football player’, according to Harris (2007), ‘is a salient variable underpinning decisions about participation’. Developing identity is, however, insufficient in itself to keep athletes involved in sport, because other factors (e.g. work, social life) may pull them away (Coakley and White, 1992; Côté and Hay, 2002; Green, 2005). However, before such negative ‘pull factors’ are considered, the development of ‘football identity’ can be investigated in more detail.

Renold (1997) has described the playground as a ‘gender neutral’ space where identities can be formed, reformed, destroyed and contested. In such spaces, it is well understood that children “do gender” (Harris, 2007) or engage in ‘gender play’ (Messner, 2000). That is to say, they practice gender roles in their everyday lives and through this practice, dominant gender norms
emerge and are challenged or reproduced (Hasbrook, 1999). Renold (1997) claims that football may be responsible for reinforcing traditional gendered behaviours, thus inhibiting children's ability to experiment with other gender identities. Such findings, however, are not consistent with the majority of the literature on this subject (cf. Walkerdine, 1984; Boyle et al., 2003), or with the experiences of girls in this study, who appeared to be able to switch identities quite freely (see data extracts corresponding to ‘Can’t wear it in a ponytail’ in table 7.3).

The social construction of feminine identity in sporting contexts has been a subject of interest for a number of sociologists. Cox and Thompson (2000), in their study of the gender identities of female football players in New Zealand, considered the ways in which women draw on different concepts of femininity to negotiate the difficulties surrounding their participation in sport. They found that women may interchange between four overlapping identities depending on the particular context they inhabit. Of particular interest here are the identities they labelled “soccer” and “feminine”. The “soccer” identity, assumed in a football environment, embodied a physical confidence (or competence) and a lack of regard for outward appearance. The “feminine” identity, on the other hand, was assumed in non-sport contexts and enabled the women to focus on their image, particularly their hair which was one of the few physical features they could change to reflect a more traditional femininity (Cox and Thompson, 2000).

The similarities to the concept ‘Can’t wear it in a ponytail’ are striking. That is to say, the girls in this study, having developed stable, quality ‘football friendships’, described being able to switch freely between identities depending on the friends they were with. Moreover, they enjoyed this ability, even though they felt unable to discuss football when with their ‘girlie mates’. As Cox and Thompson (2000) explain: ‘the ability to embody different identities may be a liberating experience in that it allows women to access a diversity of feminine practices’.
Concerning the dynamics of identity formation, Mennesson (2000) draws on Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'cultural capital' in her discussion of female boxers in France. Bourdieu's concepts are useful here since they allow Mennesson (2000) to equate identity to 'habitus': "a semi-permanent disposition, a way of standing speaking, walking and thereby thinking and feeling" (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994). A woman may therefore have multiple, shifting identities (aligned to body habituses) which are 'created and negotiated in response to how significant others confirm similarities and differences' in a particular social 'field'. That is to say, 'habitus' is formed in response to an individual's access to, and use of, cultural capital (e.g. symbols, ideas, tastes, preferences). In Mennesson's (2000) study, female boxers developed 'hard' and 'soft' feminine identities in response to such differences; though all had been 'inculcated with a competitive sporting ethos in the primary stages of socialisation'.

The girls in this study certainly developed 'makeshift identities', though whether this could be conceived of in Bourdieu's terms is difficult to say with so little data at present. A more appropriate (and less ambitious) hypothesis may be that identities were developed and negotiated principally in response to friendships (as noted earlier). Both Weiss and Smith (2002) and Zarbatany et al. (2000) conclude that friendships differ in quality and type depending on gender. For girls, intimacy, loyalty and historic participation were the most significant predictors of friendship quality in adolescence (Weiss and Smith, 2002). Quality friendships for girls in sport are therefore developed over time and are based on loyalty and intimacy, a consequence of which is greater commitment to sport and stable participation. This may help to explain the hypothesis set out in figure 6.5, which suggests that 'football friendships' are a necessary condition for developing identity and, therefore, the prioritisation of football over other activities in mid-late-adolescence.

97 That is to say, useful for Mennesson (2000), though not in this study. Bourdieu has been rightly criticised (cf. Giulianotti, 2005: 168) for placing too greater emphasis on the constraining properties of capital and habitus, thus limiting our understanding of the freedom social actors may have in being able to change their class situation, among other things. In short, Bourdieu's 'cultural determinism' sits in conflict with both the ontological and ethical assumptions underpinning this study.
As noted above, the development of a sporting identity may be insufficient for long-term participation in the presence of increasingly powerful ‘pull factors’ tugging in the opposite direction (Green, 2005). Of the negative conditions illustrated in figure 6.5, ‘stretched leisure time’ is perhaps the most important. It has been suggested that the increasing importance of study and work in mid-late-adolescence is the main reason for dropping out of sport (Butcher et al., 2002; Cox et al., 2006; Wall and Côté, 2007). Indeed, Coleman and Henry’s (1999) ‘focal model’ offers theoretical support for this hypothesis.

Having studied the academic performance of adolescents, Coleman and Henry (1999) found that those who experienced more than three significant life changes (e.g. parents breaking up, leaving school, starting work) in a single year often suffered catastrophic failure. They reasoned that adolescents may have a ‘stress threshold’ antagonised by increasing responsibility and demands on time. Of course, such life changes and increasing demands are common around the age of 15-16 when young people leave school (and school friends), undertake exams and move into college or work (a corresponding change in sporting behaviour is also likely). According to the focal model, adolescents are likely to manage this stress by reducing the number and extent of the activities they participate in.

It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that leisure activities, especially those where commitment has not been developed, would be the first ‘casualties’. Indeed, following their longitudinal study of American adolescent sport, Adler and Adler (1998) concluded that girls drop out at a higher rate than boys in mid-adolescence because ‘sport is not required for social acceptance’. That is to say, girls do not develop athletic identity as readily as boys since sport participation fails to enhance girls’ popularity (for girls, the qualities associated with popularity were: family social status; appearance; managing relationships). Such conclusions are consistent with those of Cox et al. (2006) who found that 15-19-year-old girls who “sometimes” or “never” participate, attribute this largely to a lack of time and significant ‘life transitions’. Some respondents also noted that they negatively associated sport with ‘becoming more concerned with their appearance’ (Cox et al., 2006).
The additional negative 'pull factors' noted in figure 6.5 – the 'lack of female role models' and 'lesbian stigma' – have been cited in the literature as potential barriers to female participation in football (Cox et al., 2006; Harris, 2007; Clark and Paechter, 2007), though they should be perhaps considered as part of a conditional complex rather than as significant in themselves. This is due to the fact that only a small number of girls interviewed had actually 'dropped out' of football. It is therefore difficult to suggest how significant such factors might be.

To summarise, it appears that, for girls, developing football friendships (and therefore identify and commitment) early in the socialisation process is an important step towards long-term participation. If, in addition, positive push factors outweigh negative pull factors, involvement in other sports and non-sport activities are likely to decline (Stevenson, 1990; Côté and Hay, 2002; Green, 2005), leaving football as a consistent and positive presence in the lives of adolescent girls.

7.6. Multicultural Youth Football.

It is well known that people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds suffer disadvantage or exclusion in British sport, especially football (Wagg, 2004; Burdsey, 2007). Based on the most recent research (Sport England, 2006) adults from black Caribbean (17.5%) and Asian (17%) populations reportedly participate less frequently in regular sport and physical activity than the white population (21.1%). With specific reference to young people, Sport England (2005)98 suggest that children from BME communities may be 30% less likely to participate in sport – both inside and outside school – than 'the average' child.

One of the most popular issues, as discussed by the young black and Asian participants of this study, was the problem of racism, its consequences and potential solutions. Additional barriers that limit their participation in football

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98 The 'Sport Equity Index' calculates the degree to which contextual factors affect propensities to participate. It is based on data collected in 1999 and 2002 (Young People and Sport Survey and Young People and Disability Survey).
were also discussed, especially those connected with tradition, culture and family. The hypothesis presented in figure 6.7 attempts to capture some of the complexity of these arguments presented by young people, thereby explaining the process through which young people from BME communities are socialised into football. It should be noted that the model refers mainly to the experiences of Asian youth, since their views dominated discussion around this subject.

First, a series of contextual constraints – culture barriers, family influence, lack of role models etc. – seem to limit the freedom young Asian people, in particular, have to engage in organised football. The common response among young people is a feeling of marginalisation, which they explicitly relate to racism: a contested phenomenon with institutional and individual variants. A natural and corresponding desire formed in the face of racism, however conceived, was for racial and cultural equality, particularly in football. Young people are, however, rather sophisticated in their estimation of the problem. Very few of them intimated that ‘kicking racism out of football’ would be an easy task. Indeed, at least two contrasting views on achieving equality were expressed: first, the desire for integration in football (i.e. young people believed football could serve as a useful tool for integrating diverse communities); second, the desire for separation (i.e. Asian-only teams and leagues were seen as the only solution for young players trying to avoid racism).

7.6.1. Illustrating the Model.

The data presented in table 7.4 (below), serve to illustrate the concepts (and relationships) described above. Many of the fragments are derived from just four interviews, since these issues only began to assume prominence toward the end of the study (in the middle of the second vintage). As such, both the example that follows and the discussion of the extant literature are somewhat abbreviated. That is to say, given the limited data, and the fact that most of it pertains to young Asian experiences, any discussion on such sensitive and complex issues should err on the side of caution.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept or Process</th>
<th>Illustrative Data Fragments</th>
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| SOCIAL CONTEXT             | Uzman: Okay... "culture barriers", I think, especially in Asian culture, erm as I said to these guys, that...there are some Asian families that think that girls playing football is not something that is appreciated, or it's not something that is...you know if you wanted to take it up as a job it's not something that's really for them... Erm, also, you know, like Jacob just said 'Bend it like Beckham' pointed out a lot of the problems that Asian girls - not all, but some Asian girls - have to face from the family. Y'know the parents think that all they can be is doctors or IT specialists or whatever, but they don't really have the focus on the sport because they're not interested.  
I: I understand that point, I mean, I hope we've all seen Bend it like Beckham and we understand the issues that came out from the film. But I was wondering why - er, obviously I don't have much knowledge of Asian families, and er, this is a great opportunity to ask you guys - I mean, why do you think it is that they don't see sport in general, and football in particular, as a constructive thing for their children to be doing?  
Saima: One I think is just normal culture and tradition and all that...  
Uzman: (interrupting) from back home...  
(Youth Parliament, ages 16-18) |
| (CULTURAL)                 | (Culture barriers)                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| (Family influence)         | Chris: Like if you look at the Premier league now, there’s hardly any Asians, apart from the Chinese and Japanese. You don’t get Indians or...  
I: There’s one guy for Fulham, but he’s the only British born Asian player, or Muslim player that I’m aware of.  
Ben: I mean, I’ve got a good point as well like because I mean, my area had an Indian player, and Indian captain who played up front for them for a couple of seasons and was an absolute block. I mean it’s not the kind of level that's going to inspire somebody to go and play for somebody decent, like Bury or something.  
(Youth Parliament, age 16) |
| (No role models)           | Saima: And I think that it isn’t very advertised on TV and that like I said before, you don’t see a lot of girls. Maybe if they saw a lot of girls playing football or maybe, Asian girls playing football - like how it is with the boys, maybe then it wouldn’t be a problem. 'Cos you’d see, oh look, all these girls playing football look, there are people who have gone higher, have made a career out of it, maybe if there was somebody like that there they’d think 'oh, if my daughter is playing, maybe one day my daughter will get there one day.' But because there’s nothing like that there, they see guys, they think ‘well you play football, it’s not like you’re gonna get anywhere from there is it.’  
(Youth Parliament, age 18) |
| (ENVIRONMENTAL)            | Martin: Erm, so (reading) "nowhere to play". Shazad put that, but I don’t know. He said there’s not many places for people to go play in.  
Chris: Yeah, there’s always "No ball games" signs everywhere so...  
Martin: Yeah, that’s near residential housing so you don’t get your windows put through.  
(Youth Parliament, ages 16-17) |
<p>| (Space to play)            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSES (Marginalised)</th>
<th>(Racism - institutional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris: I'm sure if they [Asian players] were good enough, I'm sure some teams would've signed them by now. But it's up to them to get good enough to play in the top leagues if you know what I mean.</td>
<td>Shazad: It's not just that. I've got a mate yeah, who used to play for Wardle football club and Rochdale came, a scout came, come down to ask him for a try out. He went down in January and got on, but what he said when he came back was 'I don't want to join it'. I goes 'why?' He goes 'they're racist.' And I said 'what's a racist?' He goes 'they're being racist, but they don't even realise they're doing it.' He goes 'that's half of it; the other half they're just being plain racist.' So he didn't wanna go down to join Rochdale, 'cos of that reason, so he stayed at Wardle. I: So it was kind of indirect racism. It wasn't 'you can't play for us because you're Asian', it was, he could have done, but he chose not to because of the environment; he didn't want to be in that environment. Uzma: It's probably that, even on the pitch you know... he might have been in a place where they could pass the ball, but they chose not to pass it to him. (Youth Parliament, ages 16-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakander: But then this is where the racism comes in you see. 'Cos when you go out there and talk to the boys and say, like, how can you further your career? And they try to like they do in snooker or in any other, racism comes into it and they say there's no point at the end of the day because you get a lot of racism. (Youth Parliament, age 16)</td>
<td>I: Some people have told me they think they still get experiences of racism... Joe &amp; Faro: You do! Joe: We get it almost every match. It's not the kids yeah, it's the parents mostly. The kids are all better than the parents when they play football yeah. The parents just come blabbing. Faro: They say: &quot;Oh, mark the coloured lad&quot;. What's that &quot;coloured lad&quot; - you can't say that! (U14 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Racism - individual)</td>
<td>Faro: Well like, in this match yeah, this player went up to one of our players: &quot;I'm marking the Afgan&quot;. Abdula: Yeah. Who did he say that to? Faro: He said it to Parmaid, remember. The referee heard that and he didn't do nothing. Abdula: It depends though, 'cos not all people are racist. (U14 boys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Okay, let's start with this one cos you've already brought this up, this is on one of your sheets [Football is a racist sport]. Daniel: No, definitely not. I: You don't agree? Jack: No. I don't like that card. I: But you were saying before that you though there was some racism in football - you think some people might be racist... Luke: There is some but... it's not meant to be racist, it's people who are doing it. I: So it's just individual people, football isn't racist as a whole? Luke: No (all agreeing) (U9 boys)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESIREs AND CONCERns (Racial, cultural equality)

I: Right, that's all I wanted to ask, so if you've got anything you'd like to add, any ways you think football could be improved...
Craig: RACISM!
Stephen: Yeah, racism is appalling.
I: So have you experienced that yourselves?
Stephen: In this match, I had this coloured lad and I were better than him cos he were a bit crap, and I were taking it off him all the time and players from his team were giving him racist comments. They were going "oh c'mon you..." racist comment.
Adam: (Interrupting) "Black...git".
Stephen: Yeah, so they were giving him all this and I were thinking 'what's gonna happen here' cos you could see his face and he looked like he were gonna cry. And like, that were just cos I took the ball off him.
(Year 10 boys)

(Separation)

Uzma: Right, as to how we can improve the situation [break down the barriers to participation] "More Asian players in mainstream football" clubs, as we just mentioned. If more Asians can get involved, yes they should try themselves, but there's various leagues out there that are Asian dominated, for example in Rochdale you've got the Asian league, Asian football team, and they've got an adult football team, under 16s, under 13s, under 11s, whatever; and if they can pick and choose the best ones for trials y'know and encourage more Asians that way.
(Youth Parliament, age 16)

(Integration)

Uzma: Just to come down from racism, after the seven-seven attacks, we actually had an organisation that got together and had a Muslim and a Christian - some lads from a mosque and some from a church - and we had a multi-race team playing against Rochdale council and that was a good opportunity, y'know, to build bridges and make friends with each other. And after that there was a meal. So that was a good opportunity to break down the racial barriers.
(Youth Parliament, age 16)

I: In Rochdale they have an Asian league - a league just for Asian teams, just for Asian players you see...
Craig: (Interrupting) That's not fair - that's racism!
Mark: They shouldn't have to do that though.
Adam: It's good that they can play in it. But... like we're not gonna be able to bridge the gap if like all communities, like Asian and black communities, want their own football league.
Mark: It's like building the bridges. They shouldn't have to just feel comfortable playing around people of their own culture, they should be able to, like, mingle.
Craig: They're just as bad as us.
Adam: I think we need some anti-racism officers in football!
(Year 10 boys)
Take, for example, two Muslim boys of South Asian descent hailing from a town in the north west of England. For both, the aspiration to play football is mitigated by a series of barriers in their immediate environment. First, their parents (second generation British-Pakistanis) do not believe football is a constructive use of their time. Only academic advancement and the pursuit of an acceptable professional career (doctor, lawyer) are considered worthwhile activities within their families. Furthermore, because there are no Asian players in professional football, they find it difficult to convince the adults around them that football can be a worthwhile activity. However, despite this general disapproval, both boys participate in school and eventually try to join a local team with a culturally and ethnically mixed membership.

After some weeks in the team, one of the boys suffers racist abuse during a game (one of the opposition fans shouts: “somebody mark that Paki”) and is shocked when the referee, his manager and team-mates all fail to intervene (or even notice). Believing the club to be institutionally racist, the boy leaves and joins a recently formed all-Asian team from the neighbouring village. His friend remains at the club, believing his former companion to have overreacted to the incident. He likes the multicultural environment at the club and believes playing with young people from different backgrounds will, in the long term, help integrate the disparate groups that constitute his local community.

7.6.2. Comparisons with Extant Literature.

Before reviewing the literature pertaining to the hypotheses set out in figure 6.7, some brief warnings need be noted and answered. In his seminal review of research on sport and South Asian youth, Fleming (1994) criticised past studies for their assumptions of ‘false universalism’. Such assumptions occur when inductive inferences are made by researchers who go on to make ‘huge generalisations’ about South Asian populations. In doing so, they fail to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the British South Asian population (also see Burdsey, 2007) which may be further divided along lines of: “religion; class, mobility and caste; family; place of origin; immigration; linguistic group; generation, gender and kinship networks” (Fleming, 1994). Such an approach
to research has been damaging because it leads to stereotyping and the perpetuation of dangerous 'racial myths'\(^99\) which may even inhibit the sports participation of young South Asians if they become self-fulfilling (cf. Rattansi, 1992).

Due to the limited nature of the sample, this research was neither exhaustive nor sufficiently focussed on the 'difference' between experiences to enable an analysis of the sort propounded by Fleming (1994). No attempts were made to 'second guess' the factors affecting the attitudes towards football among young British Asians, nor to generalise beyond the peculiarities of specific groups. The only commitment was to listen to young people from BME communities and to attempt to understand the importance of football in their lives. Where football was important, racism and barriers were often discussed. Where it wasn’t important, young people suggested why, without assuming an interest in football was necessarily desirable (as it often wasn’t).

The aims of this section must therefore be far more modest than those preceding it. In short, they are as follows: to elucidate important football-related experiences of young people from BME communities; and to connect these findings to relevant research throughout.

Two dominant discourses have been identified in the research on sport and South Asian youth. First, the 'barriers' discourse focuses on the problems within South Asian culture(s) that impede sports participation. Conversely, the 'racism' discourse focuses on the racist structures and institutions in British society that constrain South Asians (Raval, 1988). Both Fleming (1991; 1994) and Raval (1988) favour the latter approach and implore researchers to follow the same when conducting similar studies. Despite such claims, research in both traditions has continued (e.g. McGuire and Collins, 1998), and there appears to be no reason why a focus on both barriers and racism may not be fruitful.

\(^99\) It should be noted that under the critical realist understanding of 'race' and 'racism' (Carter, 2002) taken here, 'racial myths' are all that exits. That is to say, the term 'race' corresponds only to a collection of world 3 ideas that are open to criticism and, therefore, continuously changing.
In almost all research investigating the sporting experiences of South Asian children and adolescents, culture, family and role models form salient variables for analysis (Fleming, 1991; Carroll and Hollinshead, 1993; Baines and Patel, 1996; McGuire and Collins, 1998; McGuire et al., 2001). Since these factors appear to be interdependent – both in the extant literature and this study – they will be discussed together here. That is to say, the family is a central mechanism for cultural transmission\(^{100}\) and may also provide significant role models for young people.

The young participants of this study discussed the role of the family, particularly their parents, in shaping the expectations and aspirations of their children (see ‘family influence’ in table 7.4). They explained how football ‘was not valued in Asian culture’ and how parents channelled their children into ‘more appropriate activities’ which were often linked to ‘getting a job’ (doctor, IT specialist). They made reference to the film ‘Bend it like Beckham’ and noted the similarities to their own situations. That is, they felt constrained, to a degree, by the culture “from back home” which they perceived as a ‘normal’ part of growing up especially as a British Asian girl.

In their study of ‘Asian heritage' boys' experiences of PE in Rochdale, McGuire and Collins (1998) found ‘parental influence, especially at secondary level' to be the greatest factor preventing participation (also see Carroll and Hollingshead, 1993). The boys they interviewed intimated that they would like to play sport, but didn’t know how to get involved. Parents were found to be responsible for instilling professional and academic aspirations within their children, with careers in business, medicine and law the favoured ‘routes out of poverty’. Indeed, McGuire and Collins (1998) suggested that sport was not valued by Asian parents because they did not perceive it to offer a plausible career pathway. Hence, during their spare time, Asian Heritage boys were encouraged to ‘attend mosque, complete homework, and help with household chores’.

\(^{100}\) The family are important in ‘cultural transmission’ in that they often highlight the parts of world 3 they believe to be of relevance and importance to young people. This may help explain the hypotheses of Dawkins (2006: 328) and Law (2006: 168): that children very rarely choose to follow a religion different to that of their parents.
Following previous authors, McGuire and Collins (1998) lament the absence of a 'conceptual framework' for analysing the role played by parents in shaping the sport experiences of their children. However, Eccles' (1993) expectancy-value theory (EVT), as noted earlier, may be a useful way of analysing this relationship. As Partridge et al. (2008) contend, the EVT suggests parents shape their children's self perceptions about: their sporting ability, gender stereotypes, and – most significantly – their values regarding achievement domains. It is in this final regard that Asian parents may be said to influence sports participation, by encouraging their children to value academic achievement domains over sport.

In their later research with aspiring professional footballers from South Asian descent, McGuire et al. (2001) listed a series of barriers contributing to the marginalisation of their research participants. Surveying both players and professional clubs, 'culture barriers, parental attitudes and influence, the lack of role models and institutional racism' were all cited as problems. All the players in their study suggested the absence of role models was a core factor inhibiting their chances of success, though there appeared to be some disparity between the views of clubs and players in the degree to which parents and, in particular, racism, were perceived as barriers (McGuire et al., 2001). In a similar investigation, Baines and Patel (1996) had previously suggested that up to 65% of South Asian players had experienced racism. McGuire et al. (2001) reported even higher percentages (though with a smaller sample), with 90% of players having experienced racism, which they contrasted with the 26% of clubs who believed racism to be prevalent. The suggestion, therefore, is that the Asian community perceive racism to be a much greater problem than do the football community.

The young people in this study suggested they had been both the victims and witnesses of racism. In accordance with Fleming (1994) and Raval (1988) they identified racism as a central feature of sport involvement and leisure choice for adolescents from BME communities. They were also able to distinguish between 'institutional' and 'individual' racism (even at the age of nine), identified previously in schools (Rattansi, 1992) and club-based sports
(Fleming, 1994), respectively. Individual racism was relatively easy for the young people to identify, and they provided examples where players had suffered abusive name calling such as “mark the coloured lad” or “come on you black git”. Institutional racism, on the other hand, was more difficult to identify.

Fleming (1994) defined institutional racism as ‘covert and involving structural relations of subordination and oppression between social groups’. Some of the data fragments (see table 7.4) generated through this study correspond to such a definition, particularly when participants made reference to football being essentially different from other sports. The increasingly popular sport of boxing, for example, was not associated with institutional racism:

Shazad: Like if you look at boxing now, a lot of Asians have gone into boxing because if you look at Amir Khan, he represented England in the Olympics. If you go to Heymoor boxing gym, and they used to be like, I wouldn’t say fully racist but quite racist, y’know when you get outside they’d be a lot of fights and stuff ‘cos it’s like quite a white populated area. But if you go there now they’ll be like both Asians and white people there; and even the man that runs the gym, he was proper alright with you, he was joking with you about it. He’s like, if you walk in and said ‘they do the London bombings’ and stuff like that - he’d be having a laugh about it. There was this Asian man with a beard there and he was like ‘that’s Osama Bin Laden’ you know what I mean; he has a laugh about it. It breaks down all the ice and stuff. If it were like that in football it’d be much easier.

(Youth Parliament, age 17)

More subtle, hidden or ‘hegemonic’ (Burdsey, 2007) forms of racism have also been discussed in the literature. In a British school setting, Fleming (1991) claimed that racism was based on stereotypes. Hence, “once stereotypic notions become entrenched as part of coaching folklore and professional (mis)understanding, they are constantly reaffirmed and become self-perpetuating” (Fleming, 1991). More recently, Burdsey (2007: 48) has suggested that ‘unwitting exclusion’ has begun to replace the overt racism common to football’s past. Drawing on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, and his extensive ethnographic data, Burdsey (2007) notes that, whilst damaging stereotypes are perpetuated through institutions in football (e.g. leagues and County FAs), British Asian men are also beginning to challenge the dominant order.
By conceptualising racism in this way – i.e. as ‘inherent and unintentional’ discrimination (Rattansi, 1992) – it is possible to better understand some of the stories told by the young participants of this study. For example, when describing an experience with a professional team, one young man concluded: “they’re being racist, but they don’t even know they’re doing it”. This view is consistent with the discussion from the previous section on the place of women in football. The conceptions of power explored there (see note 93) to explain the domination of football by men may be used here also to describe the domination of football by the white population.

Taking a Foucaultian view, one might say power was operating ‘through’ individuals. That is to say, coaches are ‘constituted’ by such ‘racist’ discourse whilst simultaneously and unconsciously acting as its ‘vehicles’ (Giulianotti, 2005: 102). Hence, racial stereotypes (e.g. ‘Asians can’t play football’, ‘Asian girls are weak and frail’ – see Fleming, 1994) are unwittingly perpetuated. Or, drawing on Bourdieu’s notions of ‘habitus’ and ‘collective deception’, one might say coaches adopt a “taken-for-granted view of the world that flows from practical sense” (Bourdieu, 1990, in Cushion and Jones, 2006). Here, because racism is embedded in the habitus of all participants (both the dominating and the dominated), there is a “collective deception” legitimising the power of the dominant group (e.g. predominantly white, male coaches) (cf. Cushion and Jones, 2006).

Young people’s responses to racism – however conceived – were common, and amounted to a desire for ‘equality’. This desire, however, became manifest in at least two distinctly different forms: a desire for ‘separation’ or for ‘integration’ (see table 7.4 above). Both aspirations were expressed, often in the same interview (sometimes by the same individuals), demonstrating the difficulty young people often had in navigating the flaws and merits of each solution. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the ‘separation’ solution was equated with participation in Asian-only football.

Asian-only teams and leagues are becoming popular in England, especially in areas with strong Pakistani-Muslim communities (Baines and Patel, 1996).
The rationale given for the creation of such teams and leagues is often racism, as young British Asian men, in particular, feel pushed away from mainstream football (Baines and Patel, 1996; McGuire et al., 2001). In other words, institutional racism 'forces' young British Asians either to 'segregate themselves' or to 'compromise their culture and identity' by fitting in to the mainstream (Burdsey, 2007: 53). In this way, football illustrates the fact that inclusion is dependent upon 'the extent to which British Asians are able to under-emphasise the aspects of their culture most antithetical to mainstream white cultures' (Burdsey, 2007: 66). Such a choice, if it really is this stark, is clearly difficult to make\textsuperscript{101}; and such difficulties are exacerbated when one considers the consequences for young aspiring professionals, as scouts rarely extend their searches to all-Asian leagues (McGuire, et al., 2001; Burdsey, 2007: 53). It is through such mechanisms, perhaps, that 'the role model problem' is perpetuated.

The young people in this study were generally opposed to 'separation' suggesting that segregated football "might be one of the causes of the problems" or that such 'positive discrimination' was, in itself, racism (as one white teenager complained: “they’re just as bad as us”). So, although Asian-only teams and leagues may promote 'community solidarity' and the 'expression of ethnic identity' (Baines and Patel, 1996; McGuire et al., 2001), the young people here appeared much more concerned about their divisive potential. They therefore appeared much more optimistic about the role of football in promoting 'integration' – or “building bridges” as they put it.

Stories about the integrative qualities of football were common. Building bridges within and between communities was a popular theme, and football appeared to be a powerful medium in the minds of young people (see table 7.4). As one young man explained:

\textsuperscript{101} Fleming (1994) spoke of young British Asians being “caught between cultures”, whereas Carroll and Hollinshead (1993) referred to a "crisis of identity", which is perhaps analogous to the more recent, and more metaphorical, notion of "diasporic identities" (Burdsey, 2007).
Shazad: Yeah, can I tell you something yeah. There's this area called Faytons yeah, it's supposed to be quite a racist area and we've got a youth bank organisation there. We funded them to buy a kit for themselves, and as part of the funding, they had to play us in a football match - our youth bank team. So we go over once, a Saturday morning, I dunno. We were wearing Jeans pants and t-shirts yeah, normal clothes. And they had the full kit on and we played them at proper football and now we know them, like, when we see them we chat to them and stuff. Before that, we wouldn't have even looked at them. (Youth Parliament, age 17)

Despite such optimism and enthusiasm, the power of football (and sport more generally) to ‘cure society’s ills’ has been brought into question. Wagg (2004) for example, warns that “beyond a point, football cannot meaningfully address social exclusion”. Burdsey (2008), too, has challenged the so-called ‘integration thesis’, questioning the sustainability of such ‘one off’ attempts to celebrate multiculturalism. From a different perspective, Greenfield et al. (2002) reject the common assumption that sport ‘brings people together’, emphasising instead the divisive and power-laden nature of such endeavours. Having studied a range of multiethnic high-school sports teams (both boys and girls), they concluded that in-group differences (as opposed to similarities) tended to shape the nature of disagreements, and led to the formulation of racist views. Such conditions led to “the fissioning of teams into a racially and culturally defined dominance hierarchy” (Greenfield et al., 2002).

Despite such concerns, Burdsey (2007) remains adamant that football has an important role to play in the wider ‘integration debate’. The fact that young people of this study are evidently engaged in this debate at present would tend to support Burdsey’s claim. So, in order to expand (and then conclude) the present discussion, it is worth visiting this debate briefly, albeit in a fashion limited to investigating the role of sport and leisure in ‘social exclusion’.

According to Blackshaw and Long (2005), the concept of ‘social capital’ has become central to the debate on sport and social exclusion over the past ten years. Originally explored by Bourdieu, the concept of social capital was made popular in the English speaking world by Putnam (2000) in his ‘structural functionalist’ critique of modern American society (Blackshaw and Long, 2005). For Putnam (2000: 22), social capital derives from dense and
reciprocal social networks (e.g. sports clubs, church groups) which are ‘generally good for those inside, but by no means always positive for those outside’. Moreover, social capital is conceived as having two principle facets. First, it may have a bonding capacity, where it ties together like people in exclusive and inward looking groups. That is to say, ‘social capital may operate to impose conformity and social division at the expense of tolerance’ (Blackshaw and Long, 2005). Second, it may have a bridging capacity, promoting inter-group links, allowing people and associations to operate more effectively by acting together (in this view, social capital is inclusive and outward looking).

Such a distinction may be useful here in explaining young people’s divergent responses to racism and the desire for equality. Indeed, young people actually used the terminology “bridging” in their discussions on the positive impact of football on their communities. As one young British Asian explained: “[playing football] was a good opportunity, y’know, to build bridges and make friends with each other”. They also seemed aware of the potentially divisive nature of bonding capital, in the form of all-Asian teams and leagues, and recognised the problems such organisations may create for developing a tolerant society: “we’re not gonna be able to bridge the gap if like all communities... want their own football leagues” (Adam, Year 10 boy).

Blackshaw and Long (2005) argue that such a conception of social capital underpinned New Labour’s Third Way project in the late nineties. Indeed, the ‘social inclusion’ agenda which New Labour mobilised around the new millennium (PAT 10, 1999) recognised sport and leisure as a serious tool for addressing problems in education, community safety, health and wellbeing (Henry, 2001; DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002; Green, 2006). However, this overwhelmingly positive view of social capital, along with the rather (too) neat bonding/bridging distinction has been challenged.

Blackshaw and Long, (2005) contend that the ‘like us/unlike us’ presumption that lies at the heart of the bonding and bridging distinction is hard to maintain given the multi-dimensionality of any individual (sex, age, class, political
Furthermore, they argue that Bourdieu’s notion of social capital as ‘contested currency’ offers a more convincing and analytically robust approach. For Bourdieu (1984), social capital is a ‘tangible resource’ to be exploited in the ‘battle for distinction’. It is made by social advantage (family, friendships) and has a symbolic dimension which contrives to hide networks of power woven into the fibres of familiarity (Blackshaw and Long, 2005). This is quite different from Putnam’s (2000) rather rose-tinted view of social capital as a ‘collective good’ which grows through collective and reciprocal action within networks.

Such a critique is consistent with the studies of Burdsey (2008) and Greenfield et al. (2002) who suggested that the potential for sport to divide is perhaps greater than its potential to integrate. Certainly, following Bourdieu’s theory of social capital, such a hypothesis would be expected. However, because of the limited data collected here, only basic insights into this complex problem have been offered. Hence, although young people’s views on Asian-only football appeared to be consistent with Putnam’s (2000) notions of bonding and bridging capital, it remains far too early to say anything authoritative about the ‘integration debate’ and the possible (and perhaps limited) role football might play.

\[^{102}\] It is in this respect that social capital may be said to be important in understanding racism in football (at least under Bourdieu’s view), as discussed earlier in this section. That is, in the ‘social field’ of football, social capital is dominated by white males who use it to maintain their positions of power in the game by controlling access to, and the actions of, social and organisational networks such as clubs, leagues and county FAs.
CHAPTER 8:
SUMMARY COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The future is very open and depends on us, on all of us. It depends on what you and I and many other people do, today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow... This means we have great responsibility, which becomes even greater when we realise the following truth: we know nothing, or rather, we know so little that we can safely define that little as nothing"

- Sir Karl Popper
CHAPTER 8:
SUMMARY COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Summary Comments.
The purpose of this thesis was to generate a substantive theory, grounded in the ideas of young people, to explain a variety of football experiences. More specifically, the research objective was to create explanatory models with two clear aims: first, to help increase our understanding of youth football; and second, to help make predictions concerning the consequences of manipulating the youth football environment (see section 1.1).

The substantive theory of 'socialisation processes in youth football' (figure 6.1, reprinted below) was generated after three vintages of increasingly deductive data collection and analysis. It hypothesised that experiences must be conceptualised as partially individualised responses to external influences, expressed as desires and concerns that may act reciprocally on the social context.

Figure 6.1. (reprinted) Socialisation Processes in Youth Football.
The abstract theory of socialisation was then applied to a range of more specific phenomena, namely: stress, enjoyment and learning (figure 6.3); coach behaviour and the club environment (figure 6.6); female experiences (figures 6.4 and 6.5); and multicultural youth football (figure 6.7). Causal relationships between salient concepts were hypothesised and compared to the findings in the relevant extant literature. The process through which the main hypotheses evolved is summarised in table 8.1 (below) and described briefly in the sections that follow (table 8.1 is a reordered and abbreviated version of table 6.5 from section 6.3.3).

### Table 8.1. The Evolution of the Main Hypotheses by Vintage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Themes</th>
<th>First/Second Vintage Questions generated</th>
<th>Third Vintage Tentative Hypotheses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressure (anxiety), enjoyment and learning.</td>
<td>What are the causes of pressure (anxiety)? How does stress impact on performance? In what ways are freedom and self-expression related to enjoyment and learning?</td>
<td>Pressure is caused mainly by significant others through social evaluation. Stress reduces enjoyment as it reduces perceived competence making flow experiences less frequent. Also, since enjoyment and experimenting with skills are linked, the presence of stress (via negative evaluation), over time, will inhibit playful desires and, thus, learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ideal football programme: coach behaviour, values and session conduct.</td>
<td>What coach behaviours lead to enjoyment and learning? Under what conditions do players most enjoy football sessions? What is the perfect balance between increasing freedom and maintaining structure?</td>
<td>Democratic coaches who offer frequent positive feedback and use questions in game-based sessions focussing on skill learning will be preferred by young people. A ‘liberal razor’ principle can be applied to protect the freedom of the group and maintain freedom-structure balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female football: early experiences and continued participation.</td>
<td>What features of early experience lead to desires for separate or mixed football? How are football identities developed and do they lead to long-term participation?</td>
<td>Early positive experiences, especially in all-female environments, help to develop positive attitudes and perceptions of ability; this leads to stable yet flexible identity over time if football friendships are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural football: barriers, racism and the possibility of integration.</td>
<td>What are young people’s experiences of racism? Are responses to racism similar or different? What factors lead to preferences for mixed or separate football provision?</td>
<td>Depending on the cultural environment, barriers to participation include culture, tradition and racism (individual or institutional). Those who perceive football to be institutionally racist are likely to want separation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Young people enjoyed football when they were able to ‘express themselves’; a desire they aligned with free play, creativity – especially emulating professional players – and physical expression (or funktionslust). Pushy parents and controlling coaches were seen as sources of stress (Passer, 1983; James and Collins, 1998) as they affected the perceived competence of young people to meet challenges in their environment (Harter, 1978). Stress therefore has negative consequences for enjoyment because it inhibits ‘flow’ – experienced when perceived competence and challenge are in balance (Jackson and Kimiecik, 2008). This relationship can, however, be reversed with supportive and positive parenting and coaching (Partridge et al., 2008), or where children are simply left to their own devices (Chalip et al., 1984). Potentially negative consequences for learning and retention were also noted. First, Weiss and Amorose (2008) suggest that enjoyment is a critical source of sport commitment and therefore retention. Second, it has been found that experimenting with skills (and making mistakes) is a necessary condition for learning to occur (Berkson and Wetterson, 1984; Wikeley and Bullock, 2006).

In a related sense, young people’s perceptions of the ‘ideal’ football environment centred on coach behaviour, programme values and the conduct of sessions. With respect to the coach, young people wanted: a democratic, autonomy supportive coach who listens to them (Horn, 2008); to be given time and space to experiment with skills (Allpress, 2005); to experience a blend of questions and instructions, sensitive to age and experience (Williams and Hodges, 2005); and frequent, supportive and informative feedback (Côté, 2002). Such coaches were expected to operate in (and facilitate) football programmes with a broadly participatory ethos, though competitive opportunities (i.e. leagues and cups with ‘competitive balance’) were valued increasingly with age. It was noted that a premature emphasis on performance has been found to be a cause of dropout in youth sports (Wall and Côté, 2007), and may also inhibit learning as coaches switch to a more instructional, drill-based and punitive pedagogy (Potrac et al., 2002; Bengoechea et al., 2004; Morgan et al., 2008).
In their football sessions, young people wanted to learn new skills and apply them in game situations (Strean and Holt, 2000; Pitchford et al., 2004). In order for this to occur, a fine balance between 'structure and organisation' and 'freedom' was necessary. It was suggested that coaches might apply the 'Liberal Razor' (Bailey, 2000: 138) to increase freedom – to play, explore, create and express – whilst guarding carefully against 'messing about' which may undermine the freedom of others. Punishment as a special form of discipline was considered permissible as 'a necessary condition for learning' given that learning in sport often occurs within a group or community (Seifried, 2008). Hence, the aim of punishment is to protect the freedom of the group.

The football experiences of girls often began in school and were heavily influenced by feelings of 'male domination' which were perpetuated by parents, coaches and peers, though often in ways invisible to both the dominators and dominated (Bourdieu, 2001: 141). Such 'hegemonic masculinity' within football was found to exclude women and girls, often as a result of their relative lack of experience and knowledge (Clark and Paechter, 2007). Those girls who did become involved in organised football were more likely remain there if they had developed 'football friendships' and, subsequently, a stable yet interchangeable football identity, or 'habitus' (Cox and Thompson, 2000; Harris, 2007). Conversely, a lack of identity and friendships, coupled with increasing demands on leisure time around middle to late-adolescence, increased the propensity to drop out of football (Adler and Adler, 1998; Green, 2005; Cox et al., 2006).

The experiences of young British Asians were dominated by two external influences: parents, culture and role models (from within the community); and racism (from without). The barriers presented by parents were connected with culture and role models, since tradition dictates that football is not associated with 'social mobility', at least within the cultures that were studied (McGuire and Collins, 1998). Racism was interpreted as 'unwitting exclusion', though it was suggested that young people, under a 'hegemonic' conception, had the power to struggle against it (Burdesy, 2007: 48). Both individual and institutional forms of racism were cited by young people, and the common
response was a desire for equality. This desire was expressed in at least two different ways: for separation (i.e. Asian-only clubs and leagues – Baines and Patel, 1996); or for integration (i.e. multicultural football festivals and events). Putnam’s (2000) notion of ‘social capital’ in bonding and bridging forms was appropriated in a critical discussion of the ‘integration thesis’. Following Greenfield et al. (2002) and Burdsey (2008) it was suggested that football had, at best, a limited role to play in the broader process of integrating diverse and diasporic communities. Especially when one considers the fact that the no research exists on the sustainable effects of ‘one-off’ integration events of the kind described by the young people in this study.

8.2. A Comment on Facts and Values.
Before proceeding to make some recommendations, it is necessary to comment briefly on the limits of sociological (or psychological) research. In a critique of Plato’s sociology, Popper (1945/1969a: 59) draws a distinction between two positions he calls naive monism and critical dualism. These positions correspond to different levels of understanding concerning the relationship between facts and values. That is to say, the naive monist draws no distinction between facts and values, believing moral laws to be derived from laws of nature. Thus, the naive monist rejects responsibility for his or her decisions or actions. The critical dualist, on the other hand, grasps the irreducibility of values and understands that ‘(moral) decisions enter the world of nature only with us’ (Popper, 1945/1996a: 61). Popper elaborates:

It is important... to realise that... decisions can never be derived from facts (or from statements of facts), although they pertain to facts. The decision, for instance, to oppose slavery does not depend upon the fact that all men are born free and equal, and no man is born in chains (p. 62).

One of many intermediate positions between these two extremes is labelled ethical positivism and describes a belief in the conflation of moral norms with current sociological ‘facts’ (or existing norms). Under this view, ‘the existing laws are the only possible standards of goodness: what is, is right’ (Popper, 1945/1969a: 71). This conservative position relies on the assumption of the
arbitrariness of moral norms. That is, if norms are arbitrary, there can be no better norms than those which currently exist.

Examples of ethical positivism have already been alluded to throughout the previous chapter. In the field of coaching, for example, Smith and Cushion (2006) assert that ‘there remains a need to undertake investigations to determine what effective coaches actually do in order to improve coach education’. Similarly, Lemyre et al. (2007) propose that, because youth coaches currently learn to coach in a fragmented and informal manner, this is how coach education should be organised in the future.

In place of this ethical positivism, it is important to recognise the autonomy of facts and values (or sociology and moral philosophy). Values or decisions are world 3 artefacts (Popper, 1994: 7). That is to say, once proposed, they are objective and open to inter-subjective criticism, in response to which they may be held (tentatively), modified or rejected. Such criticism is most effectively achieved through systematic sociological research; analysing the extent to which decisions have had the desired effect. The final two sections of the chapter follow this logic. First, policy recommendations (new moral norms) are advanced in the form of hypotheses (not derived from facts) specifying modifications to the youth football environment. Second, recommendations for further research (criticism) are proposed, specifying the types of studies required to effectively criticise the policy changes advanced.

The recommendations outlined below correspond roughly to the four main hypotheses (or models) introduced in the third vintage and explored in the discussion. Although a small number of hypotheses were generated ‘outside’ the four main themes, no recommendations will be made in these areas for the sake of brevity.

8.3.1. Coach Education.
At present, the FA are experimenting with a range of new coach education courses (cf. Insight, Summer 2008), some of which (e.g. FA Youth Coaches
Modules) draw on the theory of learning propounded in this thesis. Moreover, they are reasonably well informed with respect to the psychological well-being of young players, another core theme in this research. However, the basic Level 1 and 2 coaching awards continue to be underpinned by inductivist theories of learning and are occupied almost entirely with organisation and simple pedagogical procedures. Put simply, within such courses, coaches are treated as 'mere technicians' involved in the transfer of knowledge (Potrac et al., 2002). This is a problem because over 8,000 coaches have qualified through such programmes in the past 5 years, many of whom operate in the 3,000 (approx.) Charter Standard Clubs around England and Wales.

The hypotheses set out in sections 7.3 and 7.4 suggest that the core aspects of the youth football experience are enjoyment and learning, both of which are inhibited by stress or anxiety. The coach was identified as a central figure (along with parents, see below) affecting stress through their ability to influence players' perceived competence. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that official coach education programmes should attempt to highlight such problems and hypotheses to potential and existing coaches. More specifically, it is suggested that basic coach education courses focus on factors affecting the quality of experiences, rather than organising and conducting sessions. Similar approaches to coach education have been successful in North America (cf. Smith and Smoll, 1996; Côté, 2002). Such a programme may be organised around the following themes:

i. Explain (or demonstrate) the importance of fun and enjoyment for learning and retention.

ii. Explain the conditions under which young players are most likely to enjoy football (i.e. freedom to experiment with skills in small games).

iii. Highlight the factors likely to cause stress and, therefore, impede learning and enjoyment.

iv. Describe (or demonstrate) coaching behaviours most likely to lead to enjoyable and constructive sessions.
v. Highlight the difficulties associated with achieving such an environment and introduce the 'Liberal Razor' as a potential solution to the structure-freedom problem.

8.3.2. Parental Education and Control.
Parents and spectators were cited as a central cause of competitive stress (through a process of 'social evaluation') for young people. As a consequence, they also influence enjoyment and learning. If this influence is to be positive, parents need to understand how their behaviour affects the football experiences of their (and other people's) children. Studies have suggested that it is possible to re-educate parents in this respect, thus changing their behaviour in youth sport settings (cf. Green and Chalip, 1997). Parent education programmes in sport tend to be more successful when they focus on the ways in which certain behaviours influence children's enjoyment and learning (Côté and Hay, 2002). Most parents will change their behaviour if they know it is having negative consequences. This research might be especially useful in this respect as the voices of the young people carry emotive messages. A flyer containing such information, entitled "How to be a Super Soccer Parent" was trialled at one of the clubs in the study (see appendix J). Anecdotal evidence suggests parents responded positively to this information and the club went on to include it in their 'welcome pack' the following season.

8.3.3. Ladies' and Girls' Football.
Few recommendations can be made regarding female experiences since many of the reasons offered by girls to explain dropout from football lie beyond the limits of policy intervention (e.g. developing friendships, stretched leisure time). However, arguing with Clark and Paechter (2007), it is plausible to suggest that earlier introductions to football in all-female sessions may help to mitigate girls' relative lack of knowledge and experience. This should help more girls develop self-efficacy in a specific football environment, especially in attacking situations, before they are exposed to mixed football (mini-soccer). It was hypothesised that positive early experiences increase girls' propensity to join clubs (both inside and outside of school). And, with more girls in clubs,
over time, positive football role models (i.e. female coaches and elite players) will surely emerge.

8.3.4. Multiculturalism and Football.
Eroding cultural barriers and challenging hegemonic or institutional forms of racism are critical problems for those seeking to improve young British Asians’ experiences of football. Such problems, once again, arguably lie beyond the influence of youth sport policy (Wagg, 2004) and must be challenged on a much broader scale. Especially if one considers that the goalposts are constantly moving. As Werbner (2005) warns: “multicultural citizenship is changing and dialogical, inventive and responsive: a negotiated social order”.

It is worth noting, however, that the young participants of this study had been both the victims and witnesses of racist abuse and considered it a central problem in football. The ‘solution’ of all-Asian leagues and teams was unpopular, as young people were concerned about the potentially divisive effects. Hence, more frequent inter- or multi-cultural football events, similar to those described in section 7.6.1, could be utilised as a small part of a many-pronged approach to integrating diverse communities. That is to say, football, as a popular and essentially cooperative sport, may be able to play a symbolic role (at least) in the generation of ‘bridging’ forms of social capital (Putnam, 2000) in diasporic communities.

8.4. Recommendations for Further Research.
Following the careful distinction between facts and values noted above, critical sociological research is needed to subject policy changes to constant criticism. That is to say, once moral norms are generated and set out (here in the form of ‘policy interventions’) systematic studies might help reveal the extent to which they are achieving their intended outcomes. Concurrently, studies may also attempt to identify harmful, yet inevitable, unintended outcomes of policy change. In this way, policies, as artefacts of Popper’s (1994) world 3, can be subjected to criticism in much the same way as are scientific theories. And, through a critical process of conjecture and refutation,
we may learn from error and develop more effective policies (i.e. policies that bring about results closer to the desired outcome).

In the case of the first two recommendations (coach and parent education), research into the effectiveness of education programmes may focus on the experiences of both adults and young people. The effectiveness of formal coach education programmes has been questioned in the past (Jones et al., 2003; Werthner and Trudel, 2006; Lemyre, et al., 2007) with researchers drawing attention to the fact that the majority of coaches’ knowledge appears to come from a range of informal experiences and interactions. A common suggestion (Culver and Trudel, 2006; Lemyre et al., 2007) is to radically revise coach education, (somehow) creating ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) to encourage ‘knowledge sharing’ in more informal networks (e.g. within and between clubs and leagues). However, just because formal coach education has failed to date, this does not necessarily mean that it has to be overthrown. Indeed, such conclusions are the result of a conflation of facts and values: the researchers fail to see that ‘what is’ may not be right. Thus, they ignore an alternative explanation: that traditional coach education methods may simply need revision.

Future research may therefore attempt to compare different methods of coach education to identify successful elements; or study the experiences of young people in environments where coaches have undertaken revised courses, focussing specifically of aspects of enjoyment and learning. Similar research on parental education interventions is also needed, perhaps with a focus on subsequent behaviour change and its impact of children’s experiences of competitive stress.

In the case of the second two recommendations (female and multicultural football) their success depends, to a large degree, on the removal or mitigation of inequalities perpetuated by hegemonic power relations. In the case of female football, sociological research in the critical feminist tradition (cf. Hargreaves, 1994) would aim to uncover and make visible subtle forms of male domination and oppression. Similarly, in case of British Asian
experiences of football, sociological research from a critical race theory perspective (cf. Burdsey, 2007: 9) may help to combat racial subjugation. In both cases, it is important to remember that “power is most powerful when it is least visible” (Lukes, 2005: 140). Hence, the fundamental aim of critical sociology should be to render power more visible, and therefore less powerful.

Beyond these specific recommendations, further research is needed to refine and perhaps reformulate the four (or five) main hypotheses advanced in the discussion. In each case, the models make predictions about the ways in which external influences condition socialisation experiences for boys and girls at different stages of their football ‘careers’. Future studies should therefore attempt to apply these hypotheses in different contexts and with different groups. In short, more research of a similar nature is needed; though samples should be more focussed (around sex or age group) and questions could be formulated more specifically.

8.5. Developing ‘Ethical’ Methodology for Research with Young People.
The research design developed for (and throughout) this thesis originated in a commitment to ‘listen to young people voices’ (see section 2.2). Attempts were made to strengthen this ethical (or legal) position and connect it to ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (see sections 1.6 and 3.8 especially). These philosophical concerns reached their logical and practical conclusions in the data collection and analysis methods appropriated throughout the three ‘vintages’. This approach was thought sufficiently robust and fruitful for use in this thesis, but it may be strengthened and extended in the future.

More specifically, this research was significantly limited by difficulties in data collection associated with the lengths of time taken to develop rapport with young people. Such engagement was deemed necessary here in order to generate ‘good data’, though it is entirely possible that data of a similar quality could have been generated in a more expedient fashion. Developing and improving such methods will be an important task for those wishing to chart a similar methodological course in future.
In a more abstract sense, it may be useful to consider the origins and ethical status of the problems we study in connection with youth sport. That is to say, if science (social or otherwise) begins with problems (see figure 3.6), the problems social scientists 'choose' to study should be important to, or even formulated by, the research participants themselves. Such a conviction is especially important where participants are traditionally 'seen but not heard'.
CHAPTER 9:
REFERENCES


Renold, E. (1997) 'All they've got on their brains is football': Sport, Masculinity and Gendered Practices of Playground Relations, Sport, Education and Society, 2, pp. 5-23.


Appendix A

Football Association development department mission statement.
Football Association Development Department: mission statement

- To use the power of football to build a better future
- To lead the successful development of football in England by working in partnership with key agencies to provide quality footballing opportunities for all
- To increase the participation, quality and enjoyment of football through 4 key objectives:

1. Football for life – providing with a clear lifelong journey in the participation of football
2. Opportunities for all – everyone having the opportunity to participate in football
3. Football in education – providing children with a quality introduction to football
4. Club development – having the best football club structures in the world providing the high quality coaching and development opportunities for all.
Appendix B

CHARTER STANDARD CLUBS MONITORING AND EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Club Details

1) Club Name.

2) Contact Name.
3) Position.

4) County FA.

5) Please list the postcode(s) of the training/playing facilities used by the club (although we recognise this may be time consuming, the data received is of great importance):

6) Please indicate the time period (in months) the club has spent as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS Club</th>
<th>CS Adult Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>6-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) Number of registered players (approx).

8) Please indicate the number of teams the club has at the following levels:

   _ Mini Soccer (U10) _ Girls (U15-U16) _ Female Adult
   _ Boys (U11-U14) _ Boys (U17-U18) _ Boys Disabled
   _ Girls (U11-U14) _ Girls (U17-U18) _ Girls Disabled
   _ Boys (U15-U16) _ Male Adult _ Adult Disabled

9) Please indicate (to the nearest percentage) the ethnic make-up of the club:

   _ Black _ White _ Asian _ Other

10) Please list the number of formal links your club has in each of the following areas:

    _ Primary Schools _ Female football Clubs
    _ Secondary Schools _ Male football Clubs
    _ Further Education _ Professional football
    _ Special Schools _ Disabled football

11) Please indicate the number (approx) of volunteers associated with the club:

    _ Coaches _ Committee
    _ Officials _ Others
Coaching and Volunteers

12) Please indicate the number of qualified coaches at your club, both now and before applying for Charter status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before applying for Charter status</th>
<th>Currently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 or better</td>
<td>Level 2 or better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13) What are the benefits of having qualified coaches in your club?

14) How far has achieving Charter Standard status helped your coaches to increase their qualification level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15) How would you rate the support provided through the Charter Standard Scheme for training new and existing club coaches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please expand:

16) How far do you feel the young players in your club have benefited from playing under qualified coaches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please explain:

17) How does your club find the recruitment and retention of volunteers (administrators, coaches etc)?

**Recruitment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very difficult</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Very easy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Retention:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very difficult</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Very easy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Club Administration and Child Protection

18) Do you feel adequately supported by the County FA in the administration of your club?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Sometimes
19) Since achieving Charter status, how many volunteers has the club sent on Effective Football Club Administration (EFCA) programme workshops or any other County FA courses?

☐ 10+ ☐ 4-6
☐ 7-9 ☐ 1-3
☐ None (please give reasons): ..............................................

20) How do you rate your club’s ability to manage its administrative duties (e.g. development plan, recruitment and registration, funding applications)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

21) How effective has the FA Child Protection and Best Practice 3 hour Workshop been in helping the club to deal with child protection issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not very</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22) To what extent has the designated child protection person been able to raise awareness of child protection issues amongst others in the club (i.e. children, parents, coaches)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not a lot</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

23) Are there any child protection issues on which you feel the FA might offer additional guidance and/or training?

__________________________

Club Development

24) Does the club have plans to develop provision, or further provision, in any of the following areas?

☐ Mini soccer ☐ Adult male
☐ Boys ☐ Adult female
☐ Girls ☐ Disabled
☐ Formal school links (primary) ☐ Formal school links (secondary)

Please give details:

__________________________
25) Is your club planning to, or in the process of, applying for higher Charter status?

□ No  □ Yes, planning to  □ Yes, in the process

Please explain why:

26) Please identify any major problems the club had in achieving, or has in retaining, its Charter status.

Achieving:

Retaining:

27) In achieving Charter status, did the club receive any assistance from organisations other than the FA?

□ Yes  □ No

Please specify:

28) Does your club offer disabled football, links with other disabled clubs or have immediate plans to do so?

□ Yes  □ No  □ Planning to do so

If yes, How would you rate your club’s disabled provision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

29) Do you feel that your club provides a clear pathway for transition from junior to adult football?

□ Yes  □ No

Please explain:

Community Links

30) To what extent do you feel formal links between the club and schools are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very strong</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

31) What strategies, if any, have been developed with schools to raise children’s awareness of your club?
32) Does your club have regular, direct contact with any of the following bodies:

- LEA
- Sport Dev teams (SDO's)
- Professional clubs
- County FA (FDOs)
- Football Foundation
- Others (specify): .....................

33) Has achieving Charter status led to the development of strategies aimed at including any of the following groups?

- Disabled people
- Ethnic minorities
- Women

Please explain:

Additional Information

34) How useful has the club found achieving its current Charter status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please expand:

35) Please add any further comments regarding the Charter Standard Scheme:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided.
CHARTER STANDARD MONITORING AND EVALUATION
QUESTIONNAIRE: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

School Details

1) School Name......................................................................................................................

2) Contact Name........................................ 3) Position..........................................................

4) School size (approximate number of pupils)........................................................................

5) Age range of pupils catered for...........................................................................................

6) County FA............................................................................................................................

7) Name of school sport partnership (if applicable).................................................................

8) Please indicate the time period (in months) the school has spent as:

   CS School  □ 0-6   □ 6-12   □ 12-18  □ 18+
   CS Dev School □ 0-6   □ 6-12   □ 12-18  □ 18+

9) Please indicate the number of teams the school has:

   Boys | Girls | Mixed

   11-a-side   □   □   □
   Mini Soccer □   □   □

10) Please indicate the number of after school sessions offered per week:

    Boys | Girls | Mixed

    11-a-side   □   □   □
    Mini Soccer □   □   □

11) Please indicate the approximate attendance of these sessions (players per week):

    _ Boys   _ Girls

12) Please indicate (as an approximate percentage) the ethnic make-up of the school:

    _ Black    _ White    _ Asian    _ Other

13) Please list the number of formal links your school has with each of the following:

    _ Secondary Schools   _ Non-Charter Std Clubs
    _ Sport Colleges      _ Working toward Charter Std
    _ Further Education   _ Charter Std Club
14) Do you play in competitions organised by any of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Football in the Authority</th>
<th>Local Community SDO</th>
<th>Local Schools FA</th>
<th>County FDO</th>
<th>Active Sports</th>
<th>ESFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff Development

15) Please indicate the number of football qualified teachers at your school, both now and before applying for Charter status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before applying for Charter status</th>
<th>Currently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FA teaching certificate</td>
<td>FA teaching certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 coach</td>
<td>Level 1 coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16) To what extent has achieving Charter status helped increase the confidence of your teachers in delivering football sessions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17) How far has achieving Charter status helped the school develop the quality of its out of school hours football provision?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18) Do teaching staff receive regular assistance from other people in providing out of school football sessions?

- [ ] AOTTs (non-qualified)
- [ ] AOTTs (qualified)
- [ ] Professional (i.e. paid) coaches
- [ ] JFOs (Junior Football Organisers)
- [ ] Others (specify)

19) Was your school involved in the FA TOP Sport Football programme prior to achieving Charter status?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

20) How many teachers in your school attended the FA TOP Sport Football training course prior to achieving Charter status?

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3 or more
21) If applicable, to what extent did the FA TOP Sport Football programme help you in achieving Charter status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**School Links**

22) How regularly do you have contact with your school sport coordinator?

- Every week
- Once every 6 months
- No school sport coordinator in the area

23) If applicable, how do you rate your school sport coordinator, in terms of their ability to forge effective links between schools in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24) Did you receive significant assistance from any secondary schools during the process of achieving Charter status?

- Yes
- No

*If yes,* please explain the exact nature of the partnership and in what ways the secondary school was able to help:

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

25) As a Charter Standard school, do you have regular, direct contact with any of the following:

- Local authority SDO
- Professional clubs
- Others (specify)

- County FA (FDOs)
- ESFA representative

*If yes,* please give details of the most frequent relationship:

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

**Community Links**

26) Does your school work in conjunction with any of the following in providing out of school football sessions?

- TOPS
- Football in the community
- Local authority sport development

- Non-Charter club
- Working toward Charter Std
- Charter Std club
27) In what ways are young people from the school encouraged to attend Charter Standard clubs?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

28) How active are Charter standard clubs in promoting themselves in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

29) How successful do you rate your school-club link programme in terms of providing a clear passage for young people to move into clubs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Additional Information

30) If currently a Charter Standard school, are you planning to, or in the process of, applying for Charter Standard Development status?

☐ No  ☐ Yes, planning to  ☐ Yes, in the process

Please explain:

________________________________________________________________________

31) Please identify any major problems the school had in achieving, or has in retaining, its Charter status.

Achieving:

________________________________________________________________________

Retaining:

________________________________________________________________________

32) Please identify which year groups receive football in the curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33) How far has achieving Charter Status helped the school to make progress towards the government target of ‘2 hours quality PE per week’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

34) In what other ways has Charter Standard impacted on the PE curriculum?

35) How useful has the school found the resource package offered as part of the Charter Standard scheme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

36) How useful has the school found achieving its current Charter status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Not Useful</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please expand:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

37) Please add any further comments regarding the Charter Standard Scheme:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided.
Appendix C

Research Diary.
Research Diary

Wallsend Town JFC (March 5 – 11 2005)

Wallsend is a poor/deprived, working-class area. Many families will be from a ship-building background. Living in the shadow of bigger clubs in the immediate area like Wallsend BC for instance having had the likes of Shearer and Bruce come through. They are recently formed (2001) and very ambitious, mainly attributed to core individuals driving the development of the club. The players I have seen are very enthusiastic about their football. Indeed, it seems the area has a long tradition of breeding players and the boys appear to have little else to occupy their lives. This is undoubtedly a football area. The coaching at the club is generally rather good, with three of the coaches level 2 qualified. However, old habits of joining in sessions and generally being autocratic clearly die hard here. Central playing/training facilities would be of great benefit as currently the teams are spread out over a large area.

7.03.05 Interview U14s
Things didn’t really proceed as planned. Lee (head coach) took up lots of time with his questions and tried to present me with information that was helpful, but, unfortunately, mistimed. I was unable to facilitate the session as planned, but managed to get a room in a nearby sports centre in which to conduct the interview. The FG was rushed, I feel, and I was almost totally unable to get any ‘good’ data. I attribute this to 3 errors:
1. I hadn’t built sufficient rapport with players, who were not informed of my visit and purpose in advance.
2. The GT approach got in the way. There must be a better way to begin a session - mind maps weren’t very useful, or I wasn’t very good at facilitating their use!
3. 14 year-old boys are perhaps the most difficult group with which to engage in a meaningful way. Hence I felt forced to elaborate on every question and answer, constantly putting words in their mouths.
There may have been other issues, but those listed above needed attending to first.

10.03.05 Interview U10s/11s
Whilst observing a session delivered by Lee to the U10s, I take time to speak with a parent who’s son and two friends came with him to training. He explains that they came to WTJ from WBC about 6 months ago. He told me that at WBC, the U13s were allowed to join in training, thus restricting opportunities for younger players to get involved. He says that they (son and friends) enjoy WTJ much more because the atmosphere is more professional, dedicated and friendly. Also, after the session when I talk to Lee, he tells me about another player who came to them from WBC because he wasn’t enjoying himself there.
There appears to be some feelings of jealousy over WBC who have dominated football in the area for years.

The actual interview is far more successful than in the previous session. Although they keep on leaving to check on the Newcastle score (they’re playing Europe), they are more enthusiastic and forthcoming than before. The likes/dislikes exercise is more successful than the mind maps in terms of generating talking points, however, I think the major difference was simply the age of the participants.
School is located in a poor area of Loughborough, with a high ethnic population. It is a large state primary school with a diverse roll and busy, active atmosphere. There is an after-school football session each week attended by around 50 children (year 4 and above), 30% of which would be girls. There are 3 teachers involved in delivery: Mrs Twist (PE coordinator), Mr Smith (caretaker) and Mr Parkin (NQT). Between them, and with the assistance of an AOTT and two students from nearby sports college, there are enough skills and experience to run a fruitful and challenging session. However, Mr Smith leads sessions and has a preoccupation with performance (winning) which is to the detriment of the less able players (notably girls). The school is trying to expand its football provision by buying more kit, balls and goalposts - but these are expensive.

21.04.05 Interview year 5 & 6 boys (aged 7-11)
With the supervision of Mrs Twist in a classroom with small chairs. In general, the session went well, with some interesting information disclosed. The older children tended to dominate and it may have been useful for me to have asked the quieter children questions directly to help them to contribute. Also, the exercise we did (likes/dislikes) worked well, but I only seem to be getting at surface issues (e.g. like scoring) and I think I need to try to get underneath this - what are the underlying issues? Maybe this will come as I begin to analyse? Also, I didn’t have time to ask the prepared questions I had formulated. Perhaps it is worth trying to work these into a session as they come up? I did try to do this at one point today - when they were talking about other sports they like to do, I asked how they compared to football. I think this is a useful approach - weaving in the constant comparative type questions into the interview. Maybe next time it would be worth opening with the question about ‘how did you first get involved in football?’ then continuing to do an exercise.

26.04.05 Interview year 5 & 6 girls (aged 8-11)
The interview began well with some interesting and diverse answers to the question: how did you first get involved in football? I think this is a useful way to begin an interview from now on and helps participants to think about their own early experiences and reasons for playing. It allows them all to contribute early to the interview which may help build confidence. I think that instructions about the exercise may have been made clearer - they need to know just to get an idea down quickly rather than writing down whole sentences. Also, I think my questions pertaining to their answers could be more focussed (no double or triple questions). A core outcome of this interview is the idea of ‘youth football trajectories’. Early answers highlighted differences in age and how they became involved in football - significant others and reasons for dropout. Over a range of ages, this could be fruitfully developed so as to understand how young people experience football throughout their lives: how they begin, who is important, what they like/dislike, how this impacts on their commitment to continue playing and how and why they move from school to club football and so on...

This should be investigated through future interviews and analysis, HOWEVER, I have to be sure I’m not leading the questions and must allow the agenda of the YP to shine through. How does this fit with GT? I didn’t have time to ask about club football, nor about other sports - I must try to involve these questions next time!
Champions League - After-school football

It was nice to see that the teaching staff had listened to and acted on the ideas of the children. This was the second week of the competition which placed players from years 5&6 in equal teams named after Europe’s biggest clubs (e.g. Juventus, Real Madrid). The players clearly think it is great and are very excited about the prospect of playing under the banner of such illustrious clubs. The boys and girls are (rightly or wrongly) split into two competitions. However, one of the girls teams are short of two players so we went about trying to include them with the remaining teams as subs. At this point, Shaun, the AOTT in charge of the session, came over and told the girls they couldn’t play without their team-mates. The girls were visibly dejected and went to sit by the fence with glum expressions on their faces. Fortunately, as Shaun went to attend to the boys again, Mrs Twist and me decided it would be best to include the girls as subs anyway and they eventually enjoyed the games in which they took part. I really fail to see what Shaun thought he was trying to achieve, and I hate to think what the girls might have thought had Mrs Twist and me not been there to intervene.

St Mary’s RC - Littleborough (April 26 – May 23 2005)

Roman Catholic primary school in Littleborough, a small rural town on the cusp of the Pennine boarder with Yorkshire. The school is quiet and fairly small - maybe 300-400 pupils - and football appears to be a great escape from the routine for the kids. The children are typically from working class backgrounds and come from local families. Some play in Littleborough, some have experience of football outside of the town, in more urban areas such as Rochdale and closer to Manchester. After school football sessions - populated by roughly 15 boys and 10 girls - take place once a week and are conducted by Bernie, an AOTT, who is very much of the ‘here’s a football, let’s play a game’ school of coaching.

I spent 4 sessions prior to interviews (boys and girls) conducting lunchtime coaching sessions with years 5&6. The players were most responsive and appeared to enjoy the prospect of my visits, often getting very excited as soon as they saw me in the school. One further observation is the difference in atmosphere and behaviour of the children I noticed between this school and TAJS. Whether this more sedate and controlled atmosphere is attributable to the presence of religion in the school is debateable, but the difference with TA is tangible. In contrast to TA, it appears that football is a time to break out of the fairly stuffy and controlled atmosphere of the classroom and run around, releasing some energy and perhaps frustration.

See individual transcripts for interview notes and context.

Siddal Moor Sports College - Heywood (April 26 – May 17 2005)

Based in a town near Rochdale it is a fairly run-down sort of place. The sports facilities and staff are, as expected in a SSC, very good and the PDM for the local SSP is based here. The surrounding area is typically working class with above average proportion of ethnic minorities. The school itself has cages and protective bars on the exterior fostering the idea that this can be a rough place outside school time. The school has a rich tradition in volleyball and are current U16s national champions. Hence, in addition to rugby league, there is considerable competition with football for the top spot among sports here.
04.05.05 Interview with Wayne (PDM)

Have just finished a bout of CS training for both schools (Primary) and non-CS clubs. In the past 3 years (duration of his post), Wayne has worked mainly on ‘disadvantaged’ sports and ignored football to a large extent. However, recently he’s started focussing his attention and effort on key stage 1 and girls football using money from the Out Of School Hours (OOSH) funding pot. He’s also managed to get a local community club (Middleton Colts) involved to provide coaching and develop links with schools.

Other CS clubs in the area (4 in total) declined the invitation to help with the scheme. They are well established and see no benefit in developing school links - they have enough players already.

The salient factor in the success of such programmes is the individuals driving them. In this specific case, a club chairman and coach is assisting with the aid of a local university student who is administrating the programme.

Apparently, it has been a challenge to involve primary schools in football development. This is due to the low confidence of many PE coordinator in delivering football (mostly women) up to TOPS level - let alone CS.

I go with Wayne to a local primary school in a very deprived area (i.e. in the middle of a dilapidated housing estate) but with brand new 3rd generation artificial turf. The session(s) are led by Nigel (from Middleton Colts), an experienced coach who is interested in football development. I assist with the girls session: an enthusiastic group but with a wide range of ability levels. The coach leading the session is not very experienced and subsequently the session is basic and possibly aimed at the wrong level. I manage to talk to a couple of girls toward the end and they tell me they played a game the previous week (for some their first time ever) and lost heavily. “We had fun though, and that’s the main thing” one girl commented. Two other girls told me they played for a club outside the session, but they rarely play games. They did, however, recall one game where they had won 2-1, scoring one goal each. - they were both beaming with pride. Wayne told me there were no girls competitions in the area and the closest were in Manchester and Bolton.

Conversation with Nigel Hampston.

Nigel is coach and chair of his club, the first in the country to receive the CSCC award. They have 16 teams, 3 of which are girls, and are also trying the develop a disabled soccer team. They have also begun work on a £1.6m development which should be finished in summer 06. Nigel is keen to tell me his thoughts on the scheme. He thinks the major problems are:

1. Parents are badly behaved and thus poor role models for children.
2. CRB checks are numerous and time-consuming (due to the extensive forms).
3. Scouts from pro clubs in the area constantly take the best players without consultation (perhaps they should be CS too?).
4. Coaching courses are infrequent (at level 2) and volunteers are hard to come by.

05.05.05 Boys Volleyball class

During the session, I speak to a boy called Danny who is sitting out due to injury. I tell him what I am doing and ask if he plays football. He tells me he did, but has since stopped playing. He says he wasn’t getting picked for his club team and wasn’t enjoying it even when he did get in. He also plays volleyball for the school besides
basketball and rugby league. This places constraints on his leisure time and the commitment he is able to make to each sport, he says. He appears very polite and committed (demonstrated by his mere presence) to volleyball.

It would be interesting to see where football stands in the sporting priorities of other students at the school, particularly at this age (11-14), to get an idea about “sampling” and how common it is, and how it effects their sporting “careers”. Also, how do certain sports win out over others?

Rochdale Youth Parliament (August 11 2005)

A one off session with the Rochdale Youth Parliament and Young Asian Girls Forum. These young people come from all over the area to a central venue in town to discuss issues of local importance. Their feedback is often used to inform local policy decisions as a kind of lobby group for young people’s interests. As they originate from different areas, it’s difficult to say anything about the status of these people. However, I think it is fair to say that few of them are from the most deprived areas of the town, though neither were they from the most affluent. The majority of the group were Asian, reflecting the high ethnic population of the town.

This experienced group were enthusiastic and active when engaged in a group exercise or discussion. The diversity within the group allowed for some lively debate that had to be curbed on occasion to secure progress. A number of interesting issues came to light including:
Ethnic culture and football
Asian girls and access to football
Why people don’t play football
Cultural differences and football
Barriers to participation across different groups.

Generally, conversation was scattered and occasionally confrontational (though this wasn’t always a bad thing). Jill suggested that another visit may help focus on important issues - something to consider.

One of the support staff - a Muslim lady - came to talk to me after the session. She told me that many Muslim families are still actively discouraging their children, mainly daughters, from playing football. She said that ‘Bend it like Beckham’ was seen as heresy and that she knew of many parents who had prevented their daughters from seeing the film, scared that it might empower them. She also told me that the young Asian women group they work with managed to access some grant money to spend on leisure activities. They voted on what to spend the money on and decided that football was the popular option. However, they also decided not to tell their parents they were playing football, simply telling them they were doing “sport” instead. She believes this negative attitude toward sport, and football in particular, will soon be broken down with the 3rd generation of Muslims in England. Attitudes, she tells me, are already changing.

With regard to this point, I think the barriers young Asian players face when trying to get involved in football are multiple and difficult to dissolve. On the one hand, there are reports of racism still rife in youth football, diverting otherwise enthusiastic and
talented players away. On the other, we have parents/families who see football as a waste of time and are unlikely to encourage or support their children in such an activity. We might also consider further ‘cultural’ issues, such as the dominance of cricket in Asian sport or the importance of attending mosque for Islamic people as further barriers to participation.

Asfordby Amateurs Ladies & Girls FC (June 29 – August 31 2005)

Asfordby appears to be a fairly affluent, rural area and the club is based, with the men’s team, at a privately owned sports ground which they rent. From the cars in the car park, one might deduce that a number of the members of the club are fairly well-off, which may well be the case. Jim, from the club committee, tells me that he has done much work in local schools – he’s there every day in fact – to promote girl’s football and the club in particular. During my stay, Jim consults me on sport development matter, particularly the potential to develop school-club links that could link in with wider county sport partnership schemes. Clearly, Asfordby are doing well in this respect already, with the membership burgeoning having increased from 80 – 200+ members in just 2 years. Much of this, I believe, can be attributed to the work Jim is involved in.

Two further notable observations about the club can be made. First, their programme of developing coaches from within seems to be working well as comments from both coaches and players would corroborate. They take young ladies from the senior team (usually around 16-18-years-old) and fund them through level 1 courses. They then take on coaching responsibilities with the younger teams (U10s-11s). The way training is structured seems to help in this respect and the smaller girls clearly enjoy having young female coaches working with them. The second observation is the clubs discontent with the facilities. Apparently the men’s club receive precedence and both have to sit out if a dog show has been booked. Needless to say, following a dog show the pitches have to be cleaned. There is real concern that the situation can only be rectified with a move to new facilities. This is, however, unlikely to happen before the two clubs (men’s and ladies’) reconcile their differences and merge to form a single, stronger organisation. It is unclear which of the two parties is currently preventing this from happening – both tell a different story.

Loughborough Dynamo JFC (Sept 6 2005 – April 19 2006)

Dynamo are a fairly typical middle-class football club. There are few ethnic minorities involved and many of the players appear to hail from Loughborough’s leafy areas. The club is a CS development club, prevented from CSCS only by the fact that they lack a girls team (and maybe level 2 coaches). They have recently linked with the senior club and are soon to be linked to Leicester City also (if reports are true). Financially, the club appear to be reasonably secure: many players have stash and all the teams have new footballs and training equipment.

22.09.05 Training session U15s
I take a session on final third attacking play, attempting to look at how forwards and midfielders might work together to create chances and score goals. The session began poorly, with few players present and most messing around and not listening. I managed to improve matters with more instructions and introducing a competitive
However, before moving the session forward again, I asked the players what they would like to do - if they were in charge of the session. They all agreed that a good session should be varied, taking in technical, physical and tactical aspects. Two players talked about how they structure their practice in Championship manager. They told me they wanted to put what we had learned into a game and we discussed between us how we might do this. They also suggested conditions to be placed on the game and then changed them according to the way the game was going.

I found they enjoyed the session much more when I asked for their input, and they took the game seriously once they had some control over how it was played. After the session, when the manager asked if they had enjoyed themselves, they all said how much better it was than a ‘normal’ session and also said they had learned a lot of useful information.

23.10.05 Game observation U10s
My first time watching a game with these guys and against an impressive team from Leicester. I am surprised by the quality of play but also by the behaviour of the coaches and parents who line the pitch. I have read comments stating that mini-soccer resembles a boxing match in the way that the (small) pitch is surrounded by spectators, all shouting encouragement and sometimes even instructions or abuse. It must be an intimidating and pressurised environment for these kids, most of whom are just nine years-old, to play in. I was also shocked at the conduct of the coaches, both of whom shouted (both positive and negative comments) for virtually the entire game. This worries me because I wonder how the lads feel, or rather, how their feelings transfer and manifest in future play i.e. are they afraid to try things or play freely in the future if this type of play is criticised?

20.11.05 Dynamo U15s
My first interview after a long period of familiarisation with this group. Takes place immediately after a loss to a team from the division above 4-2 in the cup. From the outset, the lads are obviously comfortable and at ease with the situation - making jokes, feet on table etc. During the interview I felt two things became obvious to me: 1. I felt able to push them for answers on certain questions. In this sense, I don’t think I would have dared press previous groups in fear of alienating them from the interview, however, in this case, our rapport allowed me to push without the fear of losing them. 2. Perhaps because I felt comfortable in pressing the issue here and there, I was able to probe deeper into ‘sensitive’ issues such as the origin of thoughts about body image and sex. It has become clear to me that, whilst this is the best way to generate ‘good data’ - or data on sensitive topics or antecedent causes for behaviour - it is hardly conducive to my finishing the PhD any time soon. Nor is it practical in any situation where I have limited time to spend in a research setting.

29.01.06 Game observation U10s
Having been with this team now for some months, I’m becoming familiar with the boys and some of their parents. This particular day was the first since the coach, Craig, had quit after disagreements with certain parents. Craig told me that he had argued with two parents in particular regarding the selection of their sons. He is at the game on the sideline complaining about the behaviour of the parents, which provokes
me into studying them during the game. One parent, the father of one of the more talented players, stood out among those shouting instructions (and abuse at the referee). At half time, when the players usually get together in the middle of the pitch for a huddle, he made a point of pulling his son out and taking him away from his team mates. He proceeded to castigate the boy in front of the bemused watching crown, before sending him back into the huddle with tears in his 9-year-old eyes. I made a point of watching how the lad played in the second half. And, as I expected, he virtually disappeared from the game, often playing a ball first time or miscontrolling it completely. He is clearly suffering from a lack confidence which I think it is safe to assume stems from the ‘dressing down’ he received from his dad at half time. I wonder if his dad thinks he played better in the second half, for that, I assume, is the reason he took him out of the huddle i.e. to list his mistakes so that he wouldn’t repeat them. An odd theory, but one that appears common with many parents I have seen.

Knottingley High School and Sports College (October 31 – November 11 2005)

Knottingley is, at first impression, a very deprived area. In fact, one of the teachers told me that it is in the top 5 most deprived areas in the country (but this has yet to be substantiated). There is little to suggest that the school and the immediate area have anything to recommend them; however, the sports facilities and staff appear to be well above average. The PDM for the local SSP is based there, and the coaching staff, at least where football is concerned, are well qualified and highly motivated. The school is a CS development school and have a football academy every Monday between 2-4pm; they also run a JFO course and provide festivals for the local primary schools. Football plays second fiddle to rugby league in this area, although the staff seem to think football is becoming no. 1 sport in the school. There are 3 pro/semi-pro rugby league teams in the area (Wakefield, Leeds, Castleford, Pontefract, Featherstone) with just one pro football team (Leeds Utd) who are more than 15 miles away. Perhaps this reinforces the dominance of rugby league in the area.

JFO course observations (8.11.05)
I attended the second of two JFO sessions, the first a trail run for this one, a small coaching session with children from a neighbouring primary school. What strikes me about this session is the difference in behaviour of the lads from the first. Previously they were acting themselves like unruly children: fighting, ignoring rules, abusing equipment etc, but in this session they were organised, responsible and acted like real coaches. Some of the children were difficult and one had severe ADHD. Given these circumstances, their performance was exemplary and I really felt they derived some pleasure from the whole experience. I also think they got a bit of a shock and learned what it’s like to be on the receiving end of the type of behaviour they were more accustomed to be dishing out. More generally, this was an example of how the CSS is working to provide real results in schools: developing the self-esteem and confidence of young people (in this case young people with few opportunities in life) through programmes that benefit all concerned i.e. school sport partnerships.

However, my initial thoughts on this matter were challenged somewhat during the interview I conducted with this group a coupe of days later. Upon asking about their feelings on the JFO course, they told me they thought it was too soon for them to be involved in coaching (they didn’t want the extra responsibility just yet). They also
suggested that they had too much sport related activities going on that might be preventing them from doing academic work. However, a number of the lads also expressed an interest in becoming coaches when they were older, though I can’t be sure this was due to their experiences of the JFO course.

St Joseph’s High School and Sports College (November 2 – 4 2005)

Situated in Chorley, close to the Reebok Stadium, St Joe’s is a vibrant school with what seems to be a rich tradition in sport. The area itself appears to be a fairly standard working class NW town, though it is clear the Stadium has attracted some investment to the immediate area. The head of sport, Barry Lord, is a long-serving football man with strong ideas and an incredibly proactive attitude toward getting young people involved in sport. In my short stay, we share a number of conversations about the nature of youth football and the state of the professional game. Barry was kind enough to treat me as a staff member for the 3 days of my visit, during which I helped out with a variety of PE lessons and after-school and lunchtime clubs.

PE lesson observation (4.11.05)
I take part in facilitating a PE lesson for year 9 boys. Two teachers, one young and one ‘old-school’, are running the session and include me in a discussion about what they should do. The younger teacher suggests a creative session – or what the older teacher calls “new age, fancy bollocks” – where the aim is for pupils to invent games using limited equipment. They agree to do the session, partly, I feel, because it involved little work on their behalf. As the lesson unfolds, the younger teacher tells me that this group did the same lesson last year. However, when they present their games, he appears disappointed and tells me that the games they invented last year were much more creative and interesting. It causes me to think that one year of being shouted at by the older teacher may have curbed their creative talents somewhat. Just a thought.

Interview with Nigel Hampston (10.11.05)
We met at Hopwood Hall in Middleton, the site of a new £1.6 m development with synthetic and grass pitches and a club house. Nigel tells me it has been 3 years in development and is the product of partnership work between his club, the college, community groups etc. They are about to discuss use of the synthetic pitches in a meeting with the college and Nigel hopes his club can secure regular use. After visiting the impressive site, we continue to talk over a coffee at the college. In this conversation Nigel tells me about his thoughts for a charter standard mentoring programme - an idea we had had in the past - where someone like himself would act as a mentor for aspiring clubs in the area (perhaps CFA wide). I like this idea of rewarding core volunteers with money for mentoring or with free places on coaching courses (e.g. Nigel wants to take his level 3 and goalkeeping coaching awards). I’m not sure how it would work just yet or where the money would come from, but I think it is something to think about before the next FA meeting in December. Certainly, some sort of scheme (part of the CSS) involving rewards (a choice of rewards) for key volunteers, particularly in community clubs. This may be money distributed by the CFA to CSCC which they can use as they see fit, or places on coaching courses such as level 2 or 3 (or satellite courses like psychology or youth coaches).
We also began to talk about the suitability of FA information packs (such as those to fill in for CS accreditation, or the JFO packs), and their lack of clarity. With regard to the JFO pack, Nigel urged me to follow my idea to get it re-designed by young people, perhaps as part of a school/college project, or a national competition where the winning entry was trialled for a period in schools.

Leicester Nirvana FC (Jan 28 – March 18 2006)

The club lies in one of the most deprived and ethnically mixed areas of Leicester. In an initial meeting with Dillip, the club secretary, I am told that the club has a strong tradition of bringing up good Asian footballers. He cites examples of pro and semi-pro players who’ve come through their system. However, more recently, the club’s senior structure has crumbled and the older youth age-groups have begun to falter also. The youth section is particularly vibrant at mini-soccer level and Dillip hopes that investment in facilities will see the club returned to its former position. I agree to work with the U14s who are winning their league comfortably. I get the impression Dillip wants me to see the best side of the club as I later find out that the U14 coach, Darren, is considered to be the best in the club. The facilities I see are admittedly awful, with decaying dressing rooms and pitches ruined through overuse and misuse (e.g. dog dirt). However, the players are enthusiastic (for 13-14-year-olds anyway) and training sessions are generally impressive.

In the first session I attended, I ended up coaching because the normal coach was ill and couldn’t make it. A difficult introduction to the players, but I believe I coped well and was able to establish some relationships early (albeit in a coaching capacity). As the weeks went by, I noticed that despite the mix of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the players got on well, forming a formidable team with a cohesive and defiant spirit. At no point did I experience any tension due to ‘cultural problems’ and all the players seemed to respect one another and accepted me more easily than I had anticipated (due to the obvious differences).

Game observation (12.02.05)
This is the first game I have been to see and I anticipate a good performance after all the bravado I’ve heard. It’s a cup game, a quarter final, against a team from a lower division. I am happy to find that the players are keen to discuss the game with me and particularly their own performances. In the first half it becomes clear that Nirvana are going to win comfortably, scoring 5 goals and missing many other chances. Interestingly, the opposing coach argues at halftime with the Nirvana coach and referees about the legitimacy of some of the players’ licences. She feels Nirvana are cheating by fielding overage players. Upon asking about this, Darren tells me the club are systematically discriminated against in this way because they have a lot of big players. They clearly feel victimised and this seems to have become urban myth in Leicester football circles. In the end, they run out 13-1 victors and the players are predictably buoyant and impressed with themselves. I am, however, left with the overriding feeling that the club is not well liked and expected of cheating. This, in turn, seems to cause the players to feel victimised, adding to the problems of being a poor, ethnically diverse club. Whether or not this is simply because they are good or for genuine reasons is difficult to ascertain.

Middleton Colts FC (April 6 – 18 2006)
Middleton lies on the outskirts of Rochdale and could be classified as a poor, working class area. The club has a strong committee driving it forward and were one of the first clubs in the country to be awarded CSCC status. My visit coincides with the opening of a new £1.6m facility (3G astro, 7 pitches, clubhouse etc.) that was funded by the FF with private investment drawn from partnership plans between the local council, sports college and women’s football club. Having been responsible for instigating the plan, Middleton Colts clearly feel aggrieved that they aren’t able to secure use of the facility at the times they desire. Negotiations are ongoing in this matter, but it is interesting to see how local politics are getting in the way of young people enjoying such a tremendous new facility (it is closed every time I drive past over a 2-week period). The existing facility is at a local junior school and is in very poor condition. There are no pitches marked out for mini-soccer and sometimes up to 4 teams can be training at the same time (on 2 pitches).

Game observation (16.04.06)
I agree to referee an U9s match played at home. Prior to the game both teams are, predictably, lively and confident, with the opposing managers doing a great job of motivating the players with the emphasis clearly on having fun. As the game begins, a typical mini-soccer ‘chase the ball’ few fouls affair, I become aware of the comments being made by parents. The boys and girls are just out enjoying playing, but as play continues and chances are carved out by both sides, parents and coaches become increasingly passionate and, in some cases, angry. It is also obvious that some players are confused with the mixed messages coming from the sideline – often the coach and 2 or 3 parents are shouting conflicting orders: “get back in defence”, “get up and attack”, “stay there”. On one occasion I see that one boy is almost physically being pulled in different directions as he tried to decide on which of the commands to respond to. All the time he is oblivious to what is actually happening in the game.

It’s difficult to decide why the parents are doing this: do they have no confidence in the decisions of the coach (I doubt this as he is an experienced level 2 coach)? Do they really think their instructions are helping their children play better? Even when they are clearly confused by conflicting orders? More to the point, I wonder why the club aren’t doing anything to stamp it out. One parent in particular, a burly fellow with an imposing personality, was running up and down the sideline shouting any number of inappropriate comments. I considered speaking to the parents after the game, but thought it wasn’t my place to do so (especially with an interview still to do). I did, however, speak to the coach and make my concerns clear. I also spoke to the chairman about the issue before I left.
Appendix D

The first vintage interview guide.
1. **Introduce myself and say a little about the evaluation project and how the participants will be involved:**
   a. FA scheme which involves their club/school
   b. We are involved in seeing how it is working and trying to make it better
   c. They can help us make it better with their ideas

2. **What are we going to do in the session:**
   a. Talk about their experiences of football
   b. What are the good and bad things about football
   c. They can withdraw from the session at any time
   d. All the things they say will be protected and anonymous
   e. They can make up their own pseudonyms...
   f. They define the rules of the session.

3. **Present some different ways in which they could express their ideas (see additional pages):**
   a. Mind Maps
   b. Express yourself statements: things I like/don’t like – agree/disagree
   c. Ranking statements – hierarchy/pyramid of importance
   d. Graffiti boards.

4. **Try those out which they choose and try to encourage discussion based on the issues which arise – agreement/disagreement over common ideas.**

5. **Additional questions to ask if necessary:**
   a. How did you first get involved/interested in football?
   b. Do you play for a club/in school besides here? How does it compare to football here? Better, worse? Why?
   c. What other things do you do in your spare time apart from playing football? How do they compare to football? Which do you prefer?
   d. What are the best/worse things about training/games? Which do you prefer?
   e. What would you do to make football in the school/club better? What would make it more enjoyable?

6. **Conclude session with thanks and let them know that what they have contributed will be used to develop the scheme in the future (perhaps give out tokens of thanks – footballs, bottles?).**
Mind Maps

Equipment:

Instructions:
- With a central topic of 'Football for me' or 'Things I like about football' or 'Things I don't like about football', make a mind map using colours, pictures and words. They can be as elaborate or as simple as you like.

Making a Mind Map:
1. Draw a picture/word in the middle that reflects your main topic.
2. Draw some thick lines coming away from the central topic, each one for the main ideas you have about the subject.
3. Name each idea and, perhaps with the aid of a picture, underline key words/ideas to show their importance.
4. Draw further connected lines spreading out like the branches of a tree that represent details.

5. Question Kit: can be used to extend on specific points by making subtopics of what?; where?; when?; who?; why?

(N.B. can be used to identify properties and dimensions of concepts/categories during open/selective coding).
Express yourself statements: things I like/dislike

Equipment:
- Paper, pens, flipchart, markers.

Instructions:
- Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. Write a heading on each side of the line saying ‘Likes’ and ‘Dislikes’.
- Make a list, in no particular order, of the things in football that fit into each of these categories.
- Try to think of as many as possible – there are no right or wrong answers!
- We will transfer these to the flipchart and discuss why you put certain things where; we can also discuss any disagreements.

FOOTBALL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Dislikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ranking statements/Pyramid of importance

Equipment:
- Paper, pens, cards, flipchart, markers.

Instructions:
- Write down some important elements of your football experience on cards/paper e.g. coaches, friends etc (these could be developed with mind maps?).
- In the group, decide which are the most important by placing them in a hierarchy/pyramid. This will require some negotiation within the group.
- Once decided, talk about the reasons you put each card where: why not further down? What makes ‘that’ more important than ‘the other’?
Graffiti Boards

Equipment:
- A2/3 paper, coloured pens, flipchart, magazines?

Instructions:
- Perhaps in pairs, using paper and pens, write down some words and terms that fit under the headings 'Football rocks' and 'Football sucks'. These can be accompanied by drawings or pictures from magazines.
- Show your poster to the others and explain the reasons why you wrote and drew what you did.
- Discuss similarities and differences in what you produced.
Appendix E

Questionnaire data from Charter Standard Schools (primary and secondary).
The data in this report were derived from 303 questionnaires returned by Charter Standard primary and middle schools from around the country. Headline data are presented here, but a more detailed and specific breakdown of all data from the questionnaires will be available at a later date.

**Headline Findings:**

- The majority of respondents (63.6%) were new recipients of CS i.e. they had received CS in the last 12 months.
- 72.6% of schools reported having links with secondary schools, whilst only 43% of respondents reported having links with CS Clubs.
- The majority of schools indicated that CS had NOT helped their staff become better qualified: FA Teaching Cert (74.1%); Level 1 coach (79.2%); Other e.g. TOPS (85%).
- Only 9% of respondents received help from secondary schools in achieving CS.
- Most respondents (55.3%) felt that CS clubs were either not much, or not at all active in promoting themselves in school, with teacher led activities (25.6%) the most popular way through which pupils were encouraged to join CS clubs.
- 67.6% of respondents were NOT planning to apply for CS Development status. In many cases (26.9%) they knew little about it and required more information.
- Achieving CS appeared to be well received as 68.1% rated it as being useful or very useful.

**Further Findings:**

- Only 8.8% of respondents were CS Development schools.
- 94.1% of responding schools were predominantly white (i.e. over 80% white).
- 76.1% of respondents had been involved in the TOP sport football programme prior to achieving CS with 52.5% of schools sending 2 or more teachers on TOP sport training courses. 56.5% of respondents felt the TOP Sport programme was a significant factor in helping them achieve CS.
- The majority of respondents had regular contact (55.1% - more than once a month) with a SSC, and rated their ability to forge links between schools as either very good or good in 74% of cases.
- Most responding schools (39.7%) rated their school-club link programme as average in terms of providing a clear passage into club football.
- Many schools (52.8%) felt that achieving CS had made an impact on the PE curriculum: 12% cited better facilities and equipment; 9.3% cited enhanced teaching skills; and 13% said that CS had made a positive impact on sport generally.

The CS resource pack received good press, with 67.8% of respondents rating it as either useful or very useful:

"The excellent resources which we’ve received has helped to encourage pupils to participate in and out of school hours football... We particularly like the wall charts depicting time lines etc. We’re sure that linking topics to football catches the pupils’ interest"
Many schools were also kind enough to take some time to note down some extended comments regarding their experiences of the CSS.

Praise for the Charter Standard Scheme:

The resources, kit and equipment many schools had received through the CSS were regularly praised:

"...our present kit is 7 years old and threadbare. Funding is difficult as we are a small school, fortunately we were awarded £300 and our teams now have new kits, so the younger members can now wear the old kit. We still cannot afford balls for every child...however, we will keep up the football provisions and high standard of coaching, behaviour and sportsmanship”

Schools were also appreciative of the FA logo, and the new recognition they had received as a result:

"The CS logo is great for letter heads and we get extra publicity in the local paper”

"The scheme has given recognition to all the work we do on football; it is visible – on letterheads and the certificate displayed in our entrance hall – so sends a message to people coming into contact with school”

Some schools noted that CS had made a good impression during recent OFSTED inspections:

"CS provided evidence to OFSTED of the schools commitment to standards of excellence in delivering soccer both inside and outside of curriculum time”

Whilst others found that CS had helped in their bids to gain further accreditation:

"We are very happy with the scheme as it applies to us. It has helped with our applications for Activemark and accreditation for physical activity within the Healthy Schools Scheme”

"CS has also helped us to achieve Activemark (potentially Activemark gold)”

Links to clubs and the wider community were also a positive outcome for many:

"The standard achieved by the school and local community team has meant very real links have been developed... the school can support the formation of a new youth structure in the village and a football day has been planned in May... the local club has helped with fundraising which has very practical implications”

"Links with Callowbrook Swifts are still good despite recent changes in PE teaching staff. They use our pitches, support our matches, almost half of our school team play for their U10s/11s”.

However, not all comments were positive...

Some negative comments:

Indeed, a number of schools also felt that more could be done to develop better links with clubs and other agencies:

"We feel that a lack of involvement from local clubs has penalised our new application. We should be judged on school-based commitment over which we have an influence and are
successful but our renewed application is in danger, as we have no community club involved at present this year is beyond our influence"

"We have two league clubs in the area, but when we contact them and ask them to provide courses or activities at school, there is always a price to pay. I feel that I am unable to ask children or the school to provide for this provision".

Many had an axe to grind over the allocation of International tickets (and beyond):

"We always receive offers of tickets for ‘internationals’ a few days before the event. This gives us no time to organise anything. We really need at least one month’s notice”.

"I’ve been head of PE for 5 years and have never had anything to read or complete. We are offered free tickets to U21 games but the games are always miles away so they end up being useless. I have no other resources OR extra help through having CS”

Others pointed out the problems of being associated with both the CSS and Healthy Schools Scheme:

"We are a ‘healthy schools award’ school. It is impossible for us to have a ‘Pepsi’ logo on our letter-head. Can anything be done to provide an FA logo without the ‘Pepsi’ part?”

"...my head teacher won’t let us use the CS logo as it has Pepsi on it and we’re in the Healthy Schools Initiative. It seems it doesn’t fit the image!"

Also, many schools thought the CSS was of little use beyond recognising the work they already do:

"We have had success in many sports recently and were praised in an OFSTED inspection for our broad and balanced curriculum. It is all due to the enthusiasm of the teachers in charge of each sport – we find no added kudos brought to the school other than we do enough to achieve CS"

"The impetus is coming from within the school... Teachers are turning up for a few hours after school simply to access a few footballs in a plastic bag. I doubt that the impact in busy schools is going to produce the next Wayne Rooney”

And, of course, most schools had requests of the FA...

Some common requests:

As primary schools with limited specialist staff, unsurprising were requests for specialist or professional coaches:

"Also, could the FA Charter help subsidise the cost of providing coaches to after school clubs or provide a fund for those children whose family can’t afford it?"

"Most primary schools would benefit from the CSS by being given a professional footballer from a local club, one session a week, to coach the children. This would promote local links, give footballers something to do outside of go4f, snooker nightclubs etc”

"In 3 ½ years as head, this is the first correspondence I have received. How are we being helped? Other sports fund coaches to come into school – we have had cricket x 2, tennis x 3, athletics, dance, tag rugby. Not even an offer from football”
Another popular request, and perhaps a sensible one, was for more information on CS clubs to be circulated:

"I would like to see a time limit whereby all junior clubs should have C. S status and they should do at least one session per year, working with children in school time. It would be useful to know which clubs have achieved C. S status and are working towards it within the local area."

"Lists of CS and non-CS clubs in the area would help – the internet version is not always working."

This tends to fit with a number of requests for more information on the CS scheme in general – especially where key staff had left the school since achieving CS status:

"Current staff, including PE coordinators, have very little knowledge of the CSS award. The two people who were responsible for the application have since left the school."

Perhaps regular updates detailing, in basic terms, what the CSS involves, how to achieve Development status (and the advantages of this), and where new staff might find support would be of use to many primary schools. Furthermore, some staff have requested information on the CSS that younger children might be better able to understand:

"... whilst we have notified parents in newsletters and told our children (about the CSS), we wonder if something more child-friendly could be produced to explain the award and advertise around the school?"

After reviewing over 350 comments made within the questionnaires, it should be noted that, on balance, most comments endorsed the positive aspects of the CSS, providing small success stories and highlighting good practice in primary schools across the country:

"It gives the children/teachers/school a lift, creates pride and subconsciously creates a winning team. The children perform above expectations. Moreover, it celebrates the schools who have used football as a tool to enhance children's skills, fitness and social well-being."

"In a socially deprived community, I have found that the CS and football has made a huge difference. The children feel valued because coaches from SWFC visit every week. When I speak to children who don't achieve academically, I find they attend school 'just for football'. That's fine by me because at least football motivates them to attend school. They learn team work, new skills, sharing and how to be a good winner (and loser!)".

"Football has firmly been established as the No.1 sport in our school. We run competitive teams for both boys and girls in all year groups. In addition we promote the development of skills and healthy lifestyles by taking part in curriculum and extra-curricular football sessions. We have developed our own resources to deliver quality football, using equipment/resources the children have pride in."

"As a PE instructor my aim of creating opportunities filled with fun, enjoyment and an appreciation of football has certainly been met since becoming a charter standard school. The effort to achieve this status has been all the more worthwhile when seeing each pupil develop their confidence grow with each lesson gives a great deal of reward on its own."

"...the acknowledgement within the community and with parents of our involvement have helped to sustain and increase the love of football within the school. Whilst organised leagues etc. have been in the decline in the past 15 years, and there was a time a few years ago when it was difficult to play regular matches, football does seem to be 'on the up' again and I am certain that the FA charter scheme has helped enormously."
“It’s a great scheme and the resources we have received are excellent. I particularly like the ‘inclusive’ nature of the scheme i.e. promoting football for all and not just concentrating on the elite.”

“The scheme has helped many schools move forward with football – especially girls. It has also given confidence to many female teachers in the primary sector (the majority) in the teaching or football.”

“We are pleased to be a CS school. We promote soccer as a healthy activity for all our junior pupils both in the playground, as part of the curriculum and as an important after-school club. We have strong links to the community and offer our facilities weekly to an FA coach to promote his own activities. We have several teams (including girls) and have won county level competitions recently.”
Appendix F

A list of 77 free nodes and accompanying descriptions from N*Vivo.
1 Applying Skills
Description:
YP can see where skills they have learned in training apply during a game. This lends practices some credence and they enjoys being able to see the tangible benefits of their training efforts.

2 Approachable, respectable coach
Description:
The coach (or club committee) makes the football environment a trusting one where players feel comfortable and confident. But what are the characteristics of this: how does it come about?

3 Becoming a coach
Description:
As a future career aspiration. Possibly linked to having a good coach role-model or family member; or even being in an environment where coaching appears a natural progression from playing?

4 Being victimised
Description:
Being singled out for unkind treatment. Feeling of victimisation applied by other players and possibly coach/teacher.

5 'Big stage' incentive
Description:
Playing in a professional environment provides incentive to play or compete in competitions. The kudos and feeling of importance retrieved has a positive effect on self esteem and perhaps on future aspirations (to find out through interview).

6 'Can't wear it in a ponytail'
Description:
Some idea of gender identity. There is some notion of conforming to a girlie ideal appearance - and way of acting - when with non-football friends. Thus, is the football identity seen as the masculine opposite? Or just different?

7 Clear football future
Description:
YP can see a clear future in football laid out before them. The steps into adult football and beyond are familiar and easy to access.

8 Clubman
Description:
YP sometimes stay faithful to one club. They are comfortable and happy in their environment. Why?
9 Coach makes it fun
Description:
The coaches ability to facilitate fun sessions - as opposed to static, dull, performance based sessions - plays a major role in enjoyment and retention of players. Linked, perhaps, to 'it's the taking part' and 'approachable, respectable coach'. Maybe also 'enjoy variety in training'?

10 'Coach shouts at us'
Description:
YP feel sad/down when the coach shouts at them or becomes angry. Need to explore this further: what other feelings does it create?

11 Competitive opportunities
Description:
Football provides opportunities to compete against other YP on various levels (local, regional). Competition is seen, very much, as a good thing - a fundamental part of sport. This, however, flies in the face of received wisdom about making youth sport non-competitive. Worth investigating this? Also, is this a turn-off to some (e.g. non-footballers)?

12 Concept of fairness, morality
Description:
(Possibly re-code into higher order category) A sophisticated understanding of what is fair and moral in football. A dislike of all things unfair and unequal according to their concept. I need to develop this through further questioning - innovate!

13 Constrained by coach
Description:
Coach figure is counterproductive in terms of providing a quality football experience (if they have one). They restrict opportunities and facilitate dull sessions. Linked to 'marginatised' and 'negative role model'.

14 'Culture barriers'
Description:
The idea that cultural or traditional (perhaps religious) values in the family (or wider society) run counter to allowing young people from ethnic minorities access to football. Here, 'bend it like beckham' was a strong point of reference in terms of the situation Asian girls find themselves in.

15 Dislike physical
Description:
Physical training (pure) is seen as a waste of valuable time which could be spent more usefully working with balls on skills etc.

16 Dislike selfishness
Description:
Selfish play or behaviour restricts opportunities for others. I think there is considerable overlap with concepts of FAIRNESS, ENJOY FREEDOM, TEAMWORK and SPORTSMANSHIP.
17 Dislike swearing
Description:
YP recognise swearing as poor behaviour. Usually exhibited by adults, not good behaviour to copy. Again, ties with FAIRNESS, SPECTATOR ABUSE.

18 Dislike, avoid, challenges
Description:
The propensity to avoid challenging situations in football - linked, perhaps, to fear of failure (need achievement theory?) But what are the psychological characteristics of these players?

19 Early negative experience
Description:
YP have negative early experiences. However, these are not manifest in any detectable, routine result - some players are determined to bounce back, others just drop out. I think this may be linked to psychological characteristics of the individual (in this sense, linked to SEEK CHALLENGES, OVERCOMING SETBACKS).

20 Early positive experience
Description:
Could be a single moment e.g. scoring, or a broader experience e.g. a few training sessions, or a game. Can be a big influence on future participation. Linked to SCORING, PRAISE IMPROVES CONFIDENCE.

21 Enjoy learning skills
Description:
Drills and skills games are preferred to games. They enjoy learning new techniques and know the value of this. The mode of learning varies: from training to TV.

22 Enjoy, seek, challenges
Description:
Seeking challenges and setting challenging goals. Confident individuals look to stretch themselves and place themselves in challenging situations. Again, look at achievement motivation theory. (FEAR OF FAILURE).

23 Escaping the house
Description:
Football is seen as a way to escape the house, or more accurately, home life, for various reasons. The important point is that football is a positive distraction from the negative environment of the house.

24 Exemplary coaching
Description:
Examples of coach behaviour the YP found benefitted them.

25 Fear of failure
Description:
Those with less ability or skill, typically younger children and girls, are scared of making mistakes and thus avoid challenges. But what is it about the environment that causes them to be scared?
26 Feedback for learning
Description:
Feedback from significant others leads to more efficient, faster learning e.g. explanation for being substituted. A lack of feedback (or negative - or none at all) can lead to feelings of dejection and perhaps drop out. Linked to PRAISE - CONFIDENCE, SCORING GARNERS ADULATION.

27 Fitness through football
Description:
Football serves a dual purpose of being both fun and healthy. Worth exploring where these ideas come from: is it from the media/political push to have active children?

28 Football first
Description:
Football plays a central role in life. It is the hub of their leisure time and social world and, in this sense, they act as if addicted to it.

29 Football friendships
Description:
YP regard friendships inside and outside football as entirely separate. They believe they have to change their persona in order to fit with the different groups - but this isn't necessarily seen as constraining.

30 Forced to decide on football
Description:
YP are 'forced' - by other or by circumstances - to make a decision on whether continue or not. They feel a decision has to be made (can't do both) and under pressure to make it. Linked to STRETCHED LEISURE TIME, FOOTBALL FIRST.

31 Formal introduction
Description:
Introduced to football through formal lines of engagement e.g. after-school clubs, FITC, active sports. But how are their experiences different to those with more serendipitous introductions?

32 Gender equity
Description:
Girls in particular are keen on the idea that female football should enjoy the same recognition and privileges as male football does. There is a clear understanding of what is equitable and what isn't. It would be interesting to see if boys feel the same (I doubt they would).

33 Gender rivalry
Description:
Conflict of interest between male and female players (particularly at younger age-groups where mixed football is common). Girls often relate experiences where boys dominate possession. Manifest in 'gender wars' where girls and boys see themselves as populating two sides in a battle for possession (of the game).
Gender separation
Description:
Football should be a separate endeavour for boys and girls. Both parties feel, in most instances, that this would provide more constructive, fairer sessions. Link to 'fairness and morality'. However, not all feel this way. But what is it that makes some feel one way and others another? Experiences?

'Getting stuck in'
Description:
Football serves as a medium for cathartic release. YP enjoy the physical contact involved in football - particularly girls. Possibly relate to GENDER SEPARATION, GENDER RIVALRY.

Inadequate facilities-equipment
Description:
Inadequate facilities constrain or impede the enjoyment of football. However, this is not just a case of 'the grass being greener', as most cannot present examples of what they would like - just what they don't. Is this linked to geographical factors?

Injury problems - fear
Description:
Experience of injury and how it can impede future performance. However, whilst some are nervous when playing after injury, many are just happy to be playing again - there is no apprehension. Link to OVERCOMING SETBACKS.

Integration or separation
Description:
A complex idea regarding racial integration in or through football. There seems to be some conflict as to what young Asian people want: equal but separate (i.e. not racist) football; or integrated (but possibly still racist) football? Related to MARGINALISED, CULTURE BARRIERS, and perhaps even NO ROLE MODELS.

It's the taking part
Description:
The result and performance isn't important. The fun of playing is - they play for intrinsic enjoyment. Link to broadly, COACHING, FRIENDSHIP, TEAMWORK, SPORTSMANSHIP etc.

Journeyman
Description:
Players move from club to club. They don't feel comfortable in one place and would rather sample other environments. Possibly linked also to success i.e. players getting scouted to go elsewhere.

Just matches, no good
Description:
YP feel that playing matches is of little benefit in terms of personal skill development. They draw little enjoyment or improvement from simply playing.
42 Lesbian stigma
Description:
YP perceive there to be a lesbian stigma still attached to female football. Particularly boys - maybe linked in this sense to MALE DOMINATION.

43 Let down by team mates
Description:
YP feel cheated when team mates fail to turn up to training. They expect the same level of commitment from others as they give themselves. Maybe link to ‘concept of fairness’?

44 Like freedom, dislike constraints
Description:
Enjoyment of being allowed to 'just play' without interference from others: teachers, parents? YP do not like to be constrained or restricted about when and where they can play.

45 'Like sportmanship'
Description:
YP have a strong sense of what sportmanship is. Not only do they enjoy being on the receiving end of what they perceive to be good sportmanship, but they also like to be considered good sportsmen themselves. Try to define sportmanship in their terms - from examples?

46 'Losing sucks'
Description:
With competitive opportunities comes the possibility of losing. YP seem not to like this (naturally), which, although obvious, has implications: younger groups might be saved from constant defeat by non-competitive practice, or by evenly matched leagues. Link to COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES (also competitive balance and competitive intensity - economics).

47 Making, keeping friends
Description:
The common interest of football is a social glue which helps create and bind friendships. Perhaps a very significant reason why YP play football (or sport more widely).

48 Male superiority, domination
Description:
A belief that boys/men dominate the game, manifest in a bullying, aggressive attitude toward girls. Both boys and girls perceive this - but framed in different terms.

49 Marginalised
Description:
Feeling left out (or pushed out) of a team or group. But by who, and how? This exclusion can occur in different ways. Potentially leading to premature drop-out due to disillusionment.
50  Need rules and discipline  
Description:  
Whilst most YP dislike referees, they agree that rules and discipline are needed to keep the game in order. Without these, they understand that the game would fall into disarray. In this sense, they feel let down by poor refereeing decisions.

51  Negative role models  
Description:  
Understanding that pro players and coaches (i.e. people who should be role models) can behave badly. They know what constitutes unethical behavior and that it is wrong to act this way on a football pitch (or off it).

52  No ~female~ role models  
Description:  
Young people feel that they do not have role models, perhaps at the professional, high profile level. They therefore lack a model to identify with (particularly girls and Asians - marginalised groups) that may motivate them to participate. In the case of Asian girls, they may also present an acceptable example showing that it is okay to play football. 'Bend it like Beckham' is clearly a point of reference here.

53  Not enough football  
Description:  
A feeling that there should be more football provision: longer, more frequent games, competitions and leagues. Also, more structured, formal provision from an earlier age - particularly for girls. link to GENDER EQUITY.

54  'Only one team to play for'  
Description:  
YP have restricted opportunities to play in clubs to to lack of awareness. This may be a marketing problem, or a genuine lack of provision in the local area.

55  Opportunity to progress  
Description:  
The prospect of being able to progress to a higher level of performance is exciting and appealing. In what environments does this occur? Formerly, "Performance pathways."

56  Overcoming setbacks  
Description:  
Some YP are determined to continue playing in the face of adversity (dropped, injured etc.) What type of people are they? Linked to 'seeking challenges'?

57  Parental~family influence  
Description:  
Family play a central role in their football involvement. This is a factor both in starting and continuing to play. YP need considerable support from their families if they are to be involved in football long term? However, this may also be a constraining factor, as in the example of Asian families preventing girls from playing.
58 Patriotism - identity
Description:
Football is seen as a medium through which young people can express their patriotic tendencies and national identity. This may also be the case on a more regional level i.e. YP can express their identity as, say, a Yorkshireman, through supporting a team.

59 Peer influence
Description:
Friends play a major role in starting, continuing (and sometimes dropping out of) football. They play (or stop) because they are part of a larger group that governs the decisions they make.

60 Pleasure from teamwork
Description:
Great pleasure is gleaned from involvement in a team situation. Making consecutive passes, scoring 'team goals' involving all players, and making personal sacrifices for the greater good of the team. Linked to 'fairness' and 'sportsmanship'. Being part of something.

61 Positive after injury
Description:
The perceived negative psychological impact of injury is not present. Instead, YP are determined to enjoy the game again as before.

62 Praise improves confidence
Description:
Positive feedback from significant others (coach, peers, supporters) can provide a great boost to YPs' confidence. Linked (by memo) to SCORING, FEEDBACK.

63 Pride, representation
Description:
YP take pride from being part of a team or representing their school. They enjoy the recognition and respect they receive.

64 Racial, cultural equity
Description:
In a similar way that girls want equal opportunities to play football, those in minority groups also want equal opportunities. This is strongly linked to CULTURAL BARRIERS and MARGINALISED.

65 Scoring garners adulation
Description:
The elation from scoring a goal, coupled with 'getting cheered' is a big motivation and also has a positive impact on confidence. It's a sort of positive feedback in a way I suppose? Maybe link to 'feedback for learning' and 'praise improves confidence'?

66 Self expression
Description:
Football is seen as a medium in which YP can express themselves through their skills and abilities. The pitch is a stage upon which they feel confident and comfortable - they enjoy performing. Perhaps this is analogous to the concept of 'flow' in psychology? Worth finding out what leads to this state of mind?

67 Social learning skills
Description:
Skills can be learned by watching significant others: pro players on TV (Bandura - SLT).

68 Space to play
Description:
YP are assisted by the availability of open spaces in which to play football.

69 Spectator abuse
Description:
Unruly behaviour of spectators (usually parents) at games detracts from their enjoyment. Possibly link to negative role-models?

70 Stretched leisure time
Description:
This needs to be re-coded by age (and sex). I think that, after moving to high school (10-11), YP begin to establish a number of interests outside football (perhaps less so for boys). However, these pull factors (away from football) will change with age e.g. from netball to socialising. But at what point do they cause a rift, and why?

71 Structure, organisation, tactics
Description:
YP enjoy football more when both practice and games are clearly structured and organised. This provides a framework for their play. 'Anything goes' is not enjoyable. This phenomenon is carefully balanced with FREEDOM but also linked to EXPRESS YOURSELF and RULES AND DISCIPLINE.

72 Teacher influence
Description:
School/teacher play a central role in helping YP into football. Not necessarily organised route though.

73 Training with balls
Description:
YP like to train using balls as often as possible. Any work without the ball is treated as suspect - they fail to see how practice benefits them if they are working without the ball.

74 'Under pressure'
Description:
Performance anxiety applied by others: teachers, coaches, team mates, competitors, parents (social facilitation?) - or from within (cognitive dissonance?) Has different dimensions: 'pressure from outside' and 'pressure from within'.

75 Unsure football future
Description:
YP are not sure of their future in football - there is no path clearly laid out for them. They may, or often do, want to continue playing, but do not know what steps they need to take to achieve this.

76 Variety in training
Description:
YP enjoy doing interesting, diverse activities in training. This adds to the 'fun factor' and keeps them coming. Conversely, a dull, static session can curb the joy of football.

77 'Winning trophies'
Description:
Extrinsic rewards are motivators for young people to play football. I have a hunch that this will be more important for older players.
Appendix G

Full-page version of the mind map displaying first vintage conceptualisation.
Appendix H

Second vintage interview guide and vignettes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Questions/activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Coaching/teaching                          | *Examples*  
Can you tell me about your earliest experience of being coached?  
When do you get most from training?  
What type of things do you most enjoy?  
Can you tell me a bit about your best and worst coaching experiences? |
| Gender rivalry (male domination)           | *To begin?*  
What do girls think about boys' football (and vice-versa)?  
(BOYS) "Girls can't play football." Agree/Disagree? Why?  
(GIRLS) "Girls get the same opportunities to play as boys do" Agree/Disagree? Why? |
| Under pressure – Express yourself          | If this comes up, ask about times when they have felt like this before. Maybe also use *vignette 1* (below) and probe with where, who type questions? |
| Marginalised – Feedback for learning       | Investigate within 'worst experiences of football' discussion. Again, maybe develop with *vignette 2*? |
| Scoring – Praise – Feedback                | What is it exactly you like about scoring?  
What type of goals (teamwork)?  
What is the feeling afterwards? What is the reaction from others?  
How does this effect future performance? |
| Stretched leisure time                     | What other things are important for you at the moment? *Vignette 3*?  
How do these things compete for time with football?  
Was this always the case?  
What other things use to compete?  
Why did they lose out to football? |
| Winning trophies – Competitive opportunities & Age | *"It's not the winning, it's the taking part" (A/D?) Discuss (with reference to how this might change with age).* |
| Football and Fitness                       | *Only pursue if this comes up in interview i.e. as a reason why they play football.  
Why is fitness important?  
Where do you think this idea comes from i.e. why do you hold this opinion? |
| Cultural diversity                         | *"Football is a racist sport" (A/D?) *DISCUSS* |
| Coaching environment                       | *Vignette 4: 2 session descriptions, which is best? Why do you think that?  
What makes a good coach? What makes a bad coach? |
| 'Losing sucks' – Feedback – Role models    | Describe how you feel when you lose (example)...  
What do you do after a game? Do you talk to anyone afterwards? How do you think this makes you play in future? |
Vignette 1: ‘Under pressure’ and ‘Self expression’.

“Mike loves to play football. He plays every day at school and every night at the park or at the club. The most fun he has playing football is when he’s playing with his friends. He takes people on, makes great passes to team mates, creates and scores great goals and generally is at the centre of everything good they do. However, when he plays in defence for his club, his coach doesn’t let him express himself. His coach is always shouting to "play it simple" and "stay in position". Mike feels like he has to stay in defence and can’t play like he does with his friends. He’s scared of making a mistake and giving a goal away.”

Vignette 2: Feedback - marginalised

“Stevie is fourteen years old and has played for Blaydon Rangers for 5 years now. He has loads of friends in the team and together they’ve enjoyed success, winning both the league and cup, in the past few years. However, at the end of last season, a new manager took over the team and began to make some changes. He has left Stevie out of the team for almost the entire season – he comes on as sub sometimes at the end of a game if the team are winning easily. Stevie’s manager has never told him why he is leaving him out and tries to ignore him. He even avoids making eye-contact with Stevie when he’s sitting on the bench.”

Vignette 3: ‘Stretched leisure time’.

“Claire is 13 and plays football at school. She has played for the team for 2 years now but also plays netball and tennis. Recently Claire got into the county netball squad and has to practice three time a week 15 miles from where she lives. She really enjoys playing football because it’s different to her other sports and she likes the physical nature of the game. But she also likes to go out with her friends in town at the weekend and on evenings when she isn’t training. Both her parents and her netball coach have told her that she might have to stop playing football because it is taking up too much time and her school work is beginning to suffer.”

Vignette 4: Coaching/Environment (8-12 years)

Session A:
“We started with a warm-up, running and stretching and stuff. Coach always tells us to warm-up properly or we’ll get injured. Then we did some passing in a line where we concentrated on proper technique. Coach told us we were rubbish and we kept on trying until we got it right. After about 20 minutes, we went into a game over half the pitch and played until the end. We did go down to 3-touch at one point but didn’t play very well and coach shouted at us. We’ve got a game on Sunday so coach talked at the end for a bit about tactics and stuff. I don’t think any of us really understood what he was going on about.”

Session B:
“Before the session started, coach told us we were going to work on defending. He said that learning about defending might help us make less mistakes, after we let 3 goals in on Sunday. We do this warm-up game where we dribble and pass to each other, and then we start this little game where we have to stick with a man – like we’re marking them. After this we did another game where we get points for defending, winning the ball back and stuff. In the last 20 minutes, we play another small game where we try to put the defending skills into practice. Our coach is always telling us how good we are and says “well done” if we do a good tackle or something. At the end of training, coach asks us questions about what we learned and talks about the game on Sunday and how we’re going to defend.”
Appendix I

Third vintage interview guide (U14s and U18s).
Semi Structured Interview to be used with ages 14 and over.

1. Where do you play football at the moment? (club, school, location)

2. How did you first get started playing football?
   a. And how has that led you to where you are now (life history)?

3. What **motivates** you to play football at the moment? **What is it you enjoy most about this club?** Why football rather than other sports (e.g. netball)?

4. **How** do you think football (at your club or school) could be improved?

5. How much of your time does football occupy at the moment?
   a. What other things compete for your time?
   b. **EXERCISE** – List all the things that occupy your time at the moment, then place them in hierarchical order with the most important first.

6. Tell me about the very **best time** you have had so far in your football career (could be a specific moment or a whole season).

7. Conversely, tell me about the very **worst time** you have had thus far in your football career.

8. Where do you see yourself playing football in the **next couple of years**?

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![Diagram](image-url)
Interview: U18s

1. **What are the main reasons why you currently play football and how have these changed since you first began playing?**

2. *Can you tell me about your best and worst experiences of football?*

3. **Can you give me examples of times when you think you learned most about playing football. What did your coach do to help? (be specific)**

4. **What makes a good coach? What makes a bad coach?**

5. *There appears to be a tension between freedom to express yourself, and playing with structure and organisation. How have your coaches managed this tension (if at all) in the past?*

6. **“It’s no the winning, it’s the taking part” – discuss.**

7. What are your thoughts on female football?

8. *What type of feedback do you receive from significant others, and how does it impact on your motivation and confidence?*

9. **What other things compete with football for your leisure time?**

10. *Who of your friends/former team-mates gave up playing and why?*

11. **In what ways do you think the club could improve i.e. provide you and others with a better experience of football?**

12. **What do you see yourself doing in the future where football is concerned?**

13. Any other comments? The FA; Leagues; pro/amateur game relationship?

* Denotes question priority
Appendix J

The "How to be a Super Soccer Parent" flyer.
How to be a ‘Super Soccer Parent’:  
Your Behaviour and it’s Impact on Your Child

Playing football can help your child develop a whole range of positive skills: from teamwork and sportsmanship to coordination and fitness. The information in this leaflet is derived from interviews with young football players. They told us how important their parents were to them and how parental behaviour makes them feel. If you want your child and your team to develop through football, please try to follow these instructions. A small change can make a BIG difference!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Give lots of praise and positive feedback</td>
<td>• Helps to build self confidence and task specific confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support the decisions of the coach and referee</td>
<td>• Encourages a necessary respect for authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sympathise with your child when they lose</td>
<td>• Reduce anxiety related to poor performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell them what they did well, even after they’ve made a mistake</td>
<td>• Helps child focus on positive aspects of performance and expressing themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stand a few metres back from the playing area</td>
<td>• A small pitch surrounded by adults is a scary place to be!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’T</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Shout instructions</td>
<td>• Mixed messages are confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Criticise your child, or other people’s children</td>
<td>• It can destroy brittle confidence of young football players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Question the referee’s decisions (even bad ones)</td>
<td>• Children tend to copy this behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on what your child did wrong</td>
<td>• Child will dwell on mistakes and lose confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Swear at or abuse coaches, officials or players</td>
<td>• Children will copy and your league will lose referees!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stand on the sideline or encroach on the pitch</td>
<td>• Give officials room to work and children space to play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>