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A Study Investigating the Landscape of Sport, Health and Fitness and its Impact on Society

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis offers an insight into the societal impact of the landscape of sport, health and fitness with an especial emphasis on running. It both highlights and assesses the nature of this impact and in doing so evaluates how the health and welfare discourse of contemporary western society affects, and is affected by, the landscape of sport, health and fitness.

The concept of 'identity' and its importance for individuals and groups is highlighted in order to show how the shaping of identity is influenced for many by their relationship with sports, health and fitness. Particular emphasis is given to race and gender and through documentary and discourse analysis, in order to highlight ways in which the sport, health and fitness milieu can be both a vehicle for individual and societal progress and can also be used to reinforce existing power relations.

A series of short interviews with runners was used as a springboard into further research which included analysis of Olympic legacy documents and glossy health and fitness magazines to ascertain the nature of health messages therein. In addition, the representation of women in the sport, health and fitness milieu via mobile phone sports news applications (apps) was analysed which found an imbalance in reporting that rendered women, if not invisible, certainly second to men in terms of perceived importance.

This thesis draws from a range of theorists covering subjects that have been discussed throughout the development of classical and contemporary social theory. My position as a runner and cyclist is referred to within this thesis along with elements of my identity that influence my research and subsequent findings. Although this thesis is not presented as ethnographic research there are certainly elements of an ethnographic approach included.

The civilizing process, gender transgression, nudge theory, self-regulation and self-help are areas of interest highlighted in this thesis to show how this seemingly disparate group of phenomena can be linked to the main area of research. In so doing the thesis considers a wide field but brings together themes that have not been previously considered in unison.

The landscape of sport, health and fitness matters because it does have an impact on society and it can be a major contributor to both individual and societal change or the maintenance of the status quo. This thesis, by considering the nature of such an impact by linking sport, health, fitness, identity and discourse, adds to our knowledge by creating a tour of the landscape not previously presented.

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Introduction

Sport, Health and Fitness and its Impact on Society: A Personal Reflection

As a teenager I joined the burgeoning distance running craze that appeared to be gripping the country in the early 1980s with many people taking to the streets to train for what proved to be popular marathon events. I took part in two major marathon events in the North-West of England and they included several thousand runners tackling the courses in Manchester and Bolton. I was relatively fit as I worked in a manual job, played in a local basketball league, and regularly played football. This meant that I did not have to train with a great deal of commitment and indeed I did not actually enjoy the long training sessions that included many miles of running in preparation for the races.

As time progressed the running all but stopped and my fitness levels waned. A defining moment for me came after carrying my three year-old daughter up the stairs; I was puffing and wheezing for breath. As a non-smoker I was concerned by this, especially as I still regularly played football, and concluded something had to be done in order to improve my fitness and health. Although I considered myself a generally healthy person, I felt my fitness levels had an impact on my health outlook. Soon after this, I was presented with the challenge of once again running the Manchester Marathon in the millennium year. I took up this challenge and threw myself into the training.

This time around, something was different. I was a “responsible” adult with pressures of life that were different to those of the teenager that almost twenty years previously had taken part in marathons. Rather than being a chore, my training runs became something to enjoy. They gave me time away from the

daily pressures of a father / husband / social worker and in doing so offered me mental as well as physical benefits.

Novelist Haruki Murakami states “Running is a sort of vague theme to begin with” (2009 :vii) however, in a conversation with my PhD supervisor in which I was outlining the various subjects that I was researching he made the comment that “there is more to running than meets the eye”.

My research was touching on issues of personal and collective identity, battling oppression and the delivery of welfare in society. Therefore when we see someone “pounding the streets” it represents more than just slipping on a pair of training shoes and going for a run. Rather than being a vague theme, it transpired that the subject of running and sport in general offers much by way of concrete subject matter to discuss. Sport can effect change in individuals and it can effect change in society. Therefore, as a subject matter, sport offers fertile ground from which we can derive sociological, psychological and philosophical research.

Sport is far more than simply an activity concerning individuals and teams competing against each other. Sport and exercise and their potentially health giving outcomes are very much locked into society, and are subject to its norms, values, cultures, structures and inequalities (Barry & Yuill, 2016:244).

I began to explore the impact of running on society and found that this led to other areas within the sporting landscape therefore I widened my interest by not confining myself solely to running. Inevitably (in retrospect) my research touched on issues of health and fitness and my research took another turn in that I

became interested in the whole sport, health and fitness milieu and how this impacted on individuals and consequently society. This is the basis of my research; sport, health and fitness matter and they have a profound effect on society in myriad ways.

Rationale

When discussing further study with my new manager once I secured a job as a senior lecturer, she advised me to choose something that was of interest to me as this is key to successful completion. This transpired to be good advice and my status as a runner and cyclist (this is further explored in the Identity chapter) and my interest in sport and fitness meant this was a good avenue to pursue as I would surely find plenty to stimulate me throughout the process.

This research is more than merely an avenue of interest for me however; it is a timely piece of work in that it covers a contemporary issue that is at the forefront of society today. The health of the nation is something that is important to successive governmental administrations in times of perceived austerity in as much that spending on health and welfare is a hotly contested issue.

Encouragement to exercise regularly and eat healthily is very much part of the rhetoric of successive UK administrations and the obvious benefits of a healthier population are coupled with the fiscal benefits derived from a decreased need to spend money on healthcare and welfare. My interest in this issue has led me to further investigate the additional impacts the drive towards health and fitness has had on individuals and society.

What did I do? What are my aims?

The sports world is a lived world, like those of literature and the theatre, that is highly charged with human meaning. As a dramatic and symbolic world the sports world has its own plots, scenes, characters and settings (Lipsky, 1981:9)

My research evolved over time as my interests broadened, and reflecting Lipsky's assertion above, I uncovered the plots, scenes, characters and settings that would offer a rich exploration of the sporting landscape and why this actually matters. I found issues such as the civilizing process, identity, language, self-regulation and gender all added to the landscape of my area of interest. I used a mixed methods approach utilising short interviews as a springboard into further research, secondary literature analysis, documentary analysis and discourse analysis. Reflecting the evolving nature of information dissemination I also chose to analyse online text and imagery. Adopting a social constructionist epistemology, I explored the issues with reference to theorists such as Foucault, Butler, Elias and Bourdieu amongst others.

As my research evolved, so did my overall question and aims; these finally settled as follows:

My overall question common to my aims was. How does the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society today? In seeking to answer the question I placed an especial emphasis on running

The aims identified in order to respond to this question are:

- To critically review the landscape of the sport, health and fitness milieu as it impacts on individuals and society;
- To understand the nature of this impact and how it can shape the health and welfare discourse of contemporary western society;
- To examine how identities are influenced by language and discourse from a range of sport, health and fitness media.

What follows is a thesis covering a variety of issues but one that is characterised by a common question. How does the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society? Conscious of the evolving nature of my research, I have been keen to maintain some element of especial focus where appropriate. To this end, I have kept an interest in the original premise of the impact of running on society and used examples including the London Marathon, how the civilizing process has changed the nature of running and the changing face of women's distance running to illustrate issues such as identity and discourse. This is relevant to the research because I use my own experiences as a runner as well as those as a cyclist throughout my study to inform my standpoint; this is certainly evident in several places, if not throughout the production of this thesis. This is not a piece of ethnographic research but it certainly includes much of *me* in its production.

I agree with Barry and Yuill's (2016) quote above as well as Lipsky's (1981) in that sport and health are very much locked into society therefore I feel it is important to understand how this is and why we should be concerned by this. In doing this I hope to offer a comprehensive critical evaluation of sport, health and fitness and place its importance at the forefront of my research.

This introduction has offered a starting point for my tour of the impact of sport, health and fitness and in doing so, has pointed to some of the ideas to be explored further as the thesis progresses. What follows is a summary of each chapter and my rationale for choosing to follow each line of inquiry.

Structure of Thesis

Chapter one – The Loneliness of the Philanthropic Runner

In keeping with the especial emphasis of this study, chapter one focuses mainly on the interface between running and charity. Short preliminary interviews that served as a springboard into further inquiry are discussed. The concept of welfare and the interface between this and charity are explored. The idea of “responsible” citizens being those who look after their own health and well-being is introduced and this is an issue that reappears several times in this thesis.

The London Marathon features in this chapter because any discussion of running and charity must feature the largest of all charity races. This chapter discusses sponsorship, which is a main feature of mass participation running. Philanthropy and running are shown to be increasingly interlinked and this phenomenon was a starting point for my study, which evolved into something much more wide-ranging than I initially anticipated.

Chapter two – Methodology

The methodology chapter will outline how this thesis developed and what I actually did. Theoretical standpoints are explored as is my position as a researcher. Ethical considerations such as bias are acknowledged. My position as a mainly qualitative researcher is stated but I acknowledge the significance of

quantitative lines of enquiry and highlight the instances in which I used a combination of the two.

Reflexivity in research is considered as this is an issue linked with my development as a researcher and it helped me to understand and synthesise certain ideas. For me, the methodology is important to consider as I would like the reader to understand my thoughts and not only how the thesis developed but also my growth as a researcher and the development of my ideas and lines of enquiry. The methodology offers a rationale and justification for my lines of enquiry. I include the discussion of theoretical standpoints in the methodology chapter because for me, there is a clear link between these and the development of my knowledge.

Chapter Three – Sport and the Civilizing Process

This chapter looks at the civilizing process and how this has seen the nature of physical activity change. The power of social capital gained through sporting endeavour is highlighted via examples of sports stars being able to effect changes in societal attitudes and with this make the transition from being oppressed and censured to being lauded and able to take a more powerful position in society. This is elucidated by a discussion of the changing fortunes of sports stars such as Tommie Smith, John Carlos, Muhammad Ali and Harold Abrahams. In keeping with my aims, this chapter offers insight into the way sport can impact on society and how sports stars have been able to utilise their position in a quest for recognition.

An obligation to health is discussed in this chapter and this continues the theme of the responsible citizen. The civilizing process is linked to many developments

in society and the interface between this and the landscape of sport health and fitness is highlighted.

Chapter Four – Identity

At the outset of chapter four I assert that identity is a concept that is explored by many researchers and in many PhD theses. This is the case because identity matters. It is a fluid phenomenon and enables or disables us from functioning in particular milieus. I highlight the anomaly in today's western society whereby an increasing political landscape of individualism is countered by the fact that people still want to be members of groups.

How we manage our identities including, in some cases, a multiplicity of identities is explored as is community and belonging. Language contributes to the forming of identity and for this reason there is an exploration of the impact of language. This chapter includes much of "me" and is a site in which I use elements of ethnography because I feel an analysis of my own identity offers opportunity to explore concepts such as belonging and categorization / essentialism.

Chapter Five – Sport, Fitness and Health in Print

This primary research chapter uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to look at five governmental documents concerning the London 2012 Olympic legacy and six health and fitness glossy magazines. The intention here is to expand on the concept of language and analyse the impact of the language used in these media together with a consideration of the pictorial imagery in the magazines.

Nudge theory is considered and this continues the theme of the societal drive toward the responsible citizen. Because this chapter looks at text and imagery, the influence of discourse is considered and this includes the increasing drive toward commercialisation and the power of advertising.

Chapter Six – Self-Help and Well Being: or is it Self-Regulation?

Chapter five draws a comparison between the language of the magazines and the language of self-help. To expand upon this, chapter six further explores the concept of self-help in the health milieu. Health promotion is considered and the concept is widened to a consideration of self-control and self-regulation from a Foucauldian perspective.

Regulating the body is a theme of chapter six and again, this brings us to the theme of responsibility in terms of health and a discussion of health promotion is included. The way in which we self-regulate is analysed and this is linked to the idea of self-esteem. The sport, health and fitness milieu can offer vehicles for those who want to enhance their sense of self-esteem and this reflects the idea of a quest for recognition. Regulation of the body is developed in chapter seven with a particular emphasis on gender.

Chapter Seven – Gender Transgression: The Changing Place of Women in Sport

Chapter seven considers the place of women in sport. The changing nature of attitudes is considered and an exploration of gender transgression is augmented by a consideration of women wrestlers. A further piece of primary research is undertaken in order to gauge current attitudes to women's sport demonstrated by

online media platforms via mobile phone applications. This quantitative and qualitative research considers occurrence of articles concerning women and the language used in the articles.

Again, discourse is a feature of this chapter; indeed, it begins with a comparison of terms used for sportswomen to those used for sportsmen. Performing gender is discussed and this is linked to a consideration of a case study of a woman wrestler, whose transformation in appearance led to a transformation in the language used to describe her.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion

Here I will revisit my aims and draw together the findings and arguments made. In addition to this I will offer a summary of my research. The conclusion will also highlight any limitations to the thesis and offer further ideas for study within this subject.

Chapter one – The Loneliness of the Philanthropic Runner

“Few sports are more universal than running” (Renton, 2013:70) and the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen a rise in the number of people using running to raise and donate money to charitable organisations. Events such as the Race for Life, the Sport Relief Mile and the London Marathon are used as a means to coax members of the public to “put their hands in their pockets” and give to “worthy” causes. Indeed the London Marathon is reported to be the biggest single fundraising event in the world (London Marathon, 2016); a quick scan of its website shows a great number of charitable organisations affiliating themselves with the event and one can add to those many more, lesser known organisations that do not buy London’s *Silver* and *Golden Bond* places (guaranteed entries bought by organisations), but nevertheless benefit from donations made by runners of the race. Here, I aim to assess the impact that charity running has on society and the relationship between charitable services and state provided welfare services.

One pillar of social welfare is that of organised giving, administered by strangers, in which the givers and recipients are strangers. This is the classical welfare state model as funded by the public coffers. A citizen makes payments into the central fund by way of taxation and they or others can draw the benefits when needed (Daly, 2011).

Titmuss (1987:113) emphasises the “fundamental need for social welfare as an instrument of social justice” he further states that “only a society which is dedicated to the principle of greater equality and the diffusion of humanistic values will have sufficient moral conviction to close the gap between those who have and those who have not”. Advocates of the collective approach to welfare

provision will identify with these assertions due to the belief that collective giving is of greater value than individual self-striving. For Jordan (1989), a *good society* relies on the ability of people to cooperate; this cooperation will see factors such as quality of life be dictated by each other's actions.

The argument that the state should do nothing but keep order and safeguard property, forwarded by political philosophers such as Nozick (1974), grew in significance for proponents of the *New Right* doctrine during the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan years, which spanned from 1979 to 1990. These years saw the UK and the USA headed by administrations that increasingly promoted the idea of individualism and libertarian philosophy, which included a programme of “withdrawal of state intervention in society” (Jones, 2006:177). The rise of individualism over collectivism was evidenced by images of the economic divide between the *haves* and *have nots* increasing. The burgeoning *yuppie* generation (an epithet attached to young professionals who were reaping the benefits of libertarian policies and making substantial amounts of money) (Barron, 2013) contrasted with the increase in numbers of those who were struggling to make ends meet due to unemployment (Le Grand *et al*, 2008).

State-run welfare services were being squeezed and the private sector became a major force in the delivery of health and welfare (Ham, 2009). This is the political backdrop to today's society in which increasing amounts of welfare provision are provided by the charitable sector. Charitable sector organisations rely on donations from many sources and discussing the nature of charity, Manning (2003) points to the long standing tradition of *noblesse oblige* adopted by the aristocracy and how this informed their desire to help those less fortunate

than themselves. However, the philanthropic tradition amongst the wealthy appears to be dying out in modern society (Irvin, 2008) and increasing numbers of citizens, regardless of class, are raising and giving money to charitable causes. Irvin (2008:40-1) reports that “the richest 20 per cent of British households give only 0.7 percent of their income to charity in contrast to the poorest 10 per cent who give 3 per cent”. Gaining sponsorship for running is one of the major ways in which those citizens raise money and the phenomenon is to be explored here.

If we are to accept that running is a major issue then the questions to be asked are: Why running? Why now?

The present social climate is dominated by a moral model calling for citizens to lead healthy lifestyles (Blank & Burau, 2014). The central message is that good citizens will take personal responsibility for their health and well-being (eat five a day, take regular exercise etc.) and the discourse around policy formation reflects this. Media representations of the *desirable* body image and widespread concerns about obesity (Craig & Jones, 2008) add to this physical / social phenomenon. One can add to these phenomena the growing perception that our lives are couched as being part of a *Risk Society* (Beck, 1992) whereby assessment of negative consequences of risk is more prevalent in increasing areas of our lives. Areas included in both work and leisure time might not have once been considered as hazardous but the concerns raised by heightened health awareness, an increasingly litigious society and the escalation of “official” intervention are drivers behind the spiralling concerns that appear to dominate the public arena (Nettleton, 2013).

If people embrace the call to *better* their lifestyles by improving their health then there will be a need to find easily accessible ways to exercise: running is one of these ways. Furthermore, those who might be initially nervous about the prospect can now take advantage of the *packaged experience* offered by charity runs whereby road racing is promoted as something that anyone can do without the need to be a specialist runner.

Mass participation events are important due to the merger of sport and health agendas (this merging of agendas will be shown to be a key feature throughout this thesis). Hundreds of thousands of people running in events are doing so either solely motivated by a desire to raise money for charity, or are using their primary desire to run to afford the further benefit of charitable fundraising. The amounts raised for charitable causes by individual running events run into the tens of millions of pounds each year (Nettleton & Hardey, 2006) and the charitable organisations that benefit from this assume the responsibility for a large proportion of today's welfare provision (Filo *et al*, 2013).

An example of this is offered by a case study of Macmillan Cancer Support, which provides one of the largest charity teams in the London Marathon. The London Marathon provides the means to raise around £1m for Macmillan annually, and this contributes to the provision of expert care and practical and emotional support for people living with cancer. Indeed Macmillan say that the London Marathon is one of the biggest days in their fundraising calendar, therefore it has a major impact on their ability to provide comprehensive cancer care services (Macmillan, 2016).

Furthermore, many charitable organisations like to raise money in this way as it helps to negate the need to rely on governmental funding: this reliance brings an imperative to meet certain criteria (such as meeting targets and deadlines) and can transform voluntary organisations into quasi-governmental organisations (Clarke *et al*, 2000). Clarke *et al* link decreasing state intervention with the competitive market. This sees organisations having to adopt strategies consistent with managerialism (including meeting targets and deadlines) to survive in what is increasingly referred to as the marketplace in terms of welfare. This marketplace is now being characterised by names such as *Virgin Healthcare* adding welfare delivery to its portfolio, which includes music, air travel, telecommunications, financial services etc. Indeed, their website boasts of delivering in excess of 400 health and social care services (virginicare, 2017).

William Beveridge was the social reformer whose report was the basis for a universal welfare benefits system (Le Grand *et al*, 2008), and when citizens make contributions to that, they are fulfilling their duty as responsible members of a cohesive society that will jointly look after those needing care. Indeed if one was to develop cancer one would hope that the contributions they have made would be an *investment* enabling them to be cared for by the welfare state.

Therefore the question to be posed is why is there an increasing expectation on citizens to individually fund services such as Macmillan? A collective sense of guilt and moral obligation contributes to the seemingly imperative need to adopt a philanthropic stance toward those in a worse position than oneself. However Moore's research (2008) uncovered a trend in which people donating to certain charities saw these acts as the aforementioned *investments* toward their own future healthcare needs mirroring the traditional contributory system of funding

state welfare provision. Hyde's (2013) commentary elucidates this issue when she points to the fact that marathon runners raise money that contributes to healthcare provision stating "you never know when you or yours might need to collect on the communal winnings their charitable efforts produce" (2013:38).

The New Right (under the administration of Margaret Thatcher and subsequent Conservative leaders) doctrine of increasing private provision of health and welfare services was adapted but not completely jettisoned by New Labour in the 1990s. Their Third Way mantra, which advocated for at least a mixed economy of welfare included public and private partnerships (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). At the extreme, total privatisation included the call for individualised choices to be made available for those requiring care. From this, it appears that the individualised nature of public provision includes individualised giving. This individualised giving can take many forms and raising and donating money to charity is just one example. People often choose charities that hold special meaning to them and some of these charitable organisations do not attract as many people as other more "popular" causes. "Philanthropy implies a personal relationship" (Prochaska, 1988:7) and mass participation events include many long distance runners raising money for philanthropic causes that hold personal significance.

"Such is the hold of charities on marathon events that it is unusual for runners to participate without actively being involved in money raising" (Nettleton and Hardey, 2006:457). It is this fact that contributes to the sense of obligation felt by runners taking part in major events. I have taken part in eight marathons and raised money for charity in four of these. In 2008 I ran the London Marathon but chose not to raise money. It is notable that when people asked *who I was*

running for, they appeared almost crestfallen when I said no-one; this instilled in me a sense of guilt because I was not utilising this opportunity to contribute to society as a responsible citizen *should*. Nettleton (2013:73) reinforces this notion by stating that the drive to help causes is such that to opt out of doing so can be viewed as “an abrogation of responsibility”. The overriding message for Buckingham (2005:online) is that “running for one’s own achievement is of less value than completing the event as a means of raising charity money”. This long held view was highlighted by Hughes (1996:183) who reported that in the London Marathon “it is more the norm than the exception to be raising money for charity”.

Preliminary research

In conducting twelve short interviews with individuals who have identified as being runners, I investigated the link between leisure running and charitable fund-raising. Reasons for running were explored and where interviewees had raised money for charity, the reasons particular charities were chosen were explored.

The interviewees were those individuals that were available at the time needed. This convenience sampling method enabled a study that involved willing participants, which Gomm (2008) highlights as being potentially hazardous in terms of bias in some areas of research. However, these interviews were designed to ascertain what had already happened and identify any themes that transpired therefore the issue of bias in the findings was not considered to be problematic in this case.

The reasons that people start to run are manifold but the dominant reason amongst the interviewees was a desire to either get fit or to maintain fitness in order to continue with other sporting activity. As was hypothesised at the beginning of this process there was a strong link between runners today and raising money for charity. Although it was identified as a by-product of the endeavour, running for charity was not offered as a primary motivator to start running. However, two interviewees stated that the Race for Life event (a 5k run / walk event in which money is raised for cancer charities) proved to be a catalyst that actually made them start to run in order to get fit in that it provided a goal to aim for.

In keeping with the suggestion that the national drive to be healthy has an impact on society, several interviewees associated being fit with being healthy. Furthermore there was an assertion that running would offer a way to maintain a healthy lifestyle with one interviewee saying that:

“A healthy body helps you generally in life; weight, mind, attitude, self esteem”

(interviewee 5)

This was evident in responses of other interviewees who acknowledged the fact that running had helped them to overcome feeling low (and in one case depressed) about their health and fitness levels. One interviewee offered the view that the general image of being a *sporty mum* (interviewee 2) presented her child with a good role model. This further reinforces the notion of the Department of Health which asserts that “To improve the nation’s health, we must create and sustain a culture in which people want to be more active and are able to be more active – a culture of activity” (DoH, 2004:8).

All but two of the interviewees had actually run for charity and one individual who had not, stated a desire to run in a charity event in the future. In explaining this, the individual stated:

“I wanted to do Race for Life but wanted to run all the way because if I was going to ask for sponsorship I would want to do it properly.” (interviewee 3)

A reluctance to ask others for money was the main concern that prevented the other interviewee who had not run for charity from doing so. This also appeared to be an issue for other interviewees with one pointing out that:

“Everybody’s asking for sponsorship for something and you get into a cycle of you sponsor me and I’ll sponsor you.” (interviewee 3)

Once the fact that charities were gaining from these runners was ascertained the questions of which charities and why were explored. In the pool of identified charitable causes, those that were concerned with treatment of and research into cancer (including leukaemia) featured the most. Other conditions that featured were asthma and heart conditions. Two interviewees had raised money for local schools and one had used his run in the Sport Relief Mile to raise money for disadvantaged children in Kenya.

One interviewee who used the Race for Life as a way into running went onto raise money for other causes including organisations that help street workers and homeless young men. The reason given for choosing these charities was that the interviewee felt these causes were not popular in society and would even be viewed as undeserving in some quarters. The argument postulated is that marginal issues are not congruent with the mores of capitalist society

whereas major charities such as those concerned with cancer research, hospitals etc. make economic sense.

In essence, the above argument is that if a member of the workforce develops cancer, it is in the interests of society to cure this person, get them back into the workforce and contributing to society. However, donating to street workers or homeless young men might be seen as giving to those who do not contribute to society and may well not do so if they were given financial assistance. In addition to this can be the argument that many of us might be more fearful of developing cancer than becoming homeless as we can envisage the former more readily than the latter.

The majority of those who have raised money for charity by running have chosen their charities due to personal connections. Interviewees have either suffered themselves or have friends / family members who have. This phenomenon was reinforced by one interviewee who stated that:

“If the personal connection didn’t exist, I wouldn’t be able to engage with charity work at all.” (interviewee 1)

Other reasons for choice of charity offered included the fact that the particular charity happened to be associated with the run. This was particularly the case for several of those running the Race for Life. One interviewee who had raised money in the Race for Life in this way had not run to raise money for any other charities as she stated:

“I don’t agree with supporting UK charities that should be supported by the government.” (interviewee 12)

This is not a new sentiment as Hughes (1996:174) has pointed out that for some “It is perceived that a charity’s work should be paid for by the government” and that The Leonard Cheshire Foundation has found that there are those “who precisely for this reason will contribute to the work of the charity in the developing world but not its services for disabled people in the United Kingdom” (Hughes, 1996:174).

During the research period, general attitudes to charity were beginning to surface and one interviewee asserted that:

“Charity is a massively important thing in society; there is something we can do about things.” (interviewee 5)

Therefore it was important to explore how interviewees might donate to charity in other ways. An emerging theme was reference to other mass participation events such as charity telethons. Annual fundraisers such as *Children in Need* and *Comic Relief* successfully raise millions of pounds to donate to various causes. In persuading people to donate, these events deftly tap into the collective sense of obligation in society. One interviewee clarified this by pointing out that:

“There is an element of skilled marketing involved when large events are on TV; they are structured and presented solely in a way to make you feel you should donate.” (interviewee 5)

Major events such as telethons have utilised the mass participation model and have proven to be popular ways to raise money. Another interviewee concurred with this by indicating that the mass media events apply social pressure adding

to the sense of obligation. Another way in which charities exploit the sense of obligation felt by many is by posting collection envelopes through doors then following this several days later with “door to door” collections. Several interviewees confirmed that this method encouraged them to donate because as one said:

“I didn’t want to give them back an empty envelope.” (interviewee 3)

This feeling was highlighted and confirmed for me when I returned a *Christian Aid* envelope with money in to a door-to-door collector and my daughter asked why I donated to that particular charity. The main reason I offered was the aforementioned sense of not wanting to return an empty envelope.

The research also highlighted other effective vehicles for raising money such as the traditional collection tin and donation via standing orders from personal bank accounts. The setting up of standing orders was mainly as a result of the aforementioned successful marketing practices adopted by charities and the fact that many charities have adopted business models is evidenced by those people who purchase commodities from charities. Several interviewees purchased goods from charities but in asserting that this was only the case because the goods were successfully designed and marketed to meet target purchasers, one said:

“I do buy charity Christmas cards but they would have to be cool and trendy.”

(interviewee 12)

This initial research was intended to begin the process of assessing the impact of running on society and what transpired was the fact that most of the

interviewees do indeed raise money in order to contribute to charitable organisations in society. A discussion of the concept of charity and then the biggest fundraising single running event of all (The London Marathon) and the idea of charity for welfare will now draw this together.

Charity

It is almost impossible to walk down a city centre or suburban high street without seeing individuals trying to engage people in conversation about the charities they work for in an attempt to coax them into donating. These, mostly younger, men and women (Bennett, 2012) are such a common sight now they have been accorded the epithet of “chuggers” which is a combination of the words charity and mugger. This is because the approach of some of these individuals can, at times, be viewed as over-zealous. An interesting comparison is that of the door-to-door collectors collecting the aforementioned Christian Aid envelopes, who from my observations, almost exclusively comprise older people adopting a more genteel approach. This demonstrates that there are a variety of methods that can be adopted to tap into the growing sense of obligation felt by many. Another common sight on the high streets is vendors selling the Big Issue magazine, which is a publication designed to enable homeless people to earn a livelihood (Big Issue Foundation, 2013).

From the above, it can be seen that charity is an increasingly visible phenomenon and charitable donations are being sought all year round. This is in contrast to the time specific high street campaigns of the past. Poppies would be sold in the period leading up to Remembrance Sunday and flag days would see charities collecting at particular times of the year (Moore, 2008).

In his assessment of Christian values, George (2012) describes charity as a value consistent with the duty concomitant with being a *good* Christian.

Therefore giving to charity (as well as paying one's taxes) in order to fund benefits and services is a demonstration of a *good* value base. To enable us to show we have these positive aspects to our character, many charitable organisations provide symbols for us to wear. The poppy is still visible around the time of remembrance Sunday and this has been joined by such adornments as ribbons and wristbands (Moore, 2008). These not only signify that you have donated to particular causes but by their continued wearing also symbolise not only one's ongoing support for them but a conspicuous display of one's compassion and moral status, which for Reyniers & Bhalla (2013) is something that many donors are keen to do.

Such symbols serve as a signifier of the fact we have donated to the *correct* charity and as such have ensured our money is being used in the *correct* manner. However, alongside the chuggers and Big Issue vendors we still see people begging on our high streets. Beggars do not offer anything in return for donations, rather they rely on the notion that people will be willing to help those seemingly less fortunate than themselves. Debates about the wisdom of donating to beggars abound (Hill, 2013) and the following is an account of one such typifying debate.

One of my daughters told me that on the way home from school she often gives some spare change to a female beggar on our local high street. I told her that this was a laudable act but that she might like to know that as a social worker, I worked with people like this woman, who told me that their typical day would

consist of street begging to raise cash, buying heroin with the cash and then going home to use the heroin.

This information engendered the debate around whether it is wise to give beggars money because using it on drugs might be seen as wasteful. The discussion included the concept of choice and it was postulated that if one is willing to donate to a beggar, one should not then attach conditions regarding how this donation should be spent. This concept of *conditional philanthropy* is tapped into by charitable organisations, which encourage us to help beggars by giving to a relevant charity rather than a beggar (Hill, 2013). Hill reports that London homeless charity, *Thames Reach*, discourages giving money to beggars but advocates buying them food or a cup of tea instead. This satisfies the desires of those from what are referred to as the gentrified neighbourhoods to help without being part of what might be viewed as distasteful activity.

As identified above, donating to charity might be proportionally less from the wealthiest in society but the nature of donation has changed and in their 2003 study on modes of civic engagement, Pattie *et al* (2003) found that donating money to an organisation was the foremost activity undertaken by people. As discussed, the methods of donation are varied but raising money by running is a growing phenomenon and the London Marathon is a major conduit for this phenomenon.

The London Marathon

The London Marathon has been run annually since 1981. Its founders, Chris Brasher and John Disley set out six aims for the event and these included commitments to:

“show mankind that, on occasions, they can be united...raise money for sporting and recreational facilities in London...have fun, and provide some happiness and sense of achievement in a troubled world”

(virginmoneylondonmarathon.com, 2013)

These are undoubtedly laudable aims and still hold true for the organisers of the marathon today. However, the initial aim of raising money for sporting and recreational facilities in London has been subsumed today by the millions of pounds raised for worldwide causes. These causes are not solely concerned with sports and recreation; rather they take myriad forms from *Save the Children* to *Save the Rhino*. Runners can be seen wearing anything from vests advertising their charities to elaborate and often cumbersome costumes, as in the case of *Save the Rhino*, thereby adding to the challenge, in an attempt to raise awareness of their chosen cause.

As stated above, it is almost an expectation that one will raise money for charity when competing in a marathon, and indeed, I have witnessed increasing numbers are raising money when competing in shorter events such as half-marathons, 10 and 5 kilometre races. The challenge for many is convincing people to “sponsor” them for the race. Having successfully completed several marathons, I have found it difficult to keep asking for sponsorship. Particularly if running in a shorter race. The question I have been asked is “Where’s the challenge in that?”

Therefore it is easy to understand the philosophy behind completing the marathon in a weighty costume. Welch (2000) highlighted that some of the most popular costumes worn by charity runners included the rhino, Big Ben, camels,

trees and Wombles. As Bryant (2006) points out, the runners in fancy dress are afforded television coverage, often being interviewed on the course thereby raising the profile of their chosen charities which in turn hopefully generates more income. In addition to the challenge, it can be argued that one can be more assertive in one's requests for money.

Hyde (2013) addresses the problem of requesting sponsorship when she points out that due to the increasing number of people asking, many requests are preceded by an apology. This echoes the thoughts of one of the interviewees whose reluctance to ask was based on the assertion that *"Everybody's asking for sponsorship for something"*. This being the case, it is remarkable that the money raised by runners of the London Marathon is rising year on year. Its popularity is evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of spectators lining the streets of London to offer their support on the day and the millions who watch TV coverage (Sheahan, 2015).

Beedie (2010:66) informs us the television coverage of the London Marathon shows not only the race itself but also the training to be a "festival of human interaction in a sporting setting". The coverage starts prior to the beginning of the race and concentrates both on the elite field of athletes and the thousands of "ordinary" people competing. It is this concept of ordinary people that gives a clue to the popularity of the London Marathon as a spectator sport. Vignettes of people's lives, their struggles in training and of the charities and various causes they are supporting are presented in a TV programme that is similar in format to the TV telethon. Whereas the telethon is interspersed with music and comedy etc., the marathon programme is interspersed with images of the race unfolding.

Many people who would not necessarily watch TV coverage of sporting events such as athletics meetings will however watch coverage of the London Marathon as they can identify with the efforts of ordinary people in a way they possibly cannot identify with elite athletes. The programme makers skilfully tap into this idea by presenting what amounts to part sports coverage and part entertainment show and in doing so, are able to increase viewing figures (Smith, 2000). This situation also enables the organisers of the London Marathon to attract major corporate sponsorship as companies recognise that they will be able to reach vast TV audiences. This is particularly important for the corporate world as traditional forms of advertising such as TV advertisements and printed media are becoming less effective (Deuze, 2007).

The London Marathon organisers have utilised the changing landscape of advertising to good effect in their “virtual shop window”. On visiting the home page of their website one is presented with not only advertisements for charities but also the logos of major corporations such as Adidas, Holiday Inn and Virgin Money. These corporations get the benefit of widespread exposure coupled with the positive effect of being associated with, what increasingly amounts to a “festival of philanthropy”.

Another of the tactics used by the London Marathon to raise its profile is the inclusion of celebrity runners amongst its field. Most runners have to gain a place through ballot selection, qualifying times or securing charity bonded places. However, politicians, actors, singers, sports stars etc. are invited to take part in the event thereby raising the profile of the race. A concomitant benefit of the inclusion of celebrity runners is the increase in donations made to their chosen charities due to the increased exposure they are able to garner. The social

capital of modern day celebrities (this will be explored further in this thesis) enables them to enter the public consciousness and those who wish to associate themselves with the image of their “icons” can do so by donating to the charities being represented.

Such is the place of the London Marathon that it appears to dominate many forms of attendant media. In conversation with a fellow runner the point was made that the popular monthly magazine *Runners World* appears to have a cyclical nature about its content that revolves around the London Marathon. The monthly editions leading up to the April event feature tips, tailored training programmes and stories around the build up to the race. The editions after the race feature reports of the events of the day and other stories associated with the race. My observations when reading *Runners World* and at times having annual subscriptions to the publication highlight the fact that coverage afforded the London Marathon far outstrips coverage of any other single event.

It is of little surprise then that the London Marathon is able to command such a status that it is in a position to facilitate the raising of vast amounts of money to fund services both in the UK and worldwide. Although it is the biggest of its kind in terms of money generation, the London Marathon is just one of a number of running events that is used to raise money. It is the effect of this income generation that I wish to explore here.

Charity for Welfare

“To ‘donate’ is to give implying an altruistic motive” (Titmuss, 1970:71).

“people can and do cooperate in the creation of the common good because they have an interest in enhancing the quality of their life together” (Jordan:49).

These quotes from Richard Titmuss and Bill Jordan are a starting point for assessing the reasons for and impact of the generation of charitable funds.

Sznaider (2001) argues that the development of a modern society has seen the rise of what he calls “The Compassionate Temperament” (the title of his book) in which concepts such as democracy and equality have engendered a sense of shared humanity together with concern for the welfare of those in need.

A constant theme here is that of social responsibility and Hughes (1996:179) points out that charities are positioned to take advantage of this as they can be seen as “the custodian of the donor’s social responsibility”. Charities are concerned with many issues from the arts and culture, the welfare of the vulnerable through to disaster relief. Raising money to restore a stately home or a painting will have certain benefits but might not have a significant impact on society. However, raising money to find a cure for cancer or protect children in need is arguably more in-line with the socially responsible society.

If we are to accept the previous assertion by Titmuss that the measure of a just society depends on, amongst other things, the quality of its welfare provision, it is important to understand how such provision is facilitated.

Welfare, in its simplest form, means happiness, prosperity or well being in general; it implies not merely physical survival but some measure of health and contentment as well (Heywood, 2000:151).

If this definition tells us what we strive for in terms of welfare then the delivery of welfare services should be tailored to deliver the elements set out in the definition. Political debates around individualism versus utilitarianism abound when the question of how we achieve welfare arises (Fives, 2008), but for the purposes of this work those debates will be sidelined to an extent to facilitate consideration of the delivery of UK welfare as it stands today.

The accepted model of welfare today relates to:

material sufficiency, well-being, the absence of negative conditions, physical and mental health, satisfaction of desires, and provision for need within the context of organised services for the needy and the population more broadly (Daly, 2011:13).

The latter part of the above quote offers an interesting seat of debate in that it refers not only to the needy but also to the broader population. This would place welfare as a phenomenon that relates to all and not merely those who are visibly in need. Welfare has, in some quarters, been associated with fecklessness and the undeserving and has, as a result, taken on a pejorative connotation (Jensen, 2013).

Fives (2008:30) discusses Mill's concept of utilitarianism and the distribution of welfare and in doing so, highlights that for some, "The principle of need may motivate charitable acts. However, in the market place, people will receive benefits because they are thought to merit or deserve those benefits". The concept of deserving brings into question just who decides on the criteria for deservedness, which in turn suggests a need for means testing whereby

measurements of neediness can be gauged before the distribution of welfare to those who by varying degrees are *truly* needy.

For Fronek and Chester (2016) the decisions regarding deservedness are increasingly being made by those from the right of the political spectrum. Even within what we might call a *democratic* society, increasing numbers of people such as refugees, the unemployed and other disenfranchised groups are being excluded from welfare assistance due to connotations of people being undeserving due to a perceived failing within them rather than a structural problem to be addressed by society as a whole.

This then is the backdrop to the landscape of welfare provision in which people not only contribute via statutory payments (taxes / national insurance) and potentially feel unhappy with the way these payments are being used but also voluntarily make contributions via donations to charitable causes of their own choosing. The latter of the two potentially brings with it the satisfaction that one is contributing to the *correct* causes.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an insight into one of the ways the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society. In keeping with the special emphasis, my hypothesis that running for charitable causes is a major phenomenon and this indeed has an impact on society has been tested. As has been shown, the activity of running not only has an impact on the health and well-being of individuals but also via charitable donations, an impact on the health and well-being of society.

Throughout this thesis there will be further consideration of the impact of sport, health and fitness and the way it might reduce the actual burden on health and welfare services. The following chapter will consider the methodology adopted throughout the process of writing this thesis and I will revisit my aims in the introduction to the methodology in order to justify the variety of perspectives I consider. I will also offer some theoretical perspectives to underline the fact that my consideration of the issues needs to draw from a range of phenomena that might initially appear slightly incongruent.

Chapter two – Methodology

This chapter will offer insight into my thought processes and justification of the direction taken in producing this thesis. I will outline the main theoretical standpoints adopted and explain why I followed particular paths. In considering the main elements of the research process, I will show how my thesis developed. Factors such as methods, selection of research criteria and ethical considerations will show why I feel my research is not only justified but also relevant to contemporary western society. Drawing from a social constructionist epistemology, my intention is to use a mixed methodology to highlight and evaluate social phenomena relevant to the aims of my study.

At this point it will be helpful to signpost the aims of this study. The overall question is: How does the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society today? As stated in the introduction, I wished to place an especial emphasis on running in seeking to answer the question. The aims identified in order to respond to the question are:

- To critically review the landscape of the sport, health and fitness milieu as it impacts on individuals and society;
- To understand the nature of this impact and how it can shape the health and welfare discourse of contemporary western society;
- To examine how identities are influenced by language and discourse from a range of sport, health and fitness media.

Qualitative research

“The procedures of qualitative research, or its *methodology*, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analysing the data” (Creswell, 2013:22).

(Emphasis in original)

If we are to accept that an inductive approach is one in which theory is generated by research, one of my duties is to offer a tour of my research process that has generated theory via an inductive process but has also utilised a deductive approach in that my initial hypothesis was tested within the research process. In using a mixed methods approach I have seen my initial overarching aim (to identify the social impact of sport) remain as a constant but the questions posed within this have undergone some modification as new interests developed through the discovery of what for me were previously unthought-of phenomena.

Creswell’s (2013) above quotation refers to qualitative research and it is here that I wish to place my first marker in a consideration of methodology. I am primarily a qualitative researcher, I am interested in the context of phenomena; I wish to uncover reasons based on a combination of responses and assertions based on feelings, thoughts and experience. It is true that I interviewed runners in an attempt to ascertain how many had run and raised money for charity but my real motive for this was not a positivistic exercise in order to present a table proving my initial hypothesis (that nearly all runners have at some point raised money for charity), rather it was an exercise to ascertain what charities were chosen and why. I wanted to offer something to think more deeply about because as Blastland & Dilnot (2007:6) state “Simplify numbers and they

become clear; clarify numbers and you stand apart with rare authority”. Further confirmation of the validity of this approach is offered by McWilliam & Tan (2010:49) who state that “To think about combining measurement and interpretation is to begin to think about what counts as knowledge production and how it works”.

Where I did place more of an emphasis on numbers was during my research into the place of women in sport. In testing my hypothesis that women were under-represented in the reporting of sport, I felt an effective method would be to simply count the numbers of articles featuring women in mobile phone sports news applications and compare their frequency to those featuring men. However, even this piece of research was coupled with an evaluation of the language used in the articles to gain a sense of *how* women were represented as well as *how often*.

What did I do?

The early days of my research journey were characterised by discussions with supervisors and the need to focus on a question. I had many ideas to pursue and naively felt I could cover all of these in a PhD. My then supervisor said to me “those ideas are all very good, and you have about 4 PhDs there; you have to choose one.” So rather than being dampened, my initial enthusiasm turned to finding a focus for research. Further thoughts and discussions with the supervisory team lead to settlement on a clear focus for me to pursue; that of assessing social change through sport but with an especial emphasis on running. This evolved to be an assessment of the current social impact of sport in today’s society due to the interests I developed in the contemporary landscape

of society. This still considered elements of change, particularly in the Civilizing Process and Gender chapters but the primary focus was shifted to the current rather than changing impact.

I had developed what Crano *et. al.* (2015:5) refer to as a “research hypothesis...a testable directional prediction about specific relationships in a study.” I wanted to assess how sport can impact on society. I had not only thought about what I wanted to research but also what was and what was not worth investigating (Bell, 2005). Dunleavy (2003) asserts that what I had done was to develop a question (How does sport impact on society?) and now it was my duty to proffer answers to it.

As a runner who has completed many races including eight marathons I was interested in the growing number of runners who were raising money for charity and how this might impact on society. The logical step it seemed would be to interview runners to firstly confirm my assertion that many runners were indeed raising money and secondly try to gather some information building a picture as to the nature of any social impact this might have.

These interviews were not intended to be a major element of the research; they were facilitated to serve as public engagement to inform further research. They proved to be a springboard into further enquiry and in that sense proved to be both helpful and useful.

The interviews

In developing a short questionnaire to form the basis of a series of pithy interviews, my aim was to find out when and why people started to run. I steered

the interviews in such a way that respondents could disclose if one of the reasons they started to run was to raise money for charity. If they did not disclose this I asked the question directly. I needed to glean particular information and according to Kvale (2006:483) I was utilising what he refers to as “The asymmetrical power relation of the interview” which is typified by an interview in which the researcher wishes to achieve a specific goal. Kvale (2006:483) refers to such interviews as “a conversation with a purpose”. Once I found if charity played any part in the interviewees’ running my aim was to find out why and in what other ways, if any, did they contribute to charity. This was because my observations had led me to believe there was a link between sport and charity but I wanted to understand the nature of charity as a concept.

Creswell (2013) further explains the above in stating that interviews such as these constitute a one-way dialogue providing information needed by the researcher to suit an identified agenda. The inequality highlighted here may seem counter-intuitive; going against my values that include a desire for equality for all. However, my justification for taking control of the interviews in such a way was that I was seeking comparatively short pieces of information to meet the aims of gathering material that would serve as a springboard into further inquiry.

Further justification for the method is found in the fact that my research was a way of finding out what had already happened. I had no influence on the events I was asking about and they had occurred regardless of the fact I was asking about them. There would have been no influence on the events by my research activity. Gomm (2008) offers that this is an antidote to the problems presented by the unequal relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

The structured interview is formulaic and offers data gathered by asking each interviewee the same questions in the same manner (Bryman, 2012). This appears to be consistent with a quantitative approach in which numbers matter more than context. However, my questions and questioning, although structured, were designed to find reasons as well as factual events. For Walliman (2006:92) “Although suitable for quantitative data collection, interviews are particularly useful when qualitative data is required”.

Who should I interview?

The answer to that question would appear to be so obvious that it would render the question rhetorical. A more pressing question for me was how do I find the runners to interview? The answer lay in quite simple devices, those of purposeful and opportunistic sampling.

Firstly, as a runner, I ran with other individuals both as a social event and in training for various races. These individuals represented an ideal opportunity to explore the issues being researched and Creswell (2013) confirms purposeful sampling is an appropriate approach in qualitative research. I selected these individuals for interview as they could *purposefully* inform my research due to them being runners who took part in the very events I was interested in. For Sharp *et. al.* (2012) this type of sampling offers the best options to meet research goals and questions. Although it could be argued I was taking advantage of a pre-existing situation (running with others) in an opportunistic sense, I contest that this was still purposeful sampling as I identified these individuals as being able to yield the information needed. Indeed, Riemer (1977:471) identified this as *opportunistic research* in which I was “taking advantage of familiar social

situations” but this is not to be confused with the second sampling method I utilised, that of opportunistic sampling.

Opportunistic sampling is an approach in which I took advantage of the unexpected (Creswell, 2013) by interviewing work colleagues, students and other acquaintances who I discovered to be runners. Unrelated conversations would turn to the subject of running, or my PhD studies and some individuals would respond by disclosing that they were runners too. I would seize these opportunities by requesting interviews. This form of *convenience sampling* (Bryman, 2012), similarly to purposive sampling enabled me to take advantage of individuals due to their availability. However, unlike other forms of convenience sampling critiqued by Bryman as being targeted at a homogenous group (e.g. teachers in a school) I was satisfied that my interviewees represented a variety of individuals who ran due to the fact they were mixed gender, a range of ages, from differing ethnic backgrounds, had a variety of occupations and their running played differing roles in their lives.

The question could be raised as to which sampling method did I use? In answering this, I refer to Creswell and Poth (2018), who state that to use purposeful sampling, the use of accessible cases can offer a desirable option. Therefore, my main intention was to use purposeful sampling methods but to enable this, I used opportunistic sampling.

What was the purpose?

In all, twelve interviews were carried out; they were short, structured and directed and were utilised as a starting point (or, as mentioned above, a springboard) into further investigation. Crano *et al* (2015) confirm that use of direction is

appropriate for structured interviews and this was useful for me to steer (as previously mentioned) the interviews appropriately.

I saw no value in continuing to interview more people as, for the purposes of my task, I had reached saturation point whereby each runner was offering similar responses. Creswell (2013) proposes to saturate research may require 20 to 60 interviews, however, my assertion is firstly, there was very little difference in each of my 12 interviews with regard to the question I asked (even with the differing profiles of the interviewees) and secondly, taking part in many and watching much televised coverage of major running events offered confirmation that charity fundraising played a significant part in the running milieu (Welch, 2000). Moreover, these interviews were not intended to be a piece of substantive research; rather they were conducted by way of public engagement to offer direction for further research.

The link between running and charitable fundraising was confirmed. Further to this, attitudes to charity were explored in the interviews and this led me, via one quote in particular, to further investigate the nature of these attitudes and how they impact on and contribute to the formation of identity. My interest was stimulated and I began an investigation via literature review into the nature of identity.

Literature review

Much of my thesis is formed by extended literature review in which I explore various concepts related to my overall aim. “The existing literature represents an important element of all research” (Bryman, 2012:8) and once a topic is considered, it is imperative for a researcher to seek out and read the writing and

research associated with that topic. For Bryman, the important elements to be uncovered include what is already known, what controversies exist and who are the key contributors that have discussed the topic. My research has not only considered some of the classical theorists covering the areas under discussion but also many of the more contemporary writers who consider the same issues. In this way I have considered aspects as they are written about pre and post the changes discussed herein, including a critique of the classical theorists as appropriate.

A simple library search yields much to consider when researching for any literature review and I often found myself emerging from the library with several texts in hand, ready to read and assimilate the information therein. Added to this, were journal searches and, as the research developed, online searches for archive news items. These were particularly useful in gauging populist societal views at particular points in time. Other print media considered in my research included sports auto/biographies and works of fiction. The 1959 short story, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Sillitoe, 1994) provided inspiration for presentation titles and further inquiry into the nature of running in contemporary times.

Search terms utilised included running, charity, marathons, welfare, identity, community, citizenship and reflexivity; these terms represent a mere sample of those used due to the fact that each theme I investigated threw up others that appeared to be of interest. Some of these were of particular use and in the case of *the civilizing process* were developed into a chapter. Others were not pursued to a similar extent. By keeping my searches wide ranging I was able to access writing and research from several disciplines. Although largely a sociological

study, I drew from fields including sports studies, history, politics and health, which proved to be of increasing significance due to the fact I was making links between healthy living and individual change leading to social change.

Ethnography in the literature review

Earlier in this chapter I stated I was a qualitative researcher but this is merely one facet of what it is to be a researcher. I am a runner who is researching running and likewise a cyclist referring to experiences whilst cycling, I am an individual with an identity constructed of a multiplicity of characteristics and traits who is researching identity and I am a researcher, presently constructing a chapter concerning research methodology. Therefore, this thesis and much of the writing within it is influenced by my own experiences and I have been keen to utilise these by sharing them in order to highlight particular phenomena. What it is to have a sense of belonging in a marathon race, how my multiplicity of identities impact on my life and my own experiences of raising money for charity have all featured in writing this thesis. Therefore it is important to acknowledge the place of ethnography in my research.

This thesis does not constitute a piece of ethnographic research as I have not immersed myself in a particular setting for an extended period of time in order to observe behaviour and ask questions (Bryman, 2012). However, there is undoubtedly an ethnographic element to my work in that I discuss observations made while running marathons, while cycling up and down mountains and while interacting with colleagues, friends and family. If ethnographic research “focuses on an entire culture sharing group” (Creswell, 2013:90) then it follows that my observations, derived from being immersed in a mass of over thirty thousand

runners, riding with fifteen cyclists or interacting with one hundred friends and family members at a Greek Cypriot wedding constitute examples of participant observation.

Bell (2005:187) asserts:

participant observation can yield valuable data. Researchers are able to observe changes over time. Rather than having to depend on one-off observations or at best observations carried out over a limited period of time, the participant observer is able to share in the lives and activities of other people

For Creswell, participant observation is one of the main forms of data gathering in ethnographic research and features the researcher being immersed in the day to day lives of people. I do not claim to have been so immersed but do claim to know what it is to undertake the activities under discussion. The personal and the emotional aspects of my experiences are important according to Emerson *et al* (2001) as they are significant features of experiential or emotional ethnography. Thus my own inclusion in the research offers some subjectivity to my findings, which in turn offers accounts that are not dispassionate. My writing features reflection in which I become part of the writing; as the author, I am self consciously brought into the text (Plummer, 2001). Therefore my experiences and my research combine to produce a thesis that in parts features reflection and reflexivity.

Reflexivity in research

Reflexivity is only as strong as our ability to question our own knowledge (Pillow, 2010) therefore information production for me came about through synthesis of a variety of sources. Primary research was coupled with information gained via reading, discussions, supervision sessions and my own experiences to provide a thesis based on evidence not only from external sources but also drawn from my own experiential thinking. For Doyle (2013), the view that reflexivity and thinking are irrevocably linked reinforces the notion that synthesis of sources by offering all of them due consideration is indeed evidence of reflexivity in action during the research process. Moreover, it was this synthesis that enabled me to produce tracts of writing for my thesis.

In conceptualising reflexivity as a methodological issue for research, it can be seen that alongside having an individual capacity, it can also draw from collective action (Yarwood *et al*, 2015). My experiences are drawn from activities such as running with others and from discussions with others. These discussions have been in many guises, from the traditional, such as the student / supervisor tutorial, to the non-traditional, such as conversations in the pub. One such example demonstrates the way in which these non-traditional interactions can contribute to knowledge gathering.

While discussing my research with a friend in a pub, I was telling him about the concept I was exploring around the “Sporting Celebrity” and how this influenced societal views of issues such as social capital. During the conversation, my friend said in an almost “throwaway” manner “Spartacus; he was the first sporting celebrity”. I jokingly responded by pledging to somehow shoehorn

Spartacus into my research. However, upon further consideration and research, I found that far from being a witty aside, the place of Spartacus in the history of the sporting celebrity is an important one. Indeed, his name lives on in many guises such as sports clubs like *Spartak Moscow* and the mass displays of athletic prowess by totalitarian regimes, which are called *Spartakiads*.

For me, this highlighted the significance of collaboration in all of its guises and taught me to treat all input with equal import because when discussing this example with colleagues I referred to it as a conversation in a lay setting. However this was challenged in that to do so, might demean its importance because a dictionary definition of a layman includes *a person without professional or specialised knowledge in a particular subject*. Therefore to use the term “lay” would be to institute a hierarchy of knowledge. This would be contra to acknowledging the value of co-production of knowledge with valuable sources in any situation. Reflexivity and reflection on one’s own possible shortcomings are important to all researchers as they can offer a chance to accept constructive criticism therefore improving the quality and validity of research.

A troubling aspect for me in terms of reflexivity and research practice arose from my social work background. I have indicated that a conversation in a pub added to the process of research and this coupled with conversations in more traditional settings added to my ability to synthesize information to write. For me, adopting a reflexive approach in which I *reflected* upon certain phenomena was helpful and appropriate. However, during my time as a social work practitioner I was required to be a *reflective practitioner* to enable me to gauge the impact I had on others. Knott and Scragg (2013) assert that to be a reflective practitioner

requires a synthesis of theoretically underpinned work with the wisdom gained from experience as a practicing social worker.

As a social worker, the process of reflection for me was not a public one and took place within my own reflections and the privacy of supervision with peers / managers. Therefore there may have been an initial reluctance to share and collaborate with others during my research because reflection in the social work field is not something done on corridors and in pubs. As a researcher / PhD candidate I felt that I was “plowing my own furrow” and that knowledge production would be something I would do as a lone researcher.

There was an ambiguity I had to wrestle with in order to become a reflexive researcher and I found that collaborative relationships with others facilitated opportunities to do this. This ambiguity for a practitioner turned researcher is highlighted by Taylor and White (2000:206) who assert reflexivity is “an elusive term often used interchangeably with reflection. It encompasses reflection but also incorporates other features” These features include the collective action of a profession; it is the testing of knowledge and practice against an analytical framework. Therefore the collaborative framework offered by others enabled me to understand that reflexivity can not only be another way to reflect but also a way to test the validity of my reflections. The process of reflexivity was linked to reflection and the collaborative nature of my relationships with others enabled me to set aside initial misgivings borne out of my professional social work background and utilize reflexivity in my research. Indeed, this thesis which draws from collaborative work, evidences for me the importance of reflexivity and the significance of a diverse range of others in knowledge production.

For me there still remains a troubling aspect to reflexivity in that most of the writing about it does not offer one concrete definition of what it actually is. Writers tell us what reflexivity should do, what it can represent, that it is necessarily fluid, forever changing and questioning (Pillow, 2010). In order for me to arrive at a comfortable position as to what reflexivity represents, I refer to Burr (1995) who asserts the most common use of reflexivity is an analysis of a researcher's own writing to reflexively discuss how his/her accounts are constructed.

A defining moment in theorizing reflexivity came when I was offered an analogy involving the game of snooker. When preparing to take a shot in snooker one draws from the experiences previously gained from playing the game. One is conscious of how, during the game, the balls have lined up for this particular shot and one is aware that the action of playing this particular shot will have repercussions for the rest of the game. Therefore reflexivity, like the snooker shot, has to consider what has gone before, what is presently taking place and what might happen in the future.

Snooker is clearly a game requiring much thought to be played successfully; knowledge of how balls will react when struck in particular ways is derived from scientific theory. Thus, cue position, angle of contact etc. contribute to the accepted knowledge of how to play successfully. Discussing reflexivity in an e mail conversation with colleagues, I stated "*I think my understanding of reflexivity is developing into...a process of reflection that has to be tested against accepted knowledge and theoretical paradigms*". I think this is as close as I will get to *untroubling* reflexivity.

Bias in research

I have discussed the issues of including oneself in the research process and acknowledged there will inevitably be some element of subjectivity in the production of research. Furthermore, the concept of reflexivity demonstrates the fact that the qualitative researcher would find it difficult to truly remove one's own influence from the research process. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the issue of bias in the undertaking of research.

Gomm (2008) discusses the idea of *value relevant* research whereby it is acceptable for researchers to choose their topics according to their own interests. However, he points to the difficulty in maintaining *value neutrality* within research and this concept can be considered on a continuum. The very choice of subject for my PhD research, the devising of a questionnaire, selection of interviewees, choice of literature, choice of online content etc. is all indicative of my interests and therefore cannot be considered to be free from my influence. However, my assertion that neutrality can be viewed on a continuum is because, as stated previously, I have been gleaning information on events that have already taken place and literature and news articles that were already written. Therefore, I have not had an influence on these aspects of the research picture.

My influence does lie in the choice of data to examine but where it has a greater impact is on my interpretation of the findings of my research. Might someone view a particular use of language in a different way to me? Might one interpret images differently to me? I would argue, yes, they may well do so. However, my commitment to objectivity lies in the fact that I try to make my aims clear and explain a rationale behind my lines of enquiry throughout the research process.

Gomm talks of funding issues (such as in research commissioned by drug companies) and research that might be undertaken for party political reasons and it is here that he cites the very real danger that “bias’ means a deviation from the truth” (2008:17).

My research does not need to meet the requirements of an external funding body and although some of the work within this thesis is of a political nature, I would argue it is not adhering to a particular party political doctrine. It is however, in part, value lead research in that it seeks to highlight some of the inequalities in society. When discussing social research, Walliman (2006:203) defines bias as “The unwanted distortion of the results of a survey due to parts of the population being more strongly represented than others” and it is exactly this kind of bias in sports reporting that impelled me to highlight the underrepresentation of sportswomen.

Bell (2005) counsels against strength of feeling allowing one to *overweight* (attach too much importance to) facts thereby creating bias in research, however, when investigating issues such as gender and race representation, one does not need to point out the obvious. Although some may disagree, people from minority ethnic communities, women and other groups such as people with disabilities *are* discriminated against in society (Platt, 2011). Therefore I would argue it is important for any researcher with an interest in social justice to acknowledge the inequalities resulting from such discrimination and highlight them in the hope of raising awareness and hopefully exerting a positive influence on society. In undertaking new research that addresses issues from new media sources as well as those from a more traditional background my intention is not only to add to the discourse already available but to offer new perspective.

New research

For any researcher there is an imperative to in some way contribute to a body of knowledge. Both evaluative research and investigation should offer something new for interested parties and my research should be no exception to this. My secondary research in which I conduct an extended review of the literature connected to particular themes offers insight into the myriad ways sport can impact on society. Although there is much writing around these fields, I believe I have drawn together certain aspects using intentionality in that I have thought about these concepts and have derived certain findings based on the relationship between my thoughts and the phenomena under investigation. Intentionality holds that it is not good enough to merely think, one must think about *something*.

Intentionality is a derivative of phenomenology (Buchanan, 2010), a branch of thinking concerned with the manner in which we act in semi-conscious ways (Inglis, 2012). This approach enabled me to understand, for example, the impact of populist societal messages and how these shape our identity (Yianni, 2014). It was this understanding that led me to undertake a piece of primary research to further understand the impact of health and fitness messages on society and to offer any correlation between these and the governmental Olympic legacy agenda. This would offer a new perspective on how government policy permeates an aspect of our everyday lives, namely, our health and well-being.

My aim was to review governmental documents / reports concerning health and fitness and compare these with popular glossy magazines drawn from the health and fitness industry. In conducting an internet search for governmental

documents I utilized keywords including sport, health and fitness. A return from this search revealed many documents related to the Olympic 2012 legacy agenda. Therefore I decided this would be a useful focus for my research. The Olympic Games are heavily represented in the media and as such, offer a unique vehicle to deliver messages to a population. In selecting magazines I chose those that were widely sold in newsagents and supermarkets. Selecting two magazines directed at women, two directed at men and two directed at both men and women, I covered popular areas of the health and fitness landscape including running and cycling. Mautner (2008:32) asserts high circulation glossy magazines “very much reflect the social mainstream” so I was confident my selection would yield meaningful evidence rather than that of an esoteric nature.

Again, purposive sampling was in evidence here as I identified those magazines that I knew would offer a variety of messages but within the same broad subject area. The governmental reports were also selected in a purposive manner but in the final focus there was a degree of opportunism borne out of necessity. As stated, the majority of documents found concerned the Olympic legacy and there were very few others offering any rich information. My supervisors felt this was a good perspective to pursue and commended me on my selection of focus.

However, I did inform them that the decision was made as much by default as it was by design. Ó Dochartaigh (2007) asserts that to find appropriate governmental documents requires much more than simple internet searches however the data I would glean from what I had uncovered in this manner afforded me the opportunity to explore a contemporary issue. The legacy agenda relates to the 2012 Olympic Games therefore there was no need to search for

documents before a certain timeframe (the lead-up to, during and post the games).

Why research printed text?

Information is increasingly found online and people are turning to the internet for much of the information they consume. TV news channels, traditional newspapers and magazines all utilize the power of the internet to disseminate information. Therefore, some justification of why I chose to analyze off the shelf, print magazines might be warranted.

The way in which magazines can initially present images and text to an unwitting audience is arguably more effective than the internet. To encounter information on a particular subject via the internet there has to be some element of intent by way of a particular search or accessing particular websites. Even when we see suggested content on the internet that might appear to be random, this is driven by our search histories and developed into personalized content (Deuze, 2007). However, magazines can present themselves in situations in which one is carrying out an unrelated task. One might enter a supermarket to buy food and be required to walk past a merchandiser displaying many magazines with their bold text and striking images; McDonnell (2014) agrees that magazines are visible in a variety of shops, street vendor outlets and airport lounges.

Furthermore, our exposure to magazines is not restricted to point of sale as waiting rooms in a range of environments from doctors' surgeries to motor mechanics' garages often feature several magazines for clients to peruse.

The ready availability of magazines enhances their reach and because they have been part of the media revolution throughout the last and the beginning of this

century (Barron, 2013) it also enhances their influence. Despite the increasing influence of online media and the concomitant decrease in printed newspaper sales, magazines still garner substantial readerships largely due to the targeted nature of their subject matter (Ponsford, 2016). Furthermore, titles related to health and fitness feature in the list of magazines with high sales figures highlighted by Ponsford. The publishers of magazines perform as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) and in doing so bridge the gap between legitimate culture and mass production.

“Media have become central to our understanding of ourselves and of the world in which we live” (Deuze, 2007:41) and if we accept the above assertion that print magazines are still a significant part of the media landscape, we should then accept the importance of studying the messages therein. It can be inferred from this that both Bourdieu and Deuze recognize the place of magazines in the world of academic study therefore my choice to analyse glossy health and fitness related magazines is justified and of significance.

Another consideration in the primary analysis of magazines and the Olympic legacy documents in print form was the practicality of being able to conduct a thematic search using various highlighter pens and forms of annotation to enable me to identify and categorise emergent themes. For Creswell (2013) the process of qualitative research is emergent and my search of various documents would elucidate certain themes which would offer areas for discussion and further analysis.

Creswell asserts analysis of text is a challenging process in qualitative research therefore having the documents physically before me alleviated some of this

challenge as I was able to lay out the documents in front of me and more easily see the variety of identified themes in each report and magazine and develop discussions as appropriate. This was done by using different coloured highlighter pens and *Post-it Notes* to mark themes as they arose. I was able to use a notepad to list instances of themes and phrases and it was here that my research did utilize quantitative aspects. The main themes that emerged through analysis of the documents were health, youth, community, disability, women, economy and older people. In addition to this, the discourse used throughout the documents was identified using a thematic approach; therefore, words such as encourage, motivate and inspire were identified.

A vehicle for identifying prominent themes and the use of discourse was the amount of times particular words were used. Therefore, I did count the amount of times words such as *encourage* and *motivate* appeared. This use of quantitative methods was again, a means to arrive at some contextual meaning regarding themes and to assess the impact of said themes.

Despite highlighting some criticisms of thematic analysis such as it is not a sophisticated method and it is considered by some to be positivistic, Braun & Clarke (2014:2) argue that it “offers a really useful qualitative approach”.

Thematic analysis proved useful to me and I argue is a useful method for qualitative researchers because it is flexible and accessible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I found it particularly useful as it enabled me to research, in the main, qualitatively but utilize those elements of quantitative data that contributed to a holistic picture. Braun & Clarke (2006) set out six phases to thematic analysis from familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, searching for,

reviewing and defining themes to producing one's report and this was how I approached the task above.

The growing influence of online media

Researching printed media as described above is, I feel, justified for the reasons I have offered. However in offering further new research into the place of women in sport today, I turned to online content via mobile applications. Having established that "Mobile phones (smartphones in particular) offer such great features that more use of them is being made in the home as well as on the move" (Blakey, 2011:148) and this, according to Blakey, is a fast growing phenomenon in the consumption of sports media, I could not ignore the possible impact of such *new media* platforms as "Forms of communication in the new media provide rich data for social science research projects" (Gruber, 2008:72).

In choosing two of the most prominent online media providers in the UK, I again used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data (Bazeley, 2018). As previously highlighted, the quantitative aspect was a simple counting exercise to ascertain what proportion of articles relating to women's sports made up the headline content of the BBC Sport and Sky Sports mobile applications (apps). This is important to me because I would argue that an over-representation of men's sports (if found) could indicate an attitude that minimizes the importance of women's sports.

Although the quantitative aspect above is important, the qualitative aspect is one in which I wished to find deeper context and this would offer a more verifiable indication of attitudes. As well as counting the news articles, I also read them to ascertain the type of language used within them. Language is an important

artifact to consider when assessing the presence of particular attitudes and for Fairclough (1995) it has a role in the exercise of power. Fairclough asserts language is particularly powerful as part of media discourse in that it can cultivate characteristics and this assertion emphasizes the importance of the language used when reporting on women's sports. In short, do the articles adhere to and contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes? Indeed, in this thesis is an assessment of language and its contribution to the forming of identities and for Sheldon (1997) this is particularly pertinent in the formation of ideas and attitudes around gender.

Seidman (2013) points to the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and Belgian anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss who thought of language as an active, dynamic social force shaping both the mind and the world and that language was the prototype of all social phenomena. For Seidman this leads to the conclusion that the methods for studying language can be applied to any aspect of society one might wish to study. Language is the bedrock of communication and any methodology such as the one within this thesis should consider the importance of how it shapes the thoughts, attitudes and actions of both the individual and of society. It is for these reasons I have placed importance on the analysis of the language used both in printed media and online content.

Research groups

I believe no researcher is in a vacuum and the final piece of *what I did* draws on the concept of reciprocity and mutual support. I have previously referred to interaction with friends, colleagues and fellow researchers and the way in which

this can inform and shape one's research. Here I would like to discuss the process of research and the effectiveness of research groups.

Yates (2010) makes comparisons between research in groups and solitary research and points out that for some, the process of solitary research is a harder undertaking. Although the actual research I undertook was of my own authorship, the benefits of group study will be discussed here.

In the early stages of my research journey I became involved with a research group comprising fellow early stage researchers. We met on a regular basis and discussed our ideas, what we were presently doing and what we were planning. Some sessions included researchers presenting the results of particular activities to the group in order to ascertain feedback. These sessions were helpful and helped me derive further motivation via a process of mutual encouragement.

As we were all at the earlier stages of our research journeys, these sessions proved fruitful in terms of offering springboards into further study directions via suggestions from colleagues. However as my research developed I became immersed in the particular chapters I was writing and knew the directions I wanted to take. Therefore, these sessions became of less use to me. It appeared my experience was mirrored by my colleagues as the sessions eventually came to an end.

The usefulness of group study became apparent again once I was approaching the later stages of my research. Together with fellow later stage researchers I became involved in a group that would meet on a regular basis in order to study together. This time, the focus of the group was different. Rather than discussing ideas and *testing the water* the purpose of the group was to create a quiet study

environment in which we could progress with the process of reading, writing and analysis. The rationale for this format was derived from our mutual experiences of studying alone, whereby we all found it difficult at times to maintain focus and found ourselves being distracted by the exigencies of everyday life.

The agreement was that we would work for a set period of time policing each other in an attempt to stop the distractions from hindering progress and then have breaks at agreed times. These breaks were a time in which we could discuss anything from the work on our PhDs to everyday subjects such as family and social life. This technique for working was developed by Cirillo (2006) and named the Pomodoro technique after the tomato shaped kitchen timer he used. Cirillo's aim was to view time as an ally in that one can control it once one allocates a particular function to slots of time. This enables one to avoid the trap of viewing time as an enemy from which great pressure can be derived.

Although the Pomodoro technique can be utilized by a lone researcher, I certainly derived benefit from the use of it within groups as it created an atmosphere of cooperation and support rather than one of solitude. Indeed, the writing of this section was facilitated by and took place in one such Pomodoro session.

Ethical considerations

“Ethics comes in at every stage: planning, doing and writing up research” (Wellington, 2010:129) therefore several ethical considerations are important to consider within this piece of research. I have shown above how the short interviews I conducted were of use as a springboard into further research and that in conducting these interviews I considered issues of interference in people's

lives. I confirmed with the university ethics committee that as my interviews were framed as public engagement to offer further direction for research, I did not need to gain ethical approval. I did however keep my then supervisor apprised of the questions I was asking and the progress made with the interviews. I have also considered bias in research as this is an important element to acknowledge with any study.

A further consideration for me is that of the selection of materials to both study and to evidence my work. This thesis includes a diverse range of sources including academic text books and journals, novels, websites, newspapers and conversations with friends and colleagues. It is therefore important to acknowledge the bias that might be present in these sources. In presenting arguments throughout this work I have relied upon and endorsed several sources but have also used many sources to illustrate the arguments played out in society.

Although I might not agree with some of these arguments, it is important for a study that wishes to evaluate a current societal picture to be aware of and acknowledge the impact of certain views; this is particularly important as sources such as those available via the internet are immediately accessible for millions of people across the world. This is predominantly relevant in the case of news providers as Hodkinson (2017:120) informs us that sometimes “the news falls short of presenting a balanced and truthful reflection of the world”. Hodkinson points out that this is by no means a secret and highlights the fact that these biases are recognized by academics, members of the public and politicians.

Theoretical standpoints influencing methodology and learning

The following section of the methodology offers some of the main theoretical standpoints that were considered within my thesis. I felt it important to include this as one can become embroiled in the quotidian aspects of research, particularly when considering contemporary society, and neglect to offer some deeper contextual meaning to the presentation of findings. These standpoints are purposely placed within the methodology chapter as I felt they not only influenced my methodology in that they offered direction for appropriate research, but they also offered me opportunities for further learning.

Structuralism and poststructuralism

Structuralism as forwarded by those such as Saussure placed emphasis on language and its power to distinguish between different things such as cat and dog and importantly (for my research into the place of women in sport) men and women. This is facilitated by what are referred to as *signifiers* (Burr, 2015), which are the words used to refer to the *signified*; therefore we have a means of coding which enables us to visualize and identify, for example, men and women.

Ostensibly there may be no difference between the signifiers man, male, fellow etc. as these signifiers, in the main, refer to *men*. However man used in a different context by a married partner could refer to a husband thereby signifying a particular status. Likewise, fellow could refer to a member of a group or an academy with which one has an affiliation; however in this instance the gendered nature of the word is negated due to the fact that one can be referred to as a fellow regardless of gender. In this way, we can see that the signifiers in themselves do not have an intrinsic meaning but they gain meaning and point to

the signified when they are compared with something else (Burr, 2015). Although my intention is not to forward a full discussion of semiotics, “the science of signs” (Saussure cited in Buchanan 2010:428), Buchanan offers an excellent example of the cultural nuances of words when pointing to the work of Roland Barthes. Barthes forwarded the idea that everyday objects can convey greater significance than solely their utility; for example, soap bubbles can represent such cultural phenomena as purity, cleanliness, fun etc.

At the beginning of the chapter regarding women and sport is a description of a conversation in a meeting regarding the use of the term ladies opposite the term men in a handbook. This was an important distinction to challenge as the term man is largely value neutral whereas lady is often used to signify positive characteristics of a woman in the same way that gentleman can do for a man. For this reason, I felt it important to offer analysis of the gendered nature of language within this research because one could argue that a constant reinforcement of stereotypes by the use of particular forms of discourse contributes to the oppression of certain groups.

“The idea that language treats women and men differently is not new” (Weatherall, 2002:12) and it is the difference in treatment that leads to inequality and indeed, oppression that warranted further investigation. Weatherall (2002:16) points to studies carried out by educationalists showing how the construction of language within children’s literature inculcated within children “the impression that males are more important and that females’ contribution to society is trivial”. Clearly this will contribute to the development of identity within both boys and girls and this can continue throughout the life course to adulthood. Positive and negative connotations are often attributed to gender specific terms

such as fox and vixen, stallion and mare, dog and bitch etc. and it is this kind of difference that also contributes to a sense of or lack of security when considering gendered identity.

From a social constructionist perspective language and discourse are the meaning systems that produce (rather than reflect) gender as an important and salient social category. A social constructionist approach to gender views it as an ideological-symbolic aspect of language and talk that potentially constitutes identity (Weatherall, 2002:85)

Gender, it is argued from a social constructionist perspective, is not something that is acquired, rather it is negotiated in society through a variety of behaviours, relationships and social structures. Thus, the essentialist nature of gender is challenged and one cannot say categorically what it is to be a man or a woman. The chapter in this thesis considering identity includes discussion of essentialism and strategic essentialism and my assertion is that the presence of and affiliation with certain socially constructed artefacts indeed contribute to identity. The subject is produced by dominant language use and socially constructed acceptance of the associated normative / hetero-normative definitions therein.

Burr (2015) points out that structuralism and indeed poststructuralism hold that language is the seat of construction of the person. Identities, personalities and experiences can be shaped by language and it is for this reason it is important to understand the power language has when shaping people's experiences in society. The experiences of women, as identified in the research into their place in sport as well as the experiences of black sportspeople as highlighted in the chapter regarding the civilizing process are discussed with reference to the

terminology and cultural meaning of words used to describe them. The late boxer Muhammad Ali described his annoyance at being referred to as a *nigger* because of the derogatory nature the word came to symbolize. However, I have heard people from an older generation to mine refer to the colour *nigger brown* when discussing wool with no conception of the power the word possesses in terms of oppression and offence.

The word *nigger* does however offer further insight into how situational context can change the effect of language. In contemporary society a white person referring to a black person as a nigger would almost certainly be construed as being offensive and oppressive. However many black people, particularly those who subscribe to *Hip Hop* culture use the term freely when communicating with each other and within their songs (Andrews, 2014). Indeed, Kennedy, (2000) points to the fact that many black people use the term in a multiplicity of ways including one of affection thereby highlighting the fact that *nigger*, like few other terms, can invoke extremities of emotions and reactions.

The above is the basis of the critique of structuralism by poststructuralism. Burr (2015) highlights the fact that poststructuralism asserts language is temporary and meanings change over time. For example, when I was a child, the term *sick* was used exclusively in relation to an ailment and by extension something that is in some way bad. However, my children and their contemporaries use the term to denote something that is very good for example “that song is sick” would mean the song is actually very good. This term exists in its new context in contemporary society alongside the *traditional* meaning when used in a more commonly known (certainly amongst my generation) context.

For Piaget (1971:75) “The syntax and semantics yield a set of rules to which any individual speaking that language must submit” therefore it could be argued that in ignoring the rules traditionally applied to a word is a way of breaking convention in a rebellious manner. Youth culture has continually appropriated words and applied new meanings to them as shown by the *sick* (read that how you would) example above. Furthermore, researchers such as Kennedy (2000) and Andrews (2014) have shown that in appropriating the word *nigger* for use other than a derogatory term many black people have rebelled against what became, in the early 1800s, the conventional use of the term (Middleton & Pilgrim, 2001). Belsey (2002) asserts language can be altered as long as others readily accept changes. This is not a new phenomenon as Belsey reminds us that poets, philosophers and scientists have offered new words and meanings and indeed she points to the fact that William Shakespeare invented many new words.

For Belsey (2002:7) “Poststructuralism proposes that the distinctions we make are not necessarily given by the world around us, but are instead produced by the symbolizing systems we learn.” Therefore we interpret language and meaning by understanding the relationship between signifiers and the signified but this interpretation is apt to change as signifiers are used to refer to an alternative signified entity. This is one of the main shifts that poststructuralism made to distinguish itself from structuralism, which did not stress the adaptability of signifiers (Inglis, 2012). In this way, Inglis informs us, poststructuralist thinking shifted away from the preoccupation with set structures and patterns favoured by structuralist thinking.

Graham (2005) proposes a poststructuralist stance is one that sees analysis as interpretive, contingent and always resultant of a theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint. This may well contradict proponents of a positivistic epistemology and highlights the assertion that knowledge production is not value free but is situated in the domain of the researcher and the process. *Situated knowledge* “involves the examination of the nature of the research process by looking inward – self reflexivity – and outward – reflecting on the relations with others involved in the research” (Caretta, 2015:490) thereby highlighting the importance of a full consideration of values in the research process including the consideration of reflexivity, which are both discussed above.

Ultimately, structuralism accepts the concept of change but within that change still seeks to find some security in results and patterns; knowledge should “start with the norm and only then consider the exception” (Williams, 2005:2) whereas poststructuralism holds that differences and continual change defy the opportunity to reify such patterns. Williams (2005) points out that some critics of poststructuralism view it as a destructive force offering radical opposition to tradition. For me, this is important and I will accept such criticism because *traditional* is not necessarily consistent with *good* and *equitable*. This is why I feel it important to consider the place of poststructuralism when researching such phenomena as racist and sexist oppression.

Williams (2005:106) points to Foucault, who stressed the importance of “historical conditioning, contingency and openness”. This is based on the premise that we are conditioned by what has gone before us but need to take our place in an open and contingent system. This shows a dichotomous situation landing between the ideas of determinism and freedom. The concept of freedom

or free will is aligned with enlightenment thinking that rails against dogmatism. Dogmatic thinking would stress determinism and a rigid worldview whereas poststructuralist thinking aligns itself with the enlightenment and it “highlights new relations between thought and its contexts. It explains the relation between thought and society” (Williams, 2005:155) and accepts the idea that new ways of thinking can enable individual agency to take control and follow the path of free will. These issues are further explored in the following discussion re social change.

What is social change?

“Philosophers have so far only changed their interpretation of the world; the point however is to change the world”

Even though this quote from Marx (cited by McLeish, 1969:1) is relatively old, it firstly indicates the observable fact that change happens and secondly it stresses the imperative that change should be facilitated where necessary. It is the concept of *where necessary* that is of interest for this thesis as much of what is written about here documents the changes made by people and society to accommodate the exigencies of contemporary life. Indeed, McLeish (1969) asserts that social change happens as a consequence of historical necessity. The societal demand for individuals to remain healthy is one of the aforementioned exigencies and is explored in this thesis. This demand has several facets including links to self-esteem and links to obligations to society in terms of not becoming a burden (Daly, 2011).

Social change is apparent here in that, for example, ideal body shapes can be linked to self-esteem and these *ideals* have undergone changes over the years.

This aspect of social change is tied to the individual and is indicative of the growing nature of an individualistic doctrine in society that is discussed elsewhere in this thesis. However the societal imperative to remain healthy can certainly be (indeed I argue in this thesis, is) linked to economic demands whereby successive governments, certainly in the UK, have promoted a philosophy of reducing state intervention in areas such as health care and welfare provision.

The structures of society impact on the agency of the individual and this is tied to the principle of determinism. The idea that free will is inhibited by the constrictions society places upon us can, at its extreme, be seen as an assertion that individuals are not responsible for their actions. However the assertion in this thesis is that individuals respond to the demands and expectations of society and *choose* to take particular courses of action. The nature of this choice has to be questioned though; is it that individuals make these choices in a bid to conform? McLeish (1969:74) argues “The contribution of the individual is always within an institutional framework which places a premium on conformism”. For McLeish the social actions of individuals are carried out within the confines of external determinants and he cites the work of Parsons which states that ultimately, it is the system that is decisive in the ideas and actions of individuals.

Ogletree (2014) links this to tolerance when she points to the notion that if we are to believe one’s behaviour is linked to genetic and environmental factors then we will have a greater understanding of such behaviours and therefore a greater degree of tolerance. Cohen (2014) refers to the paradox of toleration whereby in a bid to maintain the values that accompany tolerance we can be compelled to tolerate behaviours that ostensibly and even manifestly are deemed intolerable

in a society that adheres to particular mores. A critique of Parsons is offered by Inglis (2012:55) who offers that his view will see individuals as “‘cultural dopes’ who carry out the instructions for social action given to them by the common culture’s norms and values”.

Even if we were to discount the notion of external systems and structures limiting free will and argue that people make choices of their own volition; or as Doomen (2012:21) puts it, “Any room left presents the possibility to argue the existence of a ‘free will’” we need to consider the antecedents to those choices. Are the choices we make prescribed for us by our up-bringing? Are they made as a result of particular innate characteristics? (the aforementioned genetic and environmental factors). If we are to subscribe to either side of the nature / nurture dichotomy we might be obliged to accept that free will is indeed contingent on some element of determined path.

In the face of the arguments above it is interesting that many people are reluctant to accept the notion that free will does not exist. In support of this, Rakos *et al* (2008) assert the generalized belief that free will is the default philosophy of most people. Further to this they highlight that “free will is so omnipresent in Western culture that its societal endorsement is accepted without requiring empirical substantiation” (Rakos *et al*, 2008:22). Concerns regarding the existence of free will over determinism lie in the fact that people wish to believe they are in control of their own destiny. They need to feel the security that is brought with the power this would entail. A sense of powerlessness would inevitably ensue if one was to accept that they had no free will. Indeed, Rakos *et al* (2008) posit a strong correlation between a strong sense of free will and that of

high self-esteem. The split in the argument is neatly summed up by Ogletree (2014:1):

If will is to be “free”, the individual who is choosing needs to be able to not only choose among alternatives, but in addition have a variety of different outcomes. The determinist argues that, given genetic and environmental determinants as well as their various interactions, only one outcome is possible in any given situation.

The argument of the determinist echoes the statement from Marx (1852:15), who asserted:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.

Ogletree informs us the determinist does not dismiss the element of choice and accepts one can consider options that could produce multiple outcomes.

However, the determinist will still argue that *only one outcome* is possible.

However, if we are to assert the notion that free will does exist in the psychological sense (Rakos (2008) refers to evolutionary psychological adaptation) then our attention must turn to the sociological factors that might impact on our destinies.

Plummer (2010) discusses the notion of contingencies; he cites the fact that chance happenstances can offer myriad possibilities in our lives. Using the 1998 motion picture *Sliding Doors* as illustrative of this, Plummer outlines the story of the main character who has two completely different life outcomes depicted

contingent on her firstly catching a tube train and secondly missing the same train. His assertion is that “Moments really do matter. Possibilities are everywhere for things to be different from what they are” (Plummer, 2010:113). In order to mitigate the uncertainty of constant change and unpredictable events impacting our lives, Plummer argues we adhere to social habits. We form routines and follow largely habitual existences thereby minimizing the risks associated with unpredictability.

The idea of contingency contributes to Giddens’ structuration theory. Giddens rejects the notion of closed systems arguing instead that social phenomena and events are open ended (Scott & Marshall, 2009). The argument forwarded by Giddens’ theory is that social actors produce structure through actions and social practices and that structure in turn produces social actions. “Structuration theory offers a conceptual scheme that allows one to understand both how actors are at the same time the creators of social systems yet created by them” (Giddens, 1991:204).

Structuration therefore does not offer a definitive idea of either structure or agency having primacy. For Giddens “people actively make and remake social structure during the course of their everyday activities” (Giddens & Sutton, 2013:89-90). Giddens (1984:22) asserts the day-to-day activities of people are formulaic and these “enter into the structuring of much of the texture of everyday life”. Giddens’ (1991) explanation of structuration is that its concern with regard to social science is that of recurrent social practices and their transformations.

Giddens appears to eschew the notion of the complete reduction of agency due to structure but in his assessment of approaches to social change, McLeish

(1969) stresses the reduction of the social agent. He asserts the individual does not exactly realise one's intentions as the systems around one are ever-present and exert an influence that can at times be barely perceptible. What might these systems be? In the case of this thesis, the systems influencing our choices and our "freedom" to make choices are manifold. Social class, notions regarding gender, access to resources, freedom of movement within society and the recognition of social capital contribute to the ability of individuals to exercise their agency.

These systems form the societal structures that can restrict one's agency. These structures are those aspects of the social landscape that are more fixed and enduring and as such can offer a pervasive and powerful influence on society that can dictate the range of choices an individual has open to them when trying to reach a particular goal. For King (2004:5) structure and agency represent a dualism that presents "on the one hand...the cold institutions of the modern society and, on the other, the creative individual". This dualism is a contributory factor in the debate around free will and the ability of an individual to make change. Do the cold institutions, steadfast in their stasis, stifle the creativity of people hence their ability to effect meaningful change in their lives?

In answering the above question one could point to the chapter within this thesis concerning the civilizing process. I highlight several examples of sportspeople who have managed change in their lives; indeed, Lyras and Hums (2009:7) assert sport can "act as a catalyst for social change, affecting the lives of participants beyond the playing field or gymnasium". This change has been shown to be of great significance to the individuals concerned and has highlighted the ability for one to effect change in one's life. However, the fact

remains that change has been facilitated by the particular attributes of these individuals, who have been able to capitalise on their talents and abilities.

It cannot be ignored however that the changes outlined have also taken place within a landscape of social change and “sport can, and indeed should, be a vehicle for progressive social change” (Kaufman & Wolff, 2010:156).

Consequently, the changes that for example Tommie Smith and John Carlos (athletes / civil rights activists from the US who will be discussed later in this thesis) were able to effect were arguably only possible in a society that was becoming more aware of the need to afford civil rights to black people. This process of change was not a speedy one but it did offer increasing structural changes that meant the lives of people were such that their agency was gaining more potential.

Jarvie (2012) charts the history of sport as it relates to social change and highlights the progress made by women and black people within a sporting context. He argues that progresses made in sport that apparently impact on society do not necessarily offer a true picture of the historical importance of women / black people in sport. Jarvie’s stance is that there is a rich history of participation and success but it is our pre-occupation with contemporary society that fails to acknowledge this. However, I would contest we can be excused for our obsession with the current picture because as Plummer (2010) points out, the process of social change means society is never fixed. His assertion is “Societies are bubbling cauldrons of never ending change. Nothing stays the same. Every sociological finding is out of date the minute it is done” (Plummer, 2010:112). It is for this reason, I acknowledge the importance of change within this thesis but I also place a premium on the current picture. Therefore, I am

interested in the current picture in terms of how sport, health and fitness impact on society.

Yet still we need to ask ourselves if society has truly changed; have people truly gained the agency that addresses the inequalities brought about by the structures of society? This debate has been added to yet again by a protest made by American National Football League (NFL) players. Mirroring the protest of Tommie Smith and John Carlos, many mainly black players kneeled during the playing of the American National Anthem before a game in a protest highlighting racism and police brutality (Guardian, 2017).

There is a difference between this protest and the programme of similar protests being made at various US sporting events and that of Smith and Carlos. The sportspeople who are making these protests are very well paid and due to their status as sporting icons with some social capital, they are in a much more powerful position than Smith and Carlos were. Their position is made stronger by the fact that unlike Smith and Carlos, they have not been universally censured and they even have the backing of many high profile people who exert great influence in society.

The above example highlights the proposal of social change being possible for some but not all. The idea of social capital having influence adds to the debate about agency and structure and arguably reasserts the notion that for some, the development of their agency has enabled them to effect change. However, Giddens might argue that it is the repeated actions of individuals that have altered the structures in such a way that their voices can be heard.

What is representation?

Before answering this question, it is necessary to state why representation matters here. Much of this thesis includes exploration of identity and how language impacts upon identity. Signifiers and the signified are key to these discussions and how we derive meaning from the forms of communication around us is investigated. Therefore, the importance of language and how we use it cannot be overstated. This is highlighted later in this thesis in the consideration of the American wrestler Chyna and how language was used in different ways to portray her.

Above is a consideration of structuralism and poststructuralism and how language changes. When considering the importance of representation it is necessary to quote Stuart Hall's (1997:61) definition

Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning. Already, this definition carries the important premise that things – objects, people, events, in the world – do not have in themselves any fixed, final or true meaning. It is us – in society, within human cultures – who make things mean, who signify. Meanings, consequently, will always change, from one culture or period to another.

It is important to include this quote in its entirety as it neatly sums up the aforementioned discussion in which the changing nature of language and meanings are explored. The media is considered in this thesis with analysis of magazines and online coverage of sports and according to King (2013), the

debate around representation includes the question of whether the media reflects or whether it constructs reality.

Hall (1997) informs us representation falls within a number of theoretical perspectives but it is the constructionist perspective that is of interest here due to the fact that “representation is the production of meaning through language” (1997:16). We can look at a table and recognize it as an object with fixed characteristics (some form of supporting structure and some form of surface) and the concept of table is now fixed and recognizable. However, when discussing issues such as identity, gender, race, the body etc. as is the case in this thesis, Hall asserts a more complex *system of representation* is employed. Contrary to the idea of an individual concept, a system of representation includes “different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them” (Hall, 1997:17).

For Hall it is not *things* that have meaning but the language, symbols, ideas and signs that form a system of representation with a constructionist approach. This thesis includes a chapter looking at gender and the concept of femininity is considered, particularly in terms of how language is employed to represent certain ideas of what femininity actually is. Language is shown to have played a part in the various representations of the wrestler Chyna but this fell within a system of representation that included concepts of what the body should be in terms of femininity. The world of wrestling offers much in the way of theoretical research and Barthes (1972) reinforces the idea of the body being key to representation therein as he asserts it is the first impression of the body that is influential in the audience’s response to a contestant.

For Hall (1997) visual representation becomes central to what he terms the spectacle of the 'other'. He asserts that there is a 'them' and 'us' binary when people are significantly different from the dominant norm.

They seem to be represented through sharply opposed, polarized, binary extremes – good/bad, civilized/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic (Hall, 1997:229)

This is exemplified in the world of wrestling in which the *heroes* and *villains* are clearly defined. Hall argues that the audience often requires people to be both these things at the same time. However, the case of Chyna, outlined later, shows that she was not able to achieve this due to her transgression from normative expectations of femininity. Schmid (1999:897) confirms the difficulty faced in adopting a combination of identities in the world of wrestling when she informs us that “goodness and badness are treated as stable personality traits”. She confirms there is always a possibility for the wrestler to change from *heel* to *face* (bad to good) and vice versa but there needs to be a significant re-framing of image. Central to this re-framing is the language used in the representation of the wrestler because as Schmid argues, the production and reception of language are carriers of attributions.

What is society?

My research throughout this thesis evidences several phenomena. I argue that society matters and we all have our place in society decided by factors both internal and external to us. These factors are shaped by a selection of criteria including identity and social capital, and these criteria are, in turn created by

language and context. Societal views of individuals are shaped by their presentation of self and part of this is the assertion that physical and health attributes matter. As simple as this might seem, it does not assume meaningful status if we do not agree what *society* actually is.

The identity chapter in this thesis includes a section discussing the concept of community and within this is an exploration of the differences between community and society. The late Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is quoted as saying “There is no such thing as society” (Steele, 2009:85) which is taken as an assertion that for her, society no longer existed. What Thatcher continued to say however was that “There are individual men and women, and there are families...no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first” (Thatcher, 1993:626). Her assertion was that society is not a distinct entity but is a living structure comprising individuals, families, members of one’s geographical community and associations. For Thatcher, we had a duty to look after ourselves first and only then could we look after others.

For me, society is indeed a living structure because it is formed by the living beings within it. I live in a society that comprises other human beings just as an ant lives in a highly organized society comprising other ants (espacepourlavie, 2017) (whilst acknowledging there is reciprocal impact between the animal and human domains, I do not propose to explore this here). Although I have some sympathy with Thatcher’s stance and do indeed agree with the idea that an individual needs to be in a position of relative security in order to best help others (put on your own lifejacket first), I do feel that the neo-liberal doctrine of individualism dismissed the importance of society as a concept.

As discussed in the identity chapter, community feels more immediate as a concept but society is an important phenomenon to consider because communities of any kind will not thrive in a wider society that is not stable. So what is society? For me, society is constructed of myriad phenomena including ideology, language, identities, theoretical standpoints, association with others and indeed, the people that constitute society. This thesis includes many references to society and in the main, this is confined to contemporary western society. This is because my research is rooted in a European setting with many references to the Americas. My research looks at social construction and one of my main assertions is that language matters. Although several of the theorists referred to might not have written in the English language, I take their ideas as translated and apply them to the research in hand because for me, as previously stated, no researcher is in a vacuum and society will inevitably impact on all of us as we impact on it.

Conclusion

The methods and methodology I have utilized here are appropriate for the task in hand. My intention in this thesis was to evaluate the complexities present in society with regard to the landscape of sport, health and fitness and in seeking to do this, it was important to use a variety of methods, which in turn, reflect these complexities. This thesis represents a critical review of several domains in society with the construction of identity being one of the main considerations.

My research acknowledges the importance of printed media as well as the growing impact of web-based communication and it is interesting that traditional theorists have produced work that talks to the issues of new technologies before

these technologies existed. This, for me, highlights the importance of referring to such theorists as Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler etc. alongside the ideas presented by theorists writing in contemporary society.

In keeping with the aims of this thesis, the following chapter will examine how the civilizing process has impacted upon physical endeavour and how this has manifested as change for individuals and consequently, societal change. This is one of the sites within the thesis that does consider the importance of social change. In highlighting issues such as the changing nature of social capital and the meaning attached to increasing obligations citizens have to be healthy, the current impact of the landscape of sport, health and fitness is considered.

Chapter three – Sport and the Civilizing Process

This chapter will trace some of the historical considerations present when assessing the impact of sport on society. In keeping with the theme that individual change can facilitate societal change, the concept of social capital (Field, 2008) will be explored and this will offer some explanation as to how powerful the sporting milieu can be in terms of enabling people to make tangible change in their lives.

The civilizing process and sporting instinct

Humans have always engaged in running. Hunting for survival and running into battle were once examples of the necessity to run. They gave a purpose and meaning to the action and as such offer reasons why individuals ran (Gotaas, 2009). Legend states that the Greek messenger Pheidippides collapsed and died after running from Marathon to Athens to announce victory over the Persians (Kyle, 1998). True or not, this story represents running as a risky activity undertaken with a clear purpose – hardly a pleasurable sporting pastime.

In contemporary western society this is not the case; running represents a pastime which is undertaken for myriad reasons. Survival in hostile circumstances is not something we associate with running today and analysis of the work of Norbert Elias (Giulianotti, 2004; Dunning, 1999) points to the civilizing process within society as being a major factor in the changing face of physical endeavour. Elias states that this process sees humans attain increasing elements of civility whereby social mores coupled with the state, mediate societal conflict in the form of protection against violence. This protection by the police and armed forces affords a situation in which violence and conflict are no longer

readily experienced by individuals. In further explaining the civilizing process Elias (1986:132) states that:

According to it, one expects that state formation and conscience formation, the level of socially permitted physical violence and the threshold of repugnance against it or witnessing it, differ in specific ways at different stages in the development of societies

Therefore we have been nurtured to adapt to a civilized society. However, a Hobbesian stance would argue that there is an innate propensity for us to revert to a pre-civilized state of nature which would require strength and a competitive nature to survive. A domesticated cat may be adequately fed and cared for to live a comfortable life, yet it will still follow its instincts by engaging in hunting activities; stalking, catching and killing smaller prey. How humans have been able to suppress their own instinctual processes over millennia is an important question. Indeed, Kaye (2007:162) argues that the transition brought about by the civilizing process and in particular, agriculturalisation, has transformed humans from hunter-gatherers to farmers. She argues that this “modern lifestyle we think of as “human” is not human at all in the grand scheme of things”.

Kaye’s stance is that despite thousands of years of change, humans are still innately hunter-gatherers and therefore still possess an instinct to run. Why else would a human being wish to voluntarily run twenty six plus miles non-stop at a strenuous pace? According to Kaye (2007), as an outlet for emotional and affective instincts running and sport in general can enable us to fulfil this innate need to compete with our surroundings. It can enable an individual to experience the full excitement of struggle without the need to expose oneself to the dangers

and risks concomitant with pre-civilized society (Guilianotti, 2004). The mimetic experience offered by sporting competition can feed an innate craving to conquer our competitors, which is a phenomenon Hobbes discussed in *Leviathan* (Schumaker, 2010).

Hobbes (1946:81) view that diffidence (distrustfulness) will naturally lead to conflict is highlighted by his belief that although all men (sic) by nature are equal they become enemies in striving for the same gains and “endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another”. His view of civilization would suggest that we are bound by a social contract with the state and that it is our fear of punishment if we transgress this contract that stops us from entering into a violent competitive struggle for supremacy.

An alternative to this view would be offered by the thoughts of Rousseau (Cottingham, 2008) whose thoughts on society and the individual would refute the argument that humans would naturally wish to conquer and even kill each other. Rousseau believed that pre-civilized humans were noble and that our natural instincts are good. Rousseau (1762) believed in the inherent goodness of people but did advocate for a social compact that would reflect the general will, which was driven by the general morality of people.

Whichever direction the above debate would take, the fact remains that in today’s society individuals are offered the opportunity to enter into a safe state of conflict due to the nature of rules and codification within sport. For Ashworth, writing in 1971, sport offered the opportunity for the release of aggression.

Referring to games as “a form of civilised violence that parallels the controlled but nevertheless universally generated violence of real life” (Ashworth, 1971:43)

Ashworth likened the FA Cup (English Soccer) to a civilised civil war and the Olympic Games as civilised world war.

As a sports competitor an individual is battling against phenomena s/he is familiar with. Another competitor, the sports field, the elements are all variables that can be, and are, assessed and prepared for. Training regimes, practice runs and at times, meticulous preparation can enable a competitor to “enter battle” in a state of relative comfort, knowing that basic survival does not depend on the outcome.

Sport for social change

As the world transforms and becomes more “civilized”, social issues become more important. Not only is basic survival necessary but a fulfilled life requires other factors such as economic stability and social acceptance. In his 2009 exploration of running Thor Gotaas documents the changing nature of running, paying attention to the ways in which running has enabled individuals to raise awareness of particular social issues such as racism and oppression (Gotaas, 2009).

In the 1930s the sprinter Jesse Owens symbolised an anomaly in society in that he enjoyed great sporting success which in turn led to a lucrative career from which he earned substantial amounts of money. This was despite being a black man from the United States of America (USA), which was still a nation that largely discriminated against its black population. Owens' feats were even more remarkable as he became, for many black *and* white people, the hero of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games held in Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany where he won four gold medals.

Although it is unclear whether a lack of civil rights informed any of Jesse Owens' intentions, he clearly represented what could be achieved by individuals from oppressed groups through sporting endeavour. Even in retirement Owens maintained his status as a role model due to the International Olympic Committee using him as a spokesman for the Olympic ideal, which sets out to promote "international understanding, particularly among the youth of the world, through sport and culture in order to advance the harmonious development of humankind" (Olympic Movement, 1999:1). Owens also represented the members of some oppressed groups in society in trying to build bridges between black and white people. Amongst other actions, Owens returned to Berlin in 1951 as global goodwill ambassador and was greeted by the Germans in the positive manner that was not afforded him by Adolf Hitler fifteen years previously.

The African-American Civil Rights Movement gained momentum during the 1950s and 1960s (Cohen & Kennedy, 2013) and again, black runners sent out a striking message during the Olympic Games, this time in Mexico City in 1968. USA athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos mounted the podium after the 200 metres final to receive their gold and bronze medals. However, while the USA was being saluted during the playing of its national anthem, Smith and Carlos raised their leather-gloved fists to salute the Black Panther Movement, which was campaigning against racism in the USA (Jarvie, 2012).

The two athletes were expelled from the Games and widely censured particularly by the sporting establishment in the USA. Tommie Smith pointed out that in winning races he was lauded and referred to as an American. However, he also pointed to the fact that if he did something bad he would be referred to as a Negro. In further highlighting his frustrations and those of his contemporaries

Smith said "It is very discouraging to be in a team with white athletes. On the track you are Tommie Smith, the fastest man in the world, but once you are in the dressing rooms you are nothing more than a dirty Negro (BBC, 2011a)." This phenomenon is discussed in Lawrence's (2005:109) study of the experiences of African American athletes which found that:

In the athletic arena, teammates, fans, administrators and coaches might express gratitude and adulation. Unfortunately, feelings of acceptance change fairly quickly when the setting changes to classrooms, restaurants, hotels or when their athletic performance is considered to be inadequate.

Many years after the protest of Smith and Carlos the status of sporting achievement and its potential to effect change was highlighted again when both men (who were now respected high school athletics coaches) were honoured for the part they played in furthering the civil rights movement in the USA (Carlos, 2011). The image of Smith and Carlos on the podium shown here still endures as an iconic representation of how success in sport can be used to impact on society.



Just as Jesse Owens was able to contribute to furthering a cause despite the power of Nazi Germany in 1936, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were able to do the same despite a prevalent culture of racist oppression (Yianni, 2013).

During the same era as the protest of Smith and Carlos another high profile figure driven by his Black Muslim beliefs (King, 1975) was battling for acceptance. Already a successful and established boxer, Muhammad Ali had refused to join the armed forces due to his anti-war stance. His position was clearly informed partly by his own experiences of oppression as he famously stated “I ain’t got no quarrel with the Viet Cong...no Viet Cong ever called me nigger” (cited in aavw, 2011). Like Smith and Carlos, Ali was censured for his stance and even sentenced to five years in prison (later overturned).

Commentators of the day referred to Ali as “a disgrace...a sorry spectacle...an adult brat...and an unpatriotic draft-dodger” (Hauser, 2004:145-147).

However once he returned to boxing after suspension, Ali went on to further sporting success becoming the undisputed world heavyweight champion. His sporting achievements and flamboyant nature saw him become a much loved and respected figure. He was idolised and considered a hero by many black and white people and in 1999 received the title of Sports Personality of the Century in the UK and Sportsman of the Century in the USA (Jarvie, 2012). Jarvie asserts that Ali was afforded these accolades not only because of his athleticism but also due to the political stances he made throughout his life.

To return from social exile in the way Ali did was quite an achievement and one which encompasses the power of sporting success and the way in which it enables understanding of particular standpoints. Because he was already a

sporting icon, Ali was afforded an opportunity to put forward his beliefs and explain his stance against war. This created a situation in which commentators and even politicians better appreciated his point of view. Edward Kennedy (cited in Hauser, 2004:199) said “I think Muhammad’s actions contributed enormously to the debate about whether the United States should be in Vietnam...anyone with that wide an audience will have an impact when they take a stand”.

American footballer Jim Brown (cited in Hauser, 2004:201) pointed to the way in which Ali helped to combat racial tensions:

When Ali came back from exile, he became the darling of America because it brought black and white people together...In a way, he became part of the establishment. And I suppose, in a sense, there’s nothing wrong with that, because if you can come to a point where you make all people feel good, maybe that’s greater than being a fighter for black people

An earlier example of using running in the struggle for recognition is provided by the story of Harold Abrahams, whose efforts are documented in the novel and screenplay for the 1981 motion picture *Chariots of Fire*. Abrahams was a Jewish man who was “forced to battle prejudice in an English society that treated him as an alien” (Weatherby, 1982:9). His athletic feats were a factor in his efforts to combat bigotry and his constant desire to win was reinforced by his status and a desire to gain equality.

Abrahams gained acceptance through his endeavours, which included winning the gold medal in the 100 metres sprint in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. He returned to Britain to a hero’s welcome and maintained his links with athletics by

becoming a writer and broadcaster. Running had enabled Abrahams to make what seemed an unlikely transition from being a potential outcast to being firmly established in society and considered a respected elder statesman of athletics. He was awarded a CBE and became president of the Amateur Athletic Association and chairman of the British Amateur Athletics Board (Frow, 1996).

Although these examples highlight the personal progress made by individuals they are indicative of the power of sport as a contributory factor in struggles for social change (Jarvie, 2012). They demonstrate how sporting achievement can enable individuals to enhance their status in society. The accumulation of wealth, a demonstration of success and the gaining of respect from the various echelons in society are increasingly concomitant with sporting success. This is highlighted by examples widely mediated in the press and on television such as David Beckham, who gained success as an English football player, mixing with the English monarchy, and the U.S. cyclist Lance Armstrong attending presidential functions.

It can be argued that this is not something that would have been commonplace for much of the twentieth century as football in particular was still viewed as a working class pastime and class divisions were more clearly defined. Although not necessarily viewed as a working class sport, cricket offers another example of this power in the case of Ian Botham. During his playing career Botham was vilified in some sections of society due to his off-field behaviour, which included smoking cannabis (Blofeld, 2001). However, his continued success on the cricket field coupled with his charitable work, which included money raising cross-country walks (Blofeld, 2001) lead to him being awarded a knighthood and

respectfully referred to as Sir Ian Botham. It can be argued that being awarded a knighthood is a clear indicator that one has gained social capital.

Social capital

Pierre Bourdieu's thoughts around *social capital* in which the central tenet is that "relationships matter" (Field, 2008:1) can lead us to the conclusion that agency to effect meaningful change can be achieved by, amongst other things, inclusion in particular networks. As can be seen in the above examples, sporting success can and has enabled people to become members of certain powerful networks thereby increasing their own potential for social mobility. Their capital is not just economic but also cultural in terms of recognition, which leads to inclusion further up the social hierarchy. Bourdieu (1999) argued that social capital was based on recognisable cultural symbols that constitute marks of distinction designating a position in the social structure. He states that symbolic and social capital can be derived from what he terms the "*club effect*" (Bourdieu, 1999:129) whereby commonalities see a gathering together of those with similarities and bring into closer proximity those people considered to be desirable.

Lack of qualifications and certificates, not having the right skin colour, or indeed the right name are some of the phenomena that Bourdieu (1999) points to when discussing the effects of stigmatisation, which prevent particular people from "joining the club". Therefore chic neighbourhoods, luxury homes and membership of particular clubs become the domain of the select few who display the desired attributes.

Bourdieu's stance here is somewhat limited in that it relies heavily on historically entrenched positions in society. He refers to honorific position in society as that

which is attached by right and protocol; this is symbolic of a dated view of society in which social mobility across class structures was not commonplace. His view, for Anthias (2006:23):

is overly reliant on the retention of the idea of materiality in terms of the traditional Marxist conception of the economic as a feature of social life, and as superordinate in defining place and position in the social hierarchy.

An update of the discussion around social capital can be applied to individuals who gain honorific positions by virtue of their sporting successes and the configuration of society, however, whether this same application can be applied to groups of people is another matter. A shared set of dispositions in thought, behaviour and taste, which Bourdieu (1984) refers to as *habitus*, can see the acquisition of social, cultural and economic capital enable certain groups to become socially upwardly mobile. Again, for Field (2008), the dispositions Bourdieu refers to can be viewed as dated in that, for example, he cites a shared appreciation of classical music as being a trait of those in elite circles. However, the argument being advanced here is that the factor enabling sports stars to garner social capital is success in the sporting arena.

With this in mind, a question to be tackled is why modern day sports stars have been able to reap those benefits in a way their predecessors were not. It can be argued that today, a culture of celebrity in which increasing influence is exerted in society by a variety of people who have gained fame by a variety of means enables them to “move about more freely in society” (Rojek, 2001:147).

Therefore it is not necessarily the social capital earned as a sportsperson that is behind this increase in status rather their status as a celebrity.

Sports star as celebrity and role model

What was once part of the process of living has now become a supplement to everyday life and sport is seen as a commodity in a consumer society (Blakey, 2011). Both as a spectator phenomenon and as a participatory event, some sports represent 'big business'. Sports people in the post modern era may have trained and competed in a traditional sense but they are increasingly reaping the benefits of heightened commercial activities such as sponsorship and maintaining a media presence (Yianni, 2008). The commercialisation of sport and the creation of sportspeople as celebrities have created an arena in which sport is viewed as a path to fame and riches. The particular sports can vary from nation to nation, for example baseball in the USA is much more popular than in the UK (Horne, 2006). However, trappings such as wealth that are readily associated with celebrity reinforce the power of the consumer lifestyle creating a culture of aspiration amongst people whereby sport is increasingly seen as a route to celebrity and a successful life. "Without doubt, celebrity is a widely desired characteristic of modern life, but the chances of gaining it via achieved celebrity are limited" (Rojek, 2001:148) and it is this point that contributes to an understanding of the power of sporting achievement.

Legend states that the Thracian slave, Spartacus rose to prominence and gained power as a leader after success in the gladiatorial arena (Strauss, 2010). As one of the earliest examples of "sporting celebrity" his celebrity lives on today in the guise of many sporting teams such as Spartak Moscow football club using his name. Additionally, Swiss cyclist Fabian Cancellara bears the nickname Spartacus in recognition of his great strength and power in competition (Scott, 2017). The name itself is a symbol of success and this symbolism is an example

of the way in which sporting phenomena can impact on societal perceptions of power. Indeed the Spartakiad movement, which consisted of mass displays of gymnastic prowess practised in the last century by both fascist and Communist regimes (Eichberg, 2010) represented highly visible demonstrations of power.

Parker (2009:150) offers the view that in contemporary society “sports stars represent a key site through which social, cultural and economic change can be observed”. Citing Rojek’s work on celebrity, Parker’s assertion is that due to the reduction of religious and monarchical influences on society and a proliferation of readily accessible media, celebrities including sporting icons exert greater influence as the dominant aspirational figures. “Sports celebrities are now at the vanguard of popular culture” (Rojek, 2006:683) and it is this phenomenon that enables sports stars to forge close relationships with those in elite circles.

Rojek argues that whereas previously the hereditary principle would have seen the distribution of distinction, honour and economic resources remain the domain of a select few within society, the ascendancy of a meritocratic achievement culture sees the celebrity benefit from increased cultural capital. This is despite the persisting attitude in some circles that those considered the *nouveau riche* do not have the cultural capital associated with a class system (Platt, 2011).

However, increased cultural capital *is* enabled by the establishment and growth of influence of celebrity culture in today’s society. Rojek maintains that this is a result of democratic society’s adherence to a “contest system of reward” (2006:680). It follows then that sport offers an exemplar of the meritocratic model in which the sports person can become the sports celebrity and subsequently a member of the *elite club*. An illustration of this is offered by the tennis stars

Venus and Serena Williams, who's story is encapsulated by Clifton (2017:online) when he discusses their success on and off the tennis court:

Both sisters, black women, have pushed past abject racism at major tournaments, sexist and misogynist characterizations of their physicality and their bodies, and many other indignities as urban-raised women playing a sport associated with wealthy suburban whites.

Horne (2006:83) points out that whereas athletes were once considered heroes, they are now considered stars; they were "known for their actions rather than their looks" and not so reliant on visual representation. The increasing media presence and branding of sportspeople such as David Beckham create a situation whereby every aspect of their lifestyle including their physical fitness is publicly acknowledged and scrutinised. Cashmore (in Horne: 2006) argues that people such as Beckham become consumable products; in this way people can gain vicarious gratification via emulation. Further evidence of this is provided by U.S. basketball star Michael Jordan, who Barron (2015:54) points out, is a "superbrand in his own right" Due to his inspirational performances on the basketball court, consumers made the *Air Jordan* brand a top selling range for the *Nike* sportswear company.

It can be argued that the Williams sisters, Beckham, Jordan *et al* have transcended the aspiration to be accepted as part of the elite to actually *being* the elite members of society. This is enabled by accumulation of material wealth and status as celebrity icons for many in society.

Media representations of a desirable lifestyle often include representations of a 'fit and healthy' body and sportspeople are ideally placed to demonstrate the image because:

the cultural *cachet* of sports has benefited from the increased concern with health and fitness in popular culture, itself the consequence of increased medical knowledge. If the healthy body is now widely desired and valued as an object of esteem in popular culture, the sports celebrity is the embodiment of this social category (Rojek, 2006:682) (emphasis in original).

We are not all capable of reaching the heights of elite sport and becoming widely exalted for our sporting achievements but encouragement of aspirations can drive one to seek alternative routes to the desirable body image. Exercise regimes are increasingly packaged for consumption and are promoted on a premise that they can enable one to attain the desirable body. The aerobics "movement" gained momentum in the 1980s with celebrities such as Jane Fonda forming part of the vanguard with her successful exercise videos (Glassner, 1989).

The above term "movement" is used deliberately as a typical social movement includes collective behaviour that is designed to fulfil common aspirations driven by equally common attitudes. The boom in popularity of the aerobics movement saw the gathering together of large numbers of people in gymnasias at set times in the week to move in ritualistic fashion around or in front of a central figure on a podium who would be giving instructions for all to follow (Felstead *et al*, 2007). Reminiscent of the aforementioned Spartakiads these gatherings gained such

popularity that celebrity status was afforded in the U.K. to Diana Moran (nicknamed the Green Goddess due to her green exercise leotard) in the 1980s and Derrick Evans (nicknamed Mr. Motivator) in the 1990s. Moran and Evans were just two of the many television instructors who facilitated daily aerobic exercise routines on national breakfast time television and they contributed to the picture of a growing phenomenon that took advantage of increasing health concerns. There was an increasing feeling that one could change oneself by taking part in what were popular and easily accessible ways to a *healthy* body.

With the increasing cult of celebrity came a blurring of the boundaries between the different types of celebrity. In her 2009 discussion of celebrity influence, Hyde discusses this concept and highlights the fact that celebrities are becoming increasingly embroiled in public debates around such issues as climate change, world conflict and public health. Hyde's view is that celebrities are taking such a hold on so many issues that "The celebrity situation is out of control and we need to start looking for an exit strategy" (2009:2). Where there is an increasing view of sportsperson as celebrity there appears to be a burgeoning view of celebrity as sportsperson / exercise expert. This is demonstrated by the proliferation of exercise DVDs and TV programmes produced by celebrities who came to prominence via the entertainment industry (Craig & Jones, 2010).

Following the lead of actress Jane Fonda, who is an example of someone who became known for her workout programmes at least as much as, if not more than her status as an actor, TV celebrities such as Davina McCall and soap stars such as Angela Griffin have produced exercise DVDs. Street dance group Diversity and nightclub and music promoters Ministry of Sound have also entered this lucrative market thereby tapping into the nation's youth culture.

DVDs such as these often appear on bestseller lists and it could be argued that it is the celebrity endorsement that is encouraging increasing numbers of people to engage in programmes of exercise (Barron, 2015). The increasingly blurred lines between celebrity and sportsperson are further reinforced by the fact that professional trainers such as Jillian Michaels, who has released a series of successful exercise DVDs, are now seen as celebrities themselves (Barron, 2015). The presentation of a well-groomed trainer with a toned body and flawless complexion in an exercise *studio* (television studio) offering an opportunity for one to emulate their appearance is far removed from the image of “sweaty” gymnasias that might have been the domain of bodybuilders, boxers and “serious” sportspeople.

The above examples show we are increasingly attaching greater significance to exercise and other commercial ventures are tapping this attitude to create a lucrative industry. Throughout the 1990s and continuing into the 2000s the aforementioned gymnasias have morphed into health clubs. These profitable clubs target all members of society including children and many large business concerns including *Virgin*, who use the *Virgin Active* brand, have entered the market. Indeed, the *Virgin Active* website offers members the opportunity to enjoy *sumptuous spas, chic changing rooms and luxurious spaces* and these represent a clearly different proposition to boxing rings, punch bags, free weights basic shower facilities that might have been on offer previously.

Further enhancing the offer of a lifestyle choice, contemporary health clubs offer crèche facilities, enabling accessibility and restaurant facilities encouraging members to spend more time in a health and fitness milieu. It has to be noted however that a feature of such health clubs is usually membership with a

minimum contract period costing several hundred pounds. Therefore, the quest to enable more people to access exercise packages can be seen as flawed in that it only enables those with the requisite finances to access them.

The massive video gaming industry is also taking advantage of our increasing health concerns by producing console games that feature exercise and sports together with fitness checks. Indeed the Nintendo Corporation produces an accessory to its *Wii* games console called the *Wii Fit Board*. This requires players to leave their armchairs and become physically active in order to participate. Players can mimic their sporting heroes by taking part in virtual sports competition whilst engaging in real exercise.

The growing concept of video games offering exercise options was highlighted by Stuart (2010) who, in an article for the Guardian, asked if the new generation of video games could indeed offer a suitable workout. In comparing the *Nintendo Wii* with a newer competitor, Stuart (2010) pointed out that the *Microsoft Kinect* offered fitness based games promising *a complete living room exercise regime*. This adds to the landscape of accessible provision of exercise options mentioned elsewhere in this thesis.

People are more readily availing themselves of these options due to the impact of external influences and it is the heavily mediated nature of such influences that contributes to the attitudes of people. Barron's (2015) study of celebrity reinforces the nature of celebrity influence and to highlight this, chapter sub-titles include *Celebrity Influence and Fashion Inspiration*, *Celebrity Body Role Models*, *Celebrity and the Enhanced Body* and even *Celebrity and Post-Pregnancy Bodies*. He does however warn of the risks of celebrity influence and the effect it

can have on people's perceptions of themselves. Citing issues such as eating disorders, Barron points to the harm that can be done as a consequence of an obsession with the celebrity image.

Exercise or sport: the growth of individualism

Commentators such as Travis (2007) have pointed to the trend that 'exercise' has increasingly become the byword for physical activity thereby surpassing the term sport. This, it is argued, is partly due to the process of removing the competitive element from school sports (Cale & Harris, 2005). For many, sporting endeavour does not mean beating an opponent; rather it represents personal challenges in which individuals "compete" against themselves. Running is an ideal activity via which these challenges can be realised. Many runners refer to their "PB" (personal best) times and strive to better these with each race they run. Therefore, for the individual, a race can be just as competitive at the rear of the field as it is at the front where the fastest runners compete.

Moreover, as increasing numbers of people attend health clubs they are continuing the growing tradition of engaging in personal fitness routines. A trip around a typical club would offer a view of many individuals using exercise equipment whilst listening to music from mp3 players through headphones thereby creating a solitary personal space. This apparent eschewing of group contact indicates an increasing trend of individualism that is evident in sporting circles and congruent with the rise of the sporting celebrity.

In the realm of spectator team sports through the years there have been rare examples of one person being perceived as more significant than the team. Notably, stars such as W.G. Grace (cricket), George Best (football) and Michael

Jordan (basketball) enjoyed arguably greater status than the teams they represented. However this rarity has dwindled and increasing numbers of team sports players are gaining prominence. If we are to accept that the successes of these individuals impact on society in terms of role modelling then we can argue that there will be a tendency for citizens in society to try to emulate the characteristics of their heroes. This can be particularly so if the traits exhibited by these individuals are concomitant with those that would gain wider societal approval in terms of structure (a concept discussed elsewhere in this thesis).

Sports stars such as Ian Botham, Andrew Flintoff, (cricket), David Beckham and Wayne Rooney (football) have gained celebrity status which has arguably created a notion that it is the individual who creates success rather than the team. With the growth of capitalism, western society's political landscape has become increasingly influenced by individualist ideology therefore it is no surprise that a by product of this is increasingly observable individualist behaviour. Karen and Washington's (2015) assessment of Marxist theory holds that sports would be included in the suite of cultural activities that would see individuals either succeed or fail in society.

Individualism holds that the supremacy and prime importance of the individual over the collective is key to ordering society. This theory grew in relevance in the 1980s during the administration of Margaret Thatcher and as has been previously noted the then U.K. Prime Minister stated "there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families" (Heywood, 2000:133). This prevalent ideology saw a widening chasm develop between the "haves and have nots" (Daly, 2011) and sports stars in particular benefited from lower levels of taxation and the accumulation of economic capital to enhance their status as

representing a desirable lifestyle. The dominant ideology as validated by government (Le Grand *et al*, 2008) meant that the previously mentioned ability of sports stars to enter elite circles reified despite the previous notion that the *nouveau riche* lacked cultural capital.

Wealth and status became recognisable marks of distinction in an increasingly acquisitive society and a sense of community in which citizens might once have identified with sports stars hailing from their areas dissipated creating an attenuation of the ties that bonded local heroes to their fans. The globalisation of sport has seen sports stars not only leave their communities but also their home countries and compete hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of miles away from their original contemporaries (Bellos, 2002; Palmer, 2013). Coupled with the increasingly vast amounts of observable wealth accumulated by these stars this reinforces for some the power of the individualist doctrine over that of the collective.

The dissipation of utilitarian influences brought about by the increasingly individualist societal landscape has arguably precipitated a concomitant dissipation in a shared sense of society. This in turn may have left many isolated members of society with little sense of recognition.

The quest for recognition and a critique of tolerance

The concept of recognition, it has been argued, is the “primary condition for a meaningful life” (McLaughlin, 2011:38). It is a phenomenon that contributes to a process of self-actualisation. In meeting our basic needs we strive to achieve physical security and, as a result of the civilizing process, economic security. Amid this we strive for psychological security which includes a sense of self

worth. In order to be considered as, at least, an equal in society we need to be afforded recognition in terms of status and identity.

For Taylor (1994:26), recognition is “a vital human need” because he believes that without it, or with misrecognition, comes a lack of respect which can in turn lead to a self-loathing within its victims. Misrecognition, according to Bourdieu (1994) is linked to the *habitus* in that particular classes of conditions of existence can be constraining thereby limiting how particular people are perceived.

Although there is some fluidity in the *habitus*, it is the fact that it is based on deep-rooted dispositions and perceptions that can render futile the efforts of some to be recognised by others. For McNay (2008:149), *habitus* is not based on decisions of free will but on the values and norms of the collective and this creates what she calls “status subordination” as highlighted by the plight of oppressed groups.

The aforementioned civil rights movement represented not only a struggle for equality of physical and economic rights but also a pursuit of recognition as equal human beings. The stories of Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Muhammad Ali give an indication that they were recognised and “respected” as equals in the sporting arena but an equal level of recognition was not evident in society. In highlighting his struggle, Tommie Smith (2008) talks of the treatment he received in terms of having to undertake menial jobs on a day to day basis but being expected to be a representative of his country when called upon as an athlete. For Smith, burgeoning recognition in society happened when he returned to his old school as student teacher; given his own classroom, he was viewed, by some at least, as an equal in the profession of his choosing. John Carlos (2011) echoed Smith’s sentiments in the quest for recognition when he spoke of the fact

that they were both finally recognised by their university when it not only unveiled a statue of them but also awarded them honorary doctorate degrees.

Recognition from one's peers does not necessarily have to be universal as in the case of subcultures (Williams, 2011) but the fact that these instances of recognition were from peers *and* higher societal echelons is an important part of the validity of recognition in these cases. John Carlos embraced this validation as it in turn validated his work when talking to young people about education. This ability to "have a say" in what matters in life is one of the factors McGary (1999) points to in the quest to have one's humanity recognised. He argues that an important part of being less alienated is to not only have the ability to hold opinions but also to be able to express those opinions and have them heard. McGary's (1999:50) comment that "Recognition by others plays an important role in the development of good self-esteem" reinforces the above and echoes Taylor's earlier assertion regarding lack of recognition and self-loathing.

With reference to the notion of equality a problem of recognition comes with the concept of "tolerance". Contemporary UK politicians often speak glowingly of the "fact" that we live in a tolerant society when trying to convince us about their willingness to embrace an inclusive, non-discriminatory stance. As a second generation immigrant to the UK I argue that I and my parents before me are not here to be tolerated, rather we are a part of society and should be afforded equality of recognition with others in that society. If we accept the concept of tolerance we immediately insert a power imbalance in that the "tolerator" has the power to afford a "lesser" person toleration. This is highlighted by Brown (2006) for whom the assumption of tolerance is linked to an assumption of moral superiority and creates a societal picture which highlights superior and inferior

citizens. Cohen (2014) describes the concept of tolerance as non-interference; he continues by arguing that to intentionally not interfere is to identify something one might feel needs interfering with. Again, this highlights the idea that there are certain behaviours that warrant the ascription of a lesser status and this brings with it an indication of moral superiority.

Tolerance is an increasingly complex issue in Western society because of the increasing diversity therein. Those that would subscribe to the ethos of being a tolerant society increasingly have to consider culture, values and beliefs as well as people. Confirming this, Cohen (2014) talks of individuals having to tolerate individuals but alongside this having to tolerate cultures.

For Kahn (2001:141) the civilizing process in Britain was predicated on the notion that white, middle class Englishmen were more advanced than anyone else in terms of a “universal human future”. It comes as no surprise then that a white male dominated society would willingly embrace the notion of tolerance thereby, it can be argued, dismissing the idea that power bases in society should comprise myriad facets. Brown (2006:8) concurs with this by stating that tolerance “iterates the normalcy of the powerful”. Furedi (2011:20) points to criticism of tolerance and the assertion that it can prevent people’s aspirations of recognition by “fooling them into thinking they are free”. The assertion that a false consciousness can be created in this way further demonstrates the subjugation experienced by those who have to be “tolerated”.

Guttman (1994) argues that recognition as equal citizens requires respect for the unique identities of individuals and respect for the practices and values of those individuals regardless of race, gender, ethnicity etc. In agreeing with Guttman’s

argument, Habermas (1994:110) asserts “the failure of cultural recognition is connected with gross social discrimination” and he too links the concept of recognition to respect.

In a further critique of tolerance, it can be argued that its meaning becomes more important to the power brokers in society as actors in the struggle for recognition become more powerful themselves. In the case of Muhammad Ali, there was a fear of what this controversial black man could do in terms of influencing society when at the height of his sporting powers and consequent popularity (Hauser, 2004). He was viewed with suspicion and unease by the dominant white actors. However in his later years Ali developed Parkinson’s disease and appeared frail and ostensibly powerless. Only after this happened was he universally lauded (being named sports personality of the 20th century) with the feelings of trepidation toward him minimised.

What do sport and sports stars represent?

We have already seen how sports stars can influence society as a result of their achieved celebrity and I wish to expand upon this to consider their impact in terms of an increasingly secular, or at least more diverse in terms of beliefs, society.

At present one can see the proliferation of running races being packaged for mass consumption. Many of these events are aimed at beginners and run / walkers and offer a safe environment for people to try out this particular form of exercise. This controlled sporting experience is an extension of the controlled environments that people might have exercised in previously. Indoor activities such as those offered by rowing machines, spin classes (exercise on static

bicycles) and running on treadmills offer individuals the experience of sporting activity in a safe environment. Tapping into this, events such as the *Race for Life*, which is organised by Cancer Research UK offer people an opportunity to raise money for a charitable cause (Penny, 2013). If one was to attend this women only race one would see a vast number of runners and run / walkers bearing photographs or messages pinned to their shirts. These are a sign that the runners are remembering loved ones who have died as a result of cancer or celebrating the survival of a loved one who has suffered from cancer.

One could argue that in an increasingly secular society in which religion has less significance, these signs of memorial / celebration are the ways in which one can demonstrate the feelings which might once have been channelled through the church. In taking this premise further, Craig (2008:20) points to an argument which states that for many, sport itself has become a form of religion as “Sports stars are now worshipped, people pray for their teams and around the world sports stadia have become the new cathedrals of worship”.

“Celebrity culture is secular” (Rojek, 2001:74) and in asserting this Rojek describes a process in which celebrities, including sports stars, are elevated to levels once reserved for religious leaders. Rojek argues that where once Christ would have been looked to for comfort and inspiration; it now appears that celebrities are sought after to fulfil such needs. Barron (2015:40) asserts:

celebrity has increasingly been seen to represent something akin to a new religious movement, albeit a secular one...celebrity can be read in a religious manner due to the ways in which many are perceived to be figures worthy of worship

This process of elevation is hastened in contemporary society due to the globalising process and the proliferation of multiple media sources. For McDonnell (2014) the rise in online technologies has seen an increasing mediation of celebrity views. Whereas disciples would once follow religious leaders via sermons, teaching and religious study, fans can now “follow” their idols via social networking sites (Barron, 2015). Immediately after competition, sports stars update their internet feeds offering their opinions on what has taken place.

However, this phenomenon does not limit itself to sporting commentary, and sports *celebrities* offer their opinions and update their followers about aspects of their everyday lives and current affairs. This can offer people a sense of affiliation which is highlighted by Meyrowitz’s (1986) analysis of electronic media in which he discusses the benefits and drawbacks of the internet. His assertion is that the internet can offer a sense of sharing and belonging and it can be argued that the phenomenon of social networking is a major contributory factor to this.

In following religion, teaching may have been didactic with little reciprocity of input from the follower. However, the following of “leaders” via social networking can enable engagement by way of thoughts, opinions and feelings being shared by the followers. Moreover, the sense of belonging fostered here can lead “acolytes” to want to become more involved and emulate their idols. In the case of sporting idols, an accessible way to do this would be to try to become involved in sport and develop a level of fitness. As mentioned above, running can offer a comparatively risk free outlet for this need. Furthermore in entering road races, runners can compete in the very same event that their idols are taking part in. Therefore increasing numbers of runners of all abilities in races such as the

London Marathon will be part of the same event that is being headed by, for example, world record holder, Paula Radcliffe. The London Marathon alone has seen numbers rise from around seven and half thousand in 1981 to in excess of forty thousand in recent years (virginmoneylondonmarathon.com, 2017). The same cannot be said of amateur footballers, cricketers etc.

An obligation to health

According to Elias (1982), in contemporary Western society there is a requirement to regulate the drives and affects of our more elementary human impulses. The civilizing process has made us more aware of our bodily functions as well as our bodies. We are more aware of how we present when eating and are concerned about publicly displaying natural bodily functions. High self-control is linked to greater emotional stability (Layton & Muraven, 2014) and the two can combine to facilitate greater bodily self-control. We have developed a greater capacity to be repulsed by certain corporeal aspects and this repulsion has taken on moral overtones.

For Foucault (1976), the development of Western civilization has seen the transference of the power we have over our bodies. Whereas sovereignty over our bodies was once the domain of the patriarch or emperor who could decide on matters of life and death, there has been a shift facilitated by the development of the prerogative to preserve life. With this shift, phenomena such as health levels and longevity have become the domain of the individual. This power over the self brings with it the moral obligation to fulfil the prerogative to preserve life.

Morality appears to be a driving force in today's promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Increasing numbers of debates about the rights of smokers to receive state

healthcare abound and similar debates are developing around the rights of obese people. Seedhouse (1997:69) offered a prophetic view of the debates when he presented two representations of what drives health promotion.

1. ***Evidence drives health promotion*** – some conditions and behaviours are as a *matter of fact* unhealthy, therefore health promoters must be opposed to them.
2. ***Values drive health promotion*** – people’s values *determine* what is taken to be good or bad health: health promoters’ values set health promotion priorities, health priorities do not set themselves. (emphases in original)

Writing around the same time as Seedhouse, Wainwright (1996) offered that political considerations in which values were pushed in health promotion were seen as a way of solving problems faced by the state. One such problem was how to curb the increasing amounts of money spent on state welfare; the solution was to offer a value driven moral imperative to remain healthy which would engender a state of self-regulation in individuals.

More recently, policy consultations such as “Choosing Health? Choosing Activity” (DoH, 2004) pointed to a societal responsibility to improve health. Moreover, within the 2011 governmental document Healthy Lives, Healthy People (DoH:2011:22) there is an assertion that obesity is not the “Government’s problem to solve. The solution lies in each of us taking responsibility for our health and taking appropriate action to manage our weight”. This responsibility can be translated into a moral obligation whereby those citizens who do not strive to maintain their health are construed as failing in their duty to society.

Added to this is Benson's (2007:123) assertion that the "good body", which is "sleek, thin and toned", is an indication that alongside being physically well, one is increasingly being seen as morally well.

Horne (2006) maintains that the body is viewed less as a given object and more a project. Health and image concerns see people use different methods of reconstruction to change their "appearance, size, shape and even content" (Horne, 2006:128). The assertion that body shape is linked to choice of lifestyle would explain why people invest increasing amounts of time, effort and money in controlling it. In contemporary western society where occupations are more sedentary than they once were, this need to cultivate a particular body shape has to be serviced mostly by our leisure activities. Watson (2007) indicates that this is made possible by the shifting work / life balance over the last 50 years which has facilitated access to increasing amounts of leisure time.

The idea that we can choose to cultivate a "desirable" body shape through exercise and maintain the concomitant level of "good health" is one of the factors driving the health promotion agenda. Indeed, Soós *et.al.* (2007:103) maintain that "Motivating individuals to become physically active is one of the major tasks confronting those who wish to promote good health through participation in sport and physical activity". The discourse around health has evolved over recent years and to have good health no longer means to be merely without illness; rather it means to be fit and have the *appearance* of being in good health. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is key to this and Blank and Burau (2014) point out that increasing numbers of countries are subscribing to this philosophy.

The previously discussed idolisation of sports stars and their effect on many people adds weight to the drives toward healthy lifestyles. Individuals cannot only compete in similar fashion to their idols but they can also *look* like them. However, one could argue that this phenomenon could be problematic when individuals are not fully cognisant of the damage that could result in ill-informed exercise and eating regimes. A “general cultural fear of ‘fat’” (Barry & Yuill, 2008:193) is a contributory factor to the development of eating disorders by certain individuals, who respond to the messages that they should be “healthy” and conform to the “right” image. In discussing the *Slender Body*, Bordo (1990:94-95) points to assertions that:

the firm, developed body has become a symbol of correct *attitude*; it means that one “cares” about oneself and how one appears to others, suggesting willpower, energy, control over infantile impulse, the ability to “make something” of oneself.

Heineken (2004:196) adds to this in terms of social mobility when she points out “The toned body is also related to social mobility since the self control it represents means that one has the managerial qualities needed to succeed”

The aforementioned policy consultation and resultant White Paper *Choosing Health* (DoH, 2004) encouraged healthy lifestyles by addressing issues such as smoking and obesity. One of its key priorities was to increase levels of exercise thereby formally entrenching the public obligation to become healthy by, *inter alia*, engaging in regular exercise. Ham (2009) reviews the proposals and points to the fact that the government was targeting obesity levels in children and in doing so, proposing to build regular exercise into the daily routines of adults and

children. Making children part of the subject of this drive clearly adds another dimension to any campaigning. The perceived helplessness of children in society offers a moral overtone of protectionism in that the message is that one must embrace a healthy lifestyle in order to maintain the welfare of one's children (Blank & Burau, 2014).

Whereas the responsibility for children's physical activity was once mainly the domain of the school physical education (PE) curriculum, which played a key role in "encouraging and empowering young people to make informed lifestyle choices" (Cale & Harris, 2005:166), the emphasis has shifted onto a shared model in which families and the wider community are apportioned increasing levels of responsibility. Indeed, Fitzpatrick (2001) informs us that as a GP following the advice of the Royal College of Physicians, he would recommend and even *prescribe* exercise programmes to children as well as adults. This was driven by the increasing health promotion agenda that saw concerns about health surpass those of social behaviour. This is evidenced for Fitzpatrick (2001) in the sight of huddles of people seemingly furtively smoking outside a variety of public and private buildings.

Further evidence of the prevailing attitude is shown by the on-line presentation of a BBC (2013a) news story highlighting health concerns in the UK. This report of a study indicating the UK is trailing other European countries in terms of good health is accompanied by a montage picture of individuals smoking, drinking alcohol and eating fast food. These activities are increasingly framed as problematic and evidence of an irresponsible attitude seemingly linked to those in pursuit of a hedonistic lifestyle. This resonates with the longstanding attitude that for some, hedonism is morally questionable and that it is bad not only for the

environment in terms of over consumption but also for individuals as it undermines health (Veenhoven, 2003).

Veenhoven's (2003) discussion compares the positive and negative attitudes to hedonism and its long-term effects. The debate mirrors Hobbes' (1947:39) view that chains of action can lead to seeming good or seeming evil, or what Hobbes refers to as "good and evil apparent". Hobbes asserted that if the "evil" consequences of a chain of events outweighed the "good" consequences then this would be considered evil apparent.

Classical philosophers such as Hobbes (1946) offered views that mirror the debates in contemporary western society. The aforementioned evil apparent today manifests itself in the societal ills that see rising levels of crime, unemployment and ill health that contribute to a greater burden on the provision of welfare to those in need. This greater burden brings with it the apparent obligation for people to act in a particular way. In contrast to this are the maxims of Mill (1985:163) who asserted that "the individual is not accountable to society for his actions in so far as these concern the interests of no person but himself." Mill (1985) qualified this assertion to state that as long as an individual's actions do not harm others then there should be no case for external intervention.

Prevention of harm to others is a concept that has seen a great increase since Mill's original treatise. This is due to advancing technologies coupled with prevailing attitudes evidenced by such things as the introduction of anti-discriminatory laws (Vogel & Wänke, 2016). Mill (1985) asserted, for example, that drunkenness should only be a matter for legislative intervention if the person who was drunk subsequently became violent toward others or failed to discharge

their legal duties to others. Compare that with the now prevailing view that excessive drinking not only damages the individual but also damages society (McKeganey, 2011), even if the individual causes no harm to others. The view is that the individual is harming society because s/he will eventually be a drain on its resources because of actions that were of his / her own choosing.

We have legislation in place that requires us to wear safety belts in our cars and crash helmets on our motorcycles and it is the liberty to choose whether or not we do this that has been taken away. Much of the debate around these issues regards the obligation to guard oneself from harm and not become a burden on the health and welfare system. Iphofen (2003) confirms the moral aspect to this when discussing needs, wants and most tellingly, *ability* to maintain one's health. The individual empowerment that comes with ability also comes with the previously mentioned responsibility to not be a drain on societal resources.

An interesting addition to this is the debate concerning whether one should be forced to wear a crash helmet on a bicycle. Given the legislative precedent set for those in cars and on motorcycles, one would assume that the same precedent would follow for cyclists. However there is reluctance from many quarters (Boardman, 2014) to enforce such legislation as there is an argument that this would deter many people from using or taking up cycling as a mode of transport or leisure activity. The assertion is that the health benefits and subsequent decrease of burden on health systems due to people cycling outweigh the cost of treatment and care for those who might sustain injury as a result of not wearing a helmet. In its campaign briefing the national cycling charity, Cyclists' Touring Club (2014:1) states it is:

opposed to both cycle helmet laws and to helmet promotion campaigns, as these are almost certainly detrimental to public health. Evidence shows that the health benefits of cycling are so much greater than the (relatively low) risks involved, that even if these measures caused only a very small reduction in cycle use, this would still almost certainly mean far more lives being lost through physical inactivity than helmets could possibly save, however effective.

Sovereignty over our own body is effectively returned to us as long as it involves keeping the body fit and healthy by cycling but not if we are to use a form of transport that would offer no health benefits.

Mill's (1985) thoughts on liberty and harm, while relevant today, can also be seen to be outdated in terms of the prevailing moral attitudes that become enshrined in legislation. Restrictions are placed on what one can do in public places (smoking, drinking etc.) as well as what one can say. Society censures and legislates against those who say distasteful things (homophobia, racism etc.) and it does the same for those who act in such a manner that might harm their own health by putting in place legislation to, for example, restrict the use of certain drugs and compel motorcyclists to wear crash helmets.

It is unclear what the most powerful force is in the overwhelming need to stay fit and healthy. A cynical view might be that being fit and healthy is not the real goal but reducing the financial burden on society is. Added to this, one could argue that the continued good health of a member of the workforce maintains good economic productivity. However, one could also argue that the good of individuals is a genuine concern concomitant with a good society. In his

discussion regarding health promotion, Cribb (2005:78) asserts that in terms of broad societal concerns, "Health is an important good". He continues by claiming that health can be considered as a value neutral primary good.

The above may be taken for granted, in that it is clearly better to be healthy than not. However, as Reisman (2001) points out, the linking of health welfare to the Good Society, a society that includes and integrates, presupposes that people will be considered equal regardless of social or economic status. Furthermore, Cribb's view that people who are less ill are better off assumes that extrinsic factors are equal and this offers a bias to the view that citizens are in command of their own fate in terms of health and economic stability. The reality nevertheless is that socio-economic differences create variations in health status; indeed, for Iphofen (2003) this is an indisputable fact.

Therefore, the Good Society idea is arguably an unrealistic, utopian phenomenon that does not fit with contemporary societies despite modern day economic and social development. However, Jordan (1989) has argued that the good society is a complex concept that includes accommodation of morality, citizenship and economics suggesting that changing attitudes can impact on any assessment thereof. His assessment of the possibility of attaining the Good Society is in part reduced to the assertion that "The only modern choice thus lies between a system based on freedom and self-interest and one based on compulsory altruism" (Jordan, 1989:35). Effectively, the conflict between individualistic and utilitarian doctrines.

Conclusion

The civilizing process has seen western society change over centuries and this change has brought with it a variety of ideas, actions, and ways of living, working and worshipping. The changing nature of western lifestyle has resulted in a contemporary outlook characterised by many different dogmas. The one inescapable feature of contemporary western society however, is the advent of technology. This has enabled members of society to discharge many basic duties without having to “leave their front doors”. We are living in an increasingly sedentary society and to counter the effects of this we are pursuing activity in a variety of ways.

This pursuit of activity has seen us look to role models for inspiration. In a society that places increasing importance on the celebrity figure, many of us are seeking said inspiration from sports stars and other celebrities who appear to offer the opportunity for us to become “fit and healthy”. Many activities can offer said opportunities but running is an activity in which one might not only fulfil an innate instinct for physical exertion and possibly to compete, it can also offer opportunities for those wishing to truly mimic their sporting idols by competing in the same races as their sporting idols. Running also offers the opportunity for people to adhere to the increasingly individualistic nature of society by presenting a form of exercise needing no interaction with others that enables one to partake on one’s own terms.

Health promotion and self-regulation are issues that have been touched upon here and they will be explored further in this thesis as it will be shown that they

are important factors in the discussion around the social impact of sport, health and fitness.

Sporting success has enabled people to gain recognition via social capital and some boxers, football players, and cyclists inter alia have enjoyed the benefits of this. The turnaround in the life of Muhammad Ali is an example of the power of sporting success and the ability it affords as a factor to fight racism. This in turn has enabled black sports stars such as the Williams sisters (tennis) and Tiger Woods (golf) to gain great success both on and off the field of sport. However, it can be argued that no greater impact on the public consciousness has been made in the struggle for recognition than that created by the iconic image of Tommie Smith and John Carlos on the podium at the 1968 Olympic Games.

In tracing the history of physical endeavour and the impact it has on society, this chapter has touched on issues such as recognition and tolerance and these are inextricably linked with identity. Therefore, the following chapter will discuss the phenomenon of identity and explore the ideas around community and belonging, which are also linked with the concept of recognition.

Within the identity chapter will be discussion of language and how the discourse of the sporting milieu permeates society. Language and discourse are shown to impact on identity and the discussion offers an introduction to further research, which forms chapter five.

Chapter four – Identity

This chapter discusses the concept of identity and I make links with sporting identities as it progresses. Because identity covers a wide range of theories, I offer a sense of that range and show that as an area of study, identity can indeed be linked to many subjects.

When discussing the development of my PhD thesis with others I have often said “I am working on a chapter on identity, but then again, doesn’t everyone?”

Without scanning every thesis that has preceded this one I cannot be certain that my assertion is correct. For Lawler (2008:1) “notions of identity are at the *heart of many of the contemporary* ‘troubles’ of Western – and especially anglophone – cultures” (emphasis added). The assertion that identity is at the heart of contemporary troubles is an indication that, as a concept, identity is a relatively new field of study. Indeed, Hall (1996:1) stated that “there has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of ‘identity’”. For me, the importance of identity lies in its status as a defining feature of the individual. It is a feature so significant that it plays a part in our everyday lives and dictates not only *who* we are but also *what* we are and *how* we become the person we project and, at times, the person we keep hidden (Goffman, 1990).

“I do buy charity Christmas cards but they would have to be cool and trendy”

The above quote from an interviewee (12) indicates that, as with other parts of our lives, our engagement with charity can be influenced by concerns about our image. The interviewee was clear that she wished to donate to charities deemed to be personally significant to, or of worth by her, but there was a caveat regarding the image presented. Image is an intrinsic part of our identity and our

identities can take many forms. Human beings have universal (related to groups) and particular (related to the individual) identities (Parekh, 2008) and the assertion by Woodward (2004) that interactions between people contribute to the forming of identity offers the view that identities are socially constructed and therefore different to personalities because our personalities, which are linked to our behaviour (Jary & Jary, 1995) can be, for the large part, intrinsically controlled whereas identities can be impacted by extrinsic factors.

Socially constructed identities are informed by membership of groupings; we share common interests and have common traits and responsibilities. Parekh (2008:3) asserts that in this way we “are morally equal and make certain claims on each other”. As members of society we have responsibilities to each other and as our identities place us in different groupings these responsibilities are replicated in microcosms of society such as are represented by organisations with official or implied membership.

These memberships are not necessarily memberships of choice. We can unwittingly and even unwillingly become members of groups at the behest of others. The problem of stereotyping can see individuals included in certain groups in the eyes of others because of a similar characteristic. Imposed membership in this way can lead to ill-informed judgements about people whereby certain traits or behaviours can be wrongly attached to them. Positive and negative stereotypes are linked to *in-groups* and *out-groups* (Gove & Watt, 2004) and can reflect and reinforce unequal relationships.

Confirmation that humans are intrinsically social beings who want to be accepted as part of the collective and be part of the *in-group* is offered by the fact that we

have anxieties about how others views us. “Cool is formed and instantiated within a plethora of social relations and connections” (Beer, 2009:1156) and wanting to be viewed as “cool and trendy” could signal a desire to be accepted by and socialise in “cool and trendy” groups, in effect, to form those social relations and forge those connections. How we define who is “cool and trendy” and what constitutes that state is a matter related to recognition. If we aspire to be accepted we aspire to have our qualities recognised by those we crave acceptance from. If we have the pre-requisite characteristics of being “cool and trendy” ascribed to us then we have an opportunity to gain membership of that group.

Bauman (2011:157) maintains that denial of recognition by one’s desired peers or those “who matter” is directly linked to exclusion and this can lead to feelings of resentment and a questioning of one’s identity. Moreover, he draws this out to assert that a sense of shame and self hatred can develop due to the denial of dignity that is concomitant with a lack of recognition. The struggle for recognition is informed by the quest for equality and for Taylor (1994:50) “can only find one satisfactory solution, and that is a regime of reciprocal recognition among equals”. If there are powerbrokers within this struggle then equality in terms of recognition “therefore is portrayed as giving a voice to those hitherto silenced by the powerful” (McLaughlin, 2003:51). Being on the *inside* with those who have power is clearly more desirable than being on the *outside* (Williams, 2011).

For Jenkins (2004:172) ascribed identity is part of our inheritance and is consequently “constructed on the basis of the contingencies of birth”. Therefore in order to have missing characteristics ascribed to us by others we might need

to develop an acquired identity. Acquired identity is achieved by our actions through our lives and as such is a result of self direction. Jenkins (2004) proposes that the distinction between ascribed and acquired identities can be applied to all identities.

It is notable that a willingness to be part of a collective persists in contemporary western society, which is increasingly driven by emphases on individualist ideologies. These are the ideologies that Faulks points to in assessing the breakdown of “traditional reference points such as religion, class, nation or stable employment” (2000:109-110), which mean that individuals must increasingly forge their own identities. In his exploration of modernity, Wagner (2012) points to the complex inter-relationship between individualism and collectivism when he points to the effects of exclusion. He argues the process of forging collective identities can disembed certain individuals from their social contexts. Wagner argues:

The subsequent long-term process of collectivization can only with difficulty be seen as further individualization. True, modern collective conventions and institutions include their members as individuals, but they do so by means of standardizing roles and homogenizing outlooks on the world (2012:47).

Therefore, standardization and homogenization relates to *norms* and the presence of such norms will inevitably create a situation whereby there will be those who do not fit the collective and can be in some way dislocated.

In assessing the factors that contribute to collective identities Borsay (2006:145) offers the term “place identity” which describes the notion that people identify

with particular locations be they geographic or time specific. Place identity contributes to the phenomenon of individuals having multiple identities, which offers more options for them to be part of a collective.

As a Mancunian I will identify with others from Manchester and may well emphasise those identifying characteristics, such as modes of speech, particularly if I am away from the city. Additionally, as a second generation immigrant I might emphasise what it is to be Greek Cypriot (albeit my passport states I am British) in particular situations either in or away from Manchester. The locality (Manchester / Cyprus) brings a sense of identity in an increasingly homogenised world driven by forces of globalization and the growing dominance of major organisations. This can be particularly beneficial in terms of belonging due to the nature of both chosen migration and increasing incidents of forced migration (Jones, 2006). Indeed, despite the assertion that globalization creates homogenisation, the dispersal of people across the globe has, at the same time, created a fragmented world in which belonging via mutual identification can be ever more desirable.

If we are to accept Jenkins' point that all identities are ascribed or acquired then place identity presents a dilemma in that there is difficulty in deciding what is ascribed and what is acquired. My ascribed identity by virtue of bloodline is that of a Greek Cypriot and recognition as a Greek Cypriot should follow. However, as someone who was born in Manchester and raised a Mancunian, I have developed and project the concomitant attributes of a British Mancunian identity such as the aforementioned modes of speech and affiliation with certain cultural

artefacts. For Edwards (1998:154) “Any of these aspects of identity can be screened out, or brought to the fore, to afford a shift in perspective”.

I could be accused of taking an essentialist stance when referring to attributes consistent with a particular identity in that I could be viewed as identifying fundamental factors that construct particular groups (Mancunians etc.) (Hall, 2000; Lewis & Phoenix, 2004). However, I would contest that phenomena such as modes of speech are a major signifier of place identity. I would also argue the influences of cultural artefacts such as fashion, music and allegiance to sports teams can serve as pointers to an individual’s place identity (Woodward, 2004). My own experiences of being in various parts of the UK have seen me as being easily identifiable as someone from the north-west of England, and in most cases, Mancunian, which at times has been a pleasant phenomenon and at others less favourable.

When challenged to qualify my *essentialist* stance on what a Mancunian identity is, I conducted a poll via social media (Facebook) in which I asked for the top three characteristics of a Mancunian. Within the many responses was repetition of several characteristics together with repeated identification of certain cultural artefacts. The content of the responses will not be discussed here as I do not offer this as a piece of rigorous research; rather an indicative snapshot.

However, I would argue the findings serve to reinforce the argument that place identity is socially constructed and individuals from certain places are willing to subscribe to the factors contributing to this.

Strategic essentialism is a term used when a group which might consist of differentiated individuals actually seeks to essentialize and standardize their

outward image. This can then help to advance a group identity in order to achieve certain objectives (Eide, 2010). This can fail however if other essentialized groups are able to wield more power due to their position in society. Raising consciousness by asserting for example, a black or a feminist identity, might only serve to reiterate the power differential and reinforce the effects of negative discrimination. Strategic essentialism can, it seems, be deployed by those who recognise the differences between groups and arguably are able to manipulate a plurality of identities for particular ends.

A plurality of identities contributes to contemporary debates about citizenship. Conservative politician Norman Tebbit caused controversy in the 1990s when he declared that those people living in the UK who did not support the England cricket team but chose instead to support their countries of origin might not have displayed loyalty to their new country. What became known colloquially as the “Tebbit Test” was directed primarily at those with Asian and African Caribbean backgrounds (Bagilhole, 2009). Similarly to this, many first, second and third generation immigrants from the Republic of Ireland eschewed supporting the English football team in favour of supporting the Irish team. I have personally been witness to heated debates between friends about the merits or otherwise of this, however, these debates did not spill over into mainstream consciousness through party political posturing and accusations of disloyalty via sporting allegiances.

One could extrapolate from this an assumption that group identities can be linked to place *and* race and that by using a populist argument, drawing on the readily identifiable medium of sport, Tebbit questioned the identity of certain British

citizens. He was effectively advocating for the abandonment of ascribed identity and its replacement with acquired identity; it would be difficult to argue that this was not pandering to a racist or xenophobic doctrine. For Hylton (2009:14) the Tebbit test is a site where “debates on immigration and xenophobia become metaphors for a debate on ‘Britishness’ and nationhood”. The complex nature of national histories means that societies today still seek to untangle the debate about who should lay claim to what in terms of identity and these claims can be linked with feelings of pride as Dimitrova-Grajzl *et al* (2016:7) claim to:

demonstrate empirically that an individual’s pride in his or her nation indeed reflects deep societal roots stemming from the historic emergence and diffusion of a common national identity.

The sporting milieu is indeed a site of identity debate and this was again raised in the sporting arena in 2013 when debates around Englishness and the right of naturalised citizens to represent England were played out in the media spotlight. South African born cricketer Kevin Pieterse took to social media platform Twitter to challenge football player Jack Wilshere on his stance that “foreigners” should not play for the English football team. Pieterse asked of Wilshere:

interested to know how you define foreigner...? Would that include me, Strauss, Trott, Prior, [cricketers] Justin Rose, [golfer] Froome, [cyclist] Mo Farah [distance runner]?

(These are all sportspeople who have gained honours while representing England / Great Britain)

To which Wilshere responded:

going to a new country when ur an adult, & because u can get a passport u play 4 that national team – I disagree. Just saying my opinion, everyone is entitled to theirs. (The Guardian, 2013).

Stuart Hall (1997) recognized this phenomenon when reporting that the cricket magazine *Wisden* was forced to pay libel damages to black athletes after it asserted black players could not be expected to show the same commitment and loyalty when representing England because they are black. This is particularly pernicious in that it questioned the motives of people regardless of their place of birth.

Place identity does not necessarily create an unquestioned bond between people from the same backgrounds. As stated above, a Mancunian may identify with another Mancunian but this cannot be taken for granted as an unquestioned phenomenon. How, for example would a racist Mancunian react to a black Mancunian? The traditional sense of community whereby similarity forges bonds of identification is dissipated by the development of individual identities and sub-group identities. These developments render the concept of the “We”, according to Wiesenfeld (1996) to be a myth.

Add to this the increasingly transient nature of populations whereby individuals move around due to an economic imperative and we can see the changing face of community in which group identity is less of a contributory factor. Simon (2004:17) points to globalization processes which create “cultures of hybridity” that see supra-national ties strengthen but arguably dissipate the strength of identification on a local level by undermining the cultural unity of nations.

In opposition to Wiesenfield's assertion is the view from Honneth (2012:214) that:

the 'I' seeks the 'We' of shared group experience, because even after maturity, we are dependent on forms of social recognition imbued with direct encouragement and affirmation.

Honneth expands this point to echo Bauman's view on social recognition by asserting "Neither self-respect nor self-esteem can be maintained without the supportive experience of practising shared values in the group" (Honneth, 2012:214).

A place in time can offer basis for identity such as can be seen in the "Teddy Boy" who will identify with the music and fashions of the 1950s. This affinity with an aspect of popular culture can again be merely one part of an individual's identity that sees one as part of a grouping. The ephemeral nature of popular culture highlights fluidity of identity in that people can change "labelled identities" by abandoning one grouping for another. I saw many "Punk Rockers" of the late 1970s morph into "New Romantics" in the early 1980s. Different clothes, music and places of congregation saw the assignment of new labels. Again, the existence of cultural artefacts plays a part in the formation of identity and this for Pullen *et al* (2007:13) is partly aided by marketing, as it serves as "one of the key cultural architects of our time". Today's young people are similarly labelled as belonging to particular groups and the early 21st century sees terms such as Emo, Goth, Indie Kid and the somewhat pejorative and possibly ascribed rather than chosen, Chav, attributed by virtue of the popular influences on identity.

Bennett's contention regarding the above is that young people took the musical and stylistic factors of particular identities and "constructed their own meanings around them" (2000:46). For King (2013:76):

The growth of youth culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s is often read as an important period leading to theoretical development and discussion about the nature and formation of identity.

These ideas contribute to an understanding of the influence of popular culture on identities and can be read into McLaughlin's (2012) discussion in which the idea of how we identify ourselves is shaped by, *inter alia*, cultural influences.

The nature of universal identity is a factor that contributes to the occurrence of popular phenomena and the claims that elements of society make on us. The observable fact that many charity runners in mass participation events are raising money for the same large charitable organisations would indicate that popular, socially acceptable interests inform choices that individuals make.

These choices can be made as a result of common lived or observed experiences. Moore (2008:23) asserts that the contents of one's identity are likely to be informed by "a retrospective interpretation of past events shaped by an idealised self-image in the here and now" and when these events for different individuals are similar in nature we can see how individual identities can coincide to form group identities.

More openly observable influences on the choices made are raised awareness of issues through an assertion that certain causes are more worthy of help than others. The concept of "deserving and undeserving" recipients of charity (discussed elsewhere in this thesis) is often a feature informing the choices

people make in deciding who to “help”. It is telling that only one interviewee had raised money for charities that some would consider “undeserving” (these charities were concerned with street workers and homeless young men). A declaration that one’s ideals are the correct ideals reinforced by being at one with the majority gives credence to individual choices. Furthermore, the added sense of belonging to a group that comes with the popular choice can give the individual confidence in his or her identity.

This issue is demonstrated in a BBC (2012) report highlighting the fact that care for lung cancer patients is poor and this is hindering survival rates. The report asserts that because lung cancer is perceived to be brought about by smoking, it is unfairly stigmatised. Indeed, Nettleton (2013:72) states that “smokers who suffer from lung cancer may be held responsible for their illness” Despite this stigmatisation, Cancer Research UK (2017) highlights figures showing lung cancer research received £43.4m during 2016-17 compared to £32.8m for breast cancer research. Lung cancer is the third most common cancer in the world (Cancer Research UK, 2017) and these figures reflect this. However, my observations during marathon events do not reflect a similarly weighted attitude via calls for sponsorship.

Large charity teams in the London Marathon provide vests for runners to wear thereby making them easily identifiable as part of the “group”. Clusters of acolytes to the cause station themselves along the route to offer support and encouragement to their runners. The cheering and flag-waving has an uplifting effect on the runner and a felt sense of belonging invokes strong emotions such as pride, which can give a runner an added boost when they might be feeling

fatigued. My own experiences of this are limited due to the fact that charities I have raised money for were small and did not have such sophisticated models of organisation. My experiences of belonging felt in the London Marathon were confined to those occasions on which members of the crowd recognised my beloved Manchester City shirt and cheered my football team along thereby giving me that sense of kinship along with pride in my identity.

Father, husband, son, brother, cyclist, runner, musician, scooter boy, soul boy, Manchester City fan; these are just a selection of the identities I have at some time subscribed to (and in some cases still do). These ingredients that contribute to how one categorises oneself are not fixed and one might draw on them when identifying with other individuals and attempting to find a common bond. Bauman (2004) asserts that in a fluid world, maintaining a single identity is a risky business because extrinsic factors continually force us to twist and mould our identities. Williams (2011:138) suggests that:

Social identities are not equally relevant or powerful in all times and places, but are affected by several factors, including the situation, their salience, and the degree to which individuals are committed to them”

An example of the above can be offered by the situation of a German person. In discussing the atrocities of the Second World War s/he might wish to minimise the German side of his/her identity, however when discussing the sporting success of the German national football team s/he might emphasise the German part of his/her identity. In his examination of the footballing rivalry between England and Germany, Downing (2001) discusses this issue and adds to it when he points out that contrary to populist opinion, during the war the German nation

as a whole was not united behind Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime in that there was an amount of domestic opposition to it. Jenkins (2004:121) adds to this by referring to past conflicts and the reunification of Germany by asserting that being German in the present day "involves emphasising or de-emphasising different things". Indeed, Giddens & Sutton (2013) assert identities can be a source of shame as well as a source of pride.

The work of Jenkins and Downing highlighted above shows that cultural and political identities are indeed impacted upon by extrinsic factors. It also echoes Williams' thoughts on salience and the frequency with which one invokes a particular identity. Gove and Watt (2004:47) point to the theory of "self-categorization" when discussing these issues. This theory proposes that, in seeing people as members of social categories, we in turn see others as members of social categories. This leads us to adopt the identities appropriate to the social categories with which we identify.

In our endeavours to avoid isolation we strive to belong and how we position ourselves helps others to recognise commonalities. Our identities are "continually negotiated and renegotiated amidst the ever-changing nature of social life" (Farooq & Parker, 2009:109) and we choose which aspects of ourselves to present to others according to the situation. As stated above, the willingness to belong to a collective exists despite the prevalence of increasingly individualistic doctrines.

Maffesoli (1995) refers to groupings of people with common interests such as skateboarding or a particular type of music as neo-tribes and it is this existence of neo-tribes that for him, confirms a human desire to belong. In his analysis of

Maffesoli's work, Bennett (1999) asserts that the neo-tribe lacks a rigid organizational form; rather it is more a state of mind expressed through lifestyles. Changing lifestyles and changing states of mind again reflect the fluidity of identity referred to by Bauman.

For Giddens (1994), fluidity of identity can be linked to modernity. Traditional, fixed attributes of identity such as gender, social status and lineage existed in medieval Europe. These attributes were not easily changed and the fluidity brought about by modernity was, if not non-existent, certainly restricted by structural processes thereby rendering the individual to be a passive agent in any changes. Giddens speaks of the plurality of choices that has come with the advent of high modernity and links this to more readily available information facilitated by the abundance of media sources together with their increasingly influential nature due to the increase in accessibility of such sources. In short, where there are more visible options, there are more lifestyle choices one can make and this includes the formation or indeed re-formation of a personal identity.

Personal identity is again formed by past events; indeed Freud (1985:137) asserted that "identification is the original form of emotional tie with an object" but it also has some sense of future in that it can be an indication of how we want to develop our image. It is tied to a sense of self-worth and is the source of emotions such as pride and guilt. We feel good when we act out the characteristics of our desired identity therefore we derive motive and moral impetus from our personal identities.

Personal identity is maintained by our actions and the choices we make. On the subject of forming a personal identity, Borsay (2006:110) talks of the self as a “combination of library and sorting office that acquires accommodates and negotiates all the collective identities that inhabit a persona.”

We think of ourselves in a particular way and this is fixed in a sense of *what* we are as well as *who* we are. Parker (2007:61) asserts that “a human does not suddenly think of itself as a meal because it has been spotted by a tiger.”

However, this shows that what we are in the eyes of others can vary dramatically depending on the point of view of others. Bauman (2004:13) talks of identities floating in the air “some of one’s own choice but others inflated and launched by those around” He continues by asserting that “one needs to be constantly on the alert to defend the first against the second” (2004:13).

Faced with this predicament humans have the ability to adopt strategies of “Impression Management” as discussed by Goffman (1990). In presenting an image of oneself a person can sometimes let the façade slip thereby “exhibiting a discrepancy between the fostered impression and a disclosed reality” (Goffman, 1990:225). Public figures such as politicians have often been exposed by the media when discussing issues apparently in private but these discussions have been recorded and reported to a wider forum. This can cause image confusion and brings into question the concept of multiple identities existing in harmony. In offering the stage as a metaphor for life, Goffman enables us to see that impression management is something that can be rehearsed. We can work “backstage”, away from the public glare on our identity before presenting it in

public. Jenkins (2008) explains this in terms of learning to play the guitar in private in order to be a guitarist in public.

Goffman's concept of the "front" refers to the space an individual inhabits when moving from backstage; it is the area in which the performance of an individual is played out in front of others and that performance will display the attributes the individual is expected to project. In projecting such attributes to offer a picture of how we wish to be perceived we undergo a process of self verification whereby we confirm to ourselves who we are by acting out our beliefs. This is the point at which real identity might become evident.

In using metaphor, Goffman demonstrates how the manipulation of language can contribute to the forming of identity and it is this concept that leads to an exploration of the use of language and how the language of running might impact on society as well as individuals.

The language of running

In order to assess the impact of running it would be useful to explore the way in which it is framed in everyday discourse. Running offers many metaphors used to illustrate situations, people and identities. The word "runner" offers an identity to be shared in discussion between individuals. Often, I have met people in social situations and found a common bond when running enters the conversation; the phrase "I'm a runner too" is casually used and immediately a shared identity is formed. Indeed, for Benwell & Stokoe (2006:49) "Identity is *performed, constructed, enacted or produced*, moment-to-moment, in everyday conversations". Fairclough (1992) confirms this when he asserts discourse contributes to the construction of social identities.

The fact that Olympic and world class athletes can be runners too, does not necessarily mean I feel a particular bond with them in terms of lifestyle and modus operandi when running. I have, however, shared the course with them when running in major events such as the London Marathon and I also share with them the *discourse* of running. This discourse can not only contribute to the shaping of identity, but by a process of *interdiscursivity* (Wodak, 2008:3) can also contribute to how we understand our functions. Interdiscursivity is the phenomenon of discourses being linked in various ways (Fairclough, 1995) and the discourse of running offers a rich landscape of examples therein.

The traditional concept of language being a neutral medium through which the world is represented has, according to Seidman (2013), been challenged by poststructuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida. This thinking holds that language and linguistic meanings play a major role in not just describing, but organising the self as well as social institutions and political landscapes. Belsey (2002) explains Derrida's stance is that we can hold the power to change meanings and this offers choice and responsibility. A radical facet to Derrida's (cited in Belsey, 2002) thinking is that language cannot represent the real world. The signifiers (symbols), be they words or gestures that create discourse can only offer meaning when signposted by other accompanying signifiers (Inglis, 2012). In essence, the argument proposed is that words only derive meaning when placed in the context of the proffered discourse. The argument that language contributes to the forming of identity is strengthened for poststructuralists who propose that "subjects are created by the discourse in which they are embedded" (Calhoun *et al*, 2012:291).

Belsey (2002) holds that poststructuralist thinking links identity and language by means of the former being created by the latter through such modes as classification. "Classification is at the basis of language and thought" (Hodge & Kress, 1993:62) and it is through the process of classification that we ascribe meaning to the words we use. However the words we use often have multiple meanings and in some cases change their popular meaning entirely. An example of this being the late twentieth century use of the word "gay" changing from a description of a happy disposition to a label for homosexual (usually male) people (Buchanan, 2010).

Words that are derivative of and linked to running often go through a change process referred to by Wodak (2008:3) as *recontextualization*. They are taken out of their original context (*decontextualized*) and used in new situations with different meaning. The fact that these words are evocative of the process of running, demonstrates the power of running and the impact it has on society.

Participation in marathon running has grown exponentially in recent decades and this has obviously facilitated increasing use of the word "marathon". "I'm running next year's London Marathon", "I'm in training for a marathon" will evidently be used more regularly. However, the word has been adopted in other situations; phrases such as "It was a marathon task" indicate the qualities of an undertaking that might bear no resemblance to running but are nevertheless arduous and require endurance. Another common appearance of the word is in the phrase "It's a marathon not a sprint", indicating the requirement for a measured approach to a task, which again might bear no resemblance to running. The word marathon has even been amalgamated with television to create a new

word *telethon*, which is an extended television programme aired to raise money for charity (Moore, 2008). This further cements the link between running marathons and charity.

Boardrooms of business and industry are not immune to the language of running and phrases such as “Pick it up and run with it” or “Let’s see how this runs” are used when making decisions to try particular strategies. Given this, it would be useful to consider why running is so ingrained in our consciousness that we readily use the language of running in other areas of life. The premise that increasing numbers of people are engaging in running might offer an explanation of this phenomenon. In considering the following example I would like to offer a hypothesis.

During a cycling trip to the French Alps in 2012, I and two other cyclists were descending the Col du Mollard by way of the twenty plus switchback bends. Being on bicycles meant that we were able to descend at high speed and we soon approached a white van that was making the same descent. Because the bends were sharp and repetitive, we were able to travel much faster than the van so as soon as he was able, the driver moved to the side of the road and indicated that we should pass him.

In conversation with my fellow cyclists at the bottom of the descent there was an agreement that this gesture would not necessarily have been afforded to us if we were cycling in the UK and we compared stories of other van drivers in the UK whose actions had been decidedly inconsiderate toward (and in some cases created danger for) cyclists. In assessing why the driver in France was so considerate, we surmised that because cycling is much more a part of the

culture, being one of France's most popular sports and a regular pastime for much of the population, it was a natural course of action for the driver to take.

Although the above example is an isolated anecdote, it can be argued that it points to a general picture of behaviour driven by common activities inculcated in society. Indeed, such is the significance of cycling in France, the French language provides many cycling related terms (peloton, col etc.) that are widely used in non-French speaking countries.

Given the above, it can be argued that as running increases in popularity, together with an awareness of the needs of runners, the language of running becomes increasingly prevalent (Remy, 2011). We might "run a mile" to distance ourselves from something without actually taking a step or "run out of steam" in writing our latest thesis whilst being sat at a desk. Furthermore, how many of us have had our children "run rings round us" with merely a series of winning smiles and well placed platitudes? Cleary and Packard (1992) explored the use of metaphors in organizations and illuminate the fact that the use of sporting metaphors is not a new phenomenon, citing examples from sports other than running alongside those from running. Remy (2011) does however point to the increasing popularity of using running based metaphors.

With the rise in popularity of running for leisure purposes came increasing numbers of joggers; those who run at a slower pace to gain or maintain fitness. Having competed in many races and associated with many who run, I have heard the word "jogger" used in a pejorative manner. This negative use of the word has entered demotic language and where once an argument might have

included a phrase containing expletives, it is just as likely to include the term “jog on”, indicating that a person should go away.

The term jogger offers insight into how language can create divisions in that it is one that, for some, defines the status of those who run. A fellow runner once said to me that in undertaking a five mile run, a seven minute-mile pace is “proper” running. Anything slower would be considered lower in status. Given that a runner who runs even faster than seven minutes per mile might consider this to be jogging, the fact remains that running non-stop for five miles at any pace takes a considerable amount of fitness and training and it can be argued that all those who can and do undertake such runs should be referred to as runners.

The language used here is a contributory factor to the forming of aforementioned in groups and out groups with the runner being seen as part of the elite. Indeed, Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997) include the use of metaphor in their discussion of discourse and strategies of involvement. However, context is important and the word runner can also refer to those further down the ladder in terms of status. For example, the occupation of runner in a broadcasting company is an entry level position and one which requires the undertaking of many relatively menial tasks such as making tea and moving equipment. However, the job of runner has not always been framed like this and indeed, before the technical advances made in communications, runners were viewed as esteemed messengers who enjoyed professional status and respect from society (Gotaas, 2009).

The theme here is that “labelling” is a powerful phenomenon that can create identities and signify power differentials, indeed, Jenkins (2008) argues power is held by those whose definitions count. Although much of the study around labelling by *inter alia* Goffman (1968) has concerned deviance, the power of the label is evident in informal modes of identification whereby identities are made external by others’ terms of reference. Cohen (2002) highlights the demonization of certain groups in his study of Mods and Rockers when he argues that it was the labelling of these two groups by the media and the linking of these labels to deviant behaviour that created a view of them being *Folk Devils*. Views taken as truths by the use of discourse in certain fora are evidence of Fairclough’s (1992:64) assertion that “discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief”.

Terms of reference, what Goffman (1968) refers to as social information, include symbols such as badges and wedding rings, use of language and idiom and even whose company we are seen to keep. This final point echoes the aforementioned importance of being in *in-groups* and avoiding *out-groups*.

For Younge (2010), language forms unconscious attachments and is a potent force that impacts upon individual identity *and* nation formation. Younge’s exploration of identity discusses the invisible bonds that tie those who speak the same language and it follows that use of dialect and idiom further cements these bonds. Younge refers to philosopher Johann Fichte who asserted that those who speak the same language “belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole” (Younge, 2010:219). Fichte’s stance in context is part of a German nationalistic address in 1806 but as Younge points out, this stance is

adopted today by French Canadians in Quebec who argue that key to their personality is the fact they speak French.

The language of running, it follows, will enable runners to identify with one another and become a community that will cross geographical borders. As I write this piece, news reports are telling of the devastation caused by explosions near the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon. The community of runners is evidenced for me in the many messages of condolence from runners that have appeared on social networking sites. Messages from these same people were not necessarily evident after other explosions reported in the news. This is by no means a criticism, rather an acknowledgement that one's bonds are prioritised by the communities one feels part of.

Community

If we are to accept identity can be constituted through community (Sarup, 1996) then an exploration of community as a concept will be helpful. "Community, we feel, is always a good thing" (Bauman, 2001:1). Bauman's assessment of the word community is that it has good feeling. He argues that it is good to have and be in a community. Citing Bulmer, Jenkins (2008) informs us that community is a feel-good word and is associated with positive notions of the collective. Contrary to society, we talk of societal ills and how society can fail an individual, community offers a protective shelter under which one can derive comfort and protection. In joining the word care, the positive aspect of community has been enshrined in legislation in The National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 (now The Care Act 2014), which sets out the notion that caring for vulnerable individuals is associated with the concept of community. There is a

debate to be had as to why the word community was removed from The Care Act possibly due to an emphasis on personalised care, however, integration is still very much a part of this legislation (Samuel, 2016).

Delanty (2010) explains that as the view of community developed it came to be seen to be the natural habitus of the individual as opposed to society which became less relevant and in effect, alien to people. He points to Tönnies' work in 1963 which was interpreted to frame community as organic and society as a post-modern mechanical construct. However, for Durkheim (1893) it is society that is organic because in its development, it moves as one whilst the individuals within it move with their own characteristics. Durkheim likens this to the movement of higher animals that are a combination of parts that form a whole which is greater than its parts.

Community has been discussed and analysed by many philosophers and the boundaries of community can not only be seen to be geographical but they can also be seen as something more intangible such as shared values and interests. Cohen (1985:13) describes a descending scale of boundaries in which national, regional, citywide, village-based boundaries become more particular until we arrive at a community which might be built on entities such as "kinship, friendship, neighbouring, rivalry, familiarity, jealousy". In this way, Cohen contends, community is based on consciousness of a variety of relationships. This reflects the earlier assertion that the traditional sense of community, although still in existence, is becoming increasingly hard to define in a singular way.

Given the above, my proposition is that it is legitimate to refer to a community of runners and therefore begin to assess such a community as an entity that is characterised by those same features of communities as observed in geographical localities. For Jarvie (2012) a community can be distinguished by bonds of comradeship such as wearing a badge of allegiance to a particular sport such as marathon running. I do not wish to create a picture of a runner as a homogenised identity but I do wish to explore the commonalities that runners share and how these impact on identity.

Having completed several marathons I have been struck by the general sense of kinship amongst the field of runners and a willingness to converse with and support complete strangers due to the commonality shared in the endeavour being undertaken. It was the shared interest that brought what might otherwise be considered a disparate group of people together and conversations would largely revolve around projected finishing times, ambitions for and past experiences of the same or similar races. There is a sense of *oneness* when running in a group typified by the fact that everyone is wearing running apparel.

Communities of interest such as, for example, punk rockers, will largely share identifying lifestyle characteristics such as taste in clothing, music, places of congregation etc. (Huppatz *et al*, 2016). However, the community of runners is unusual in that it comprises of people who, outside of the shared interest in running, might share no other interests that would see them associate in other areas of their lives. When meeting runners away from the events at which most are wearing vests and shorts, a common quip is “I didn’t recognise you with your

clothes on” indicating the fact that there is not a set uniform for runners in their everyday lives and highlighting the differences away from the running milieu.

Community “is largely a mental construct” (Cohen, 1985:108) and Cohen asserts that it is sufficiently malleable in that it can accommodate individuals with common bonds but at the same time, not force those individuals to abandon their individuality. Putnam (2000:273) argues that ““Community” means different things to different people” and he highlights the fact that we can talk of such communities as gay, Catholic, African American and even virtual communities in cyberspace. Plummer (2010) points to arguments contrary to Putnam’s assertion that weakening social bonds contribute to the decline in community. He reports that rather than the bonds being weakened, they are just being reworked. Technologies such as the internet and mobile phones “have fostered new ‘networks’, wider global connections, and a widening of our bonds” (Plummer, 2010:31).

This further reinforces the notion that community can be delineated in myriad ways. Social movements and shared interests contribute to new notions of community and an example of this was highlighted in May 2013 during a BBC report of the death of Olympic sailor Andrew Simpson. Fellow sailor Ben Ainslie spoke of a sad day for all of the sailing community. Other reports included reference to Simpson’s home town of Sherborne, which, according to the BBC, appeared to be united in its grief over the loss of a member of its community delineated not by interest status as highlighted by Ainslie but by geographical status (BBC, 2013b). Although some residents of Sherborne might not have

even heard of Simpson, the media still portrays a picture of community in the geographical sense and people do appear to unite in times of crisis.

Examples of such action are shown when a disaster befalls a community and that community reasserts its bonds with many visual displays such as vigils, fundraising etc. This was highlighted subsequent to a terrorist attack in Manchester in 2017, subsequent to which the Worker Bee symbol of Manchester became highly visible in many formats including many people having the image tattooed on themselves (Perraudin, 2017). So, contrary to the argument that a sense of anomie is seeing the decline of community, it can be argued that cultural norms are taking on different guises shaped in myriad ways. Family groups are evolving as are communities both locally and globally and this evolution sees the phenomenon of community characterised by the evolving nature of bonds. Those bonds might at times appear to be weakened but the response to a disaster such as the Manchester bomb shows that they are still there. People unite in times of crisis and this confirms the existence rather than the absence of bonds.

Further evidence of the evolving nature of the use of the word community is highlighted in the *Guardian* (2015) newspaper article regarding cyclist Lance Armstrong's proposal to take part in charity rides with ex-footballer and fellow cancer survivor Geoff Thomas. Controversy surrounds Armstrong due to his history of drug use in sport, however Thomas highlights a different type of community when he states "As a sportsman I don't condone what he has done whatsoever but I look at him as a cancer survivor and a guy who has raised \$500m [£318m] for the cancer community" (Guardian, 2015:12).

This offers a different notion of community delineated by experience. As with some communities of interest, typified by runners, individuals within communities of experience share a particular phenomenon in their lives. Despite the possibility of them being completely different in many ways, this can still see them classified as part of a community. Communities of interest involve an element of choice and often identifying behaviours (modes of dress, attendance at events etc.) whereas communities of experience often do not.

The same can be said of the *black community*, *the gay community* and others in which there may not be an element of choice; however these communities are and have long been discussed and mentioned both by academics and in society in general. I would argue that communities of experience such as the *cancer community* offer a relatively new perspective to the concept of community.

McLaughlin (2012:101) furthers this position when pointing out:

It is not that the problems facing us have changed significantly...However, how we articulate these problems and how they are presented to us in contemporary discourse would appear to have undergone a remarkable transformation in the latter decades of the twentieth century

This transformation has been facilitated by such terms as *survivor* and *movement* entering the discourse around issues such as cancer and the result, it would appear, is the adoption of the word and concept of *community*.

Much of the consideration of community has focused on factors such as delineation creating inclusion therefore this will inevitably create some sense of exclusion for some. Many responses to increasingly diverse societies have seen increasing levels of feelings of “us and them” with organisations such as the far

right British National Party (BNP) tapping into the fears of otherness evident in certain people. Lawler (2008:99) concurs with this when she asserts the BNP's rhetoric "centres on the agitation of fears that 'they' have taken things that are denied to 'us'" So why is it that we can still maintain a sense of community through such activities and interests as running? One of the uniting factors for runners is a sense of shared achievement based on the effort exerted in races or merely running for fitness and leisure.

When one is faced with adversity and shares this dilemma with others it appears a sense of mutual respect develops. A recognition that one has invested time and effort in the task means that runners can empathise with each other and develop a bond that enables them to maintain a connection. This is evidenced by the "runners' nod", which is a small gesture such as a nod of the head or a wave in acknowledgement of a fellow runner when passing on the street during training runs. I have not only experienced this when running but also while riding my bicycle, driving a Volkswagen Beetle or riding my Lambretta scooter. This acknowledgement cements the common bond forged through a shared interest and invokes a sense of belonging to a collective of sorts (Huppatz *et al*, 2016).

Belonging

Belonging is a term which has appeared several times here therefore a consideration of its importance is necessary. Dictionary definitions of the word *belong* make reference to terms such as *be a member of; have the right personal or social qualities to be a member of a particular group; be rightly placed or classified and fit a particular environment* (OUP, 1995). These terms invoke the concept of being in the *right* group and as discussed above, it is of note that

individuals choose to belong to groups despite the growth of individualist ideology and the fact that “Modern societies confer unprecedented importance on the individual *per se* and on his or her ability to build a distinct identity” (Guibernau, 2013:26).

Guibernau, offers the concept of *belonging by choice*. In extending the idea of the acquired identity, the argument is that we can chose to become members of groupings and the empowering nature of choice enables individuals to “engage in the construction of their own self-identity” (Guibernau, 2013:27)”. In belonging to a group and adhering to its principles, individuals build a home space, which offers security and a sense that they “matter”, invoking again the concept of recognition amongst one’s peers. For Edwards (1998), social relationships can be realised through an inclination to belong. It is the plurality of identity and constructs of community that offer numerous possibilities for belonging (Delanty, 2010), and as such, belonging, identity and community are intrinsically linked in the formation of the 21st century citizen.

There is however, an aspect of belonging that can create exclusion. Discourse around in groups and out groups, communities and identity necessarily involves an acceptance that at some point, someone will be excluded. Wood and Waite (2011) highlight the fact that initiatives such as anti-terror legislation in the UK and the drive to create a secular society in France in an attempt to tackle social problems and create a sense of belonging for all groups, actually further dislocate certain groups and create a sense of exclusion.

In choosing to adopt a certain lifestyle and adhere to certain cultural / religious codes (there is a discussion about the nature of these choices which is not for

here) one demonstrates an outward sign of belonging to a particular set of ideals / institution (Parekh, 2008). However, when an external influence proscribes aspects of that lifestyle then a sense of exclusion is the natural result. This can particularly be the case for Muslim people living in much of western society in that there are often debates, for example, around the right of women to wear the niqab (veil) in certain public forums. Indeed, Labour politician Jack Straw defended his stance when asking a constituent to remove her veil when visiting his advice bureau. Part of Straw's assertion was that:

wearing the full veil was bound to make better, positive relations between the two communities more difficult. It was such a visible statement of separation and of difference (Straw, 2006:online).

Although it can be argued that Straw's stance was not a call for total assimilation, it nevertheless echoes some of the arguments put forward by Norman Tebbit in the 1990s. Fletcher (2011:614) reports that Tebbit argued "to live in Britain, migrant communities had to unequivocally assimilate into the British 'way of life'" and Straw's comments can be taken to indicate that separation and difference are problematic.

The sense of belonging can invoke positive emotions and indeed physically lift an individual as highlighted earlier in cases of running the London Marathon. It is also a contributory factor to the making of identity and this sense can be threatened when a plurality of identities causes conflict, either internally or externally as highlighted by the following case.

As a scooter boy in the 1980s I associated with other Vespa and Lambretta riders and we rode to national rallies in various parts of the country. Here we

would meet with other like minded enthusiasts and a sense of kinship and belonging would facilitate a largely positive atmosphere and experience. However, this was threatened for me on one occasion when attempting to enter a pub on the Isle of White to join my friends at a pre-arranged time. My way was blocked by a person who informed me the pub was full. This individual had a tattoo depicting the symbol of the British Movement (a neo-Nazi, far right organisation) on his neck. As the pub was clearly not full I walked to the side door and entered, joining my friends. Shortly after entering, the man who blocked my way came over and remonstrated with me for coming in; the reason he gave for his stance was that I was not welcome because of my brown skin. His exact words were "You're a fucking Paki" which as well as being offensive was also a wrongly ascribed identity.

This incident raised the already mentioned question about how people with similar identities react to other aspects of identity. However, it also raised for me a question of belonging and made me question my place in the scootering community. What actually prevailed for me however was a sense of belonging in my particular group that was forged by bonds based on growing up in the same community, listening to the same music, supporting the same football team etc. These bonds were evidenced by the fact that my friends protected me during the incident thereby confirming my status as a member of the group and of the scootering community as a whole. For Simon (2004) the combination of the collective identity and the individual aspects of my identity formed over years confirmed my place in the social world and thereby fostered my sense of belonging. Confirming this he states "individual as well as collective identities

can provide people with a feeling of continuity over time which reflects the temporal dimension of belongingness” (Simon, 2004:67).

The incident above was a traumatic one that for Sarup (1996:38) (when discussing the construction of identity) could have become for me an object of fixation; he asserts “An incident which occurred in the past can become a true present” and this could have impacted on my identity as well as my sense of belonging. Fortunately the bonds have endured and having recently acquired a Lambretta scooter I once again feel I belong to a particular group / scene, associating again today with many people I had not had contact with since the 1980s. The sense of belonging here resonates with the concept of a community of interest in that a love of scooters has brought together groups of people who have many differences but at least one major similarity.

Tick the appropriate box

The concept of sharing bonds due to similarity has been presented here as a positive phenomenon. However, it is not without its problems. Being a second generation immigrant with brown skin has meant that I do not fit neatly into commonly used categories when required to identify myself in a variety of situations. The seemingly ubiquitous tick-box system that constitutes equal opportunities monitoring, when applying for jobs, services etc. tends to concentrate on what Fanshawe & Sriskandrajah (2010) refer to as six strands. These are gender, race, disability, sexuality, faith & belief and age; at the core of this approach is group identity. The idea that minority groupings as related to these classifications are discriminated against informs a desire to address any disadvantage and offer equality of opportunity.

Despite reservations about the origins of ethnic monitoring and its true purpose (Bonnett & Carrington, 2000), addressing disadvantage is clearly a laudable concept and one which ostensibly should be encouraged. However, identity is not easily definable and I have often felt frustrated at the lack of an appropriate box to tick regarding ethnic identity when filling out forms and have had to use the “other” category. This instilled in me a true sense of otherness and a feeling of dislocation, which was ironically the opposite effect to that intended by such exercises. This continues for my own children today whose mother is *white English* but who identify as being mixed heritage; they too do not have a box to tick that would offer a true sense of their heritage.

“Identity interacts with ascription or the ways in which people allocate others to groups” (Platt, 2011:70). Platt points to the fact that ascription is reinforced by categorization in such things as censuses, surveys and monitoring forms.

“People are expected to match themselves to predefined categories” (Platt, 2011:70) and this can have an impact on the way in which individuals think about themselves. Platt’s (2011) discussion and her presentation of the *Household Labour Force Survey 2004-8* looking at the distribution of ethnic groups across England and Wales highlights the point I argue regarding a sense of otherness. The survey encompasses 15 ethnic groups including white British, black Caribbean, Chinese, Bangladeshi, mixed white and black African etc. but the only group I could include myself in is *other* and my children would be *other mixed*. This situation can have an effect on how people relate to their identity and its place in the society in which they live. Indeed, Bonnett and Carrington (2000:488) suggest “the very process of compelling people to assign themselves

to one of a small number of racial or ethnic 'boxes' is, at best essentialist and, at worst, racist".

The concept of ethnicity is often conflated with race and it is here where the complications seem endless. Younge (2010) offers a historical explanation for the need of some to categorise in order to maintain power and inheritance. Such categorization in countries such as the U.S., Rwanda and South Africa is based on physical appearance and linked to characteristics deemed particular to a certain race. Younge (2010) shows that such characteristics as skin colour, facial features and even hair type have been used to determine racial identity, which in turn has impacted on individuals' life opportunities due to the pernicious effects of categorization. Segregation, poor employment opportunities and a lack of access to basic services are just some of the negative effects that manifest themselves in such systems.

The seeming absurdity of the above forms of categorization is further strengthened by the *one-drop rule* (Younge, 2010; Khanna, 2010). This rule, developed in the U.S. stated that if an individual had one drop of black blood in their ancestry then they are deemed to be black. Khanna's discussion of the one-drop rule points to the symbolic interactionist framework, which seeks to analyse the meanings of everyday life that emerge through interaction. Symbolic interactionism holds that "racial identity is described as a process in which identity is negotiated between the individual and larger society" (Khanna, 2010:96-97) and if this is the case, then we must acknowledge that where there are more powerful actors in society, that process of negotiation will result in

biases leading to ascribed identities that individuals would not necessarily *subscribe* to.

These issues reflect the discussion earlier in this chapter regarding identities and the sporting arena. There have been debates concerning the rights of people to claim nationality as highlighted above, but even when nationality is accepted there are those who would still seek to deny this due to a perception of race and difference.

Wallace (2013), in discussion with ex-football player John Barnes, points to the targeting of Barnes by far-right groups such as the National Front. Barnes who is a Jamaican born black man scored what is widely regarded as one of the England football team's greatest goals against Brazil in the Maracanã stadium in Rio de Janeiro. England went on to win the match 2-0 but on the flight back to the UK Barnes was subjected to abuse from other passengers who were members of the National Front. These people refused to accept Barnes' status as an Englishman to the extent they chanted that the team only won 1-0 because "a nigger's goal doesn't count" (Wallace, 2013).

John Barnes' story is not atypical of the time he was a professional footballer as many of his fellow black players endured abuse from sections of supporters in football grounds. People would throw bananas at these players and make monkey like noises if they touched the football. Interestingly, many of these people displaying racist behaviour, unlike the aforementioned National Front members, would cheer if their team scored even if a black player was the goal scorer. This is consistent with the treatment of black US athletes such as

Tommie Smith and John Carlos and Jewish GB athlete Harold Abrahams discussed elsewhere in this thesis and highlighted by Yianni (2013).

Identity, ethnicity and race are complex phenomena in which the powerful in society are able to exert their will (Parekh, 2008). Crawford & Novak (2014) talk of trust being a factor in the perpetuation of discrimination; they argue that the concept of trust might be beneficial to interpersonal relationships but it can enable discrimination due to race to persist. Even in contemporary society in which we can easily discredit concepts such as the one-drop rule we see policy and legislation which decides on such issues as right to stay in the UK and access to welfare benefits played out on race and ethnicity lines (Thorpe and Jarvis 2006). The idea that what we *are* dictates our future is a troublesome one and is challenged by Fanshawe & Srisakandrajah (2010) who argue for a position in which the political position of equality and diversity, and hence, our future opportunities, should be derived from what we think and do. Unfortunately, the tick box system in which ascription of identity is based upon hackneyed groupings, which one could argue have been superseded by an increasingly diverse societal make up, only serves to reinforce the notion that we can indeed be *put in a box*.

Conclusion

In keeping with my stated intention of offering a range of concepts to consider around the landscape of sport, health and fitness, I have offered a tour of the concept of identity. Initially one might question the relevance of this, but my research has uncovered many facets of identity that do indeed lend themselves to this area. Phenomena such as belonging and community are two of the

concepts shown to be of importance as they consider both individual and societal perspectives to identity and the formation of identity/ies.

In assessing the social impact of sport, my research uncovered the quote regarding Christmas cards near the beginning of this chapter and this acted as a springboard (yet another sporting metaphor) into a full evaluation of identity and the part it might play in society and social change. Identities and the language surrounding them are linked to all elements of our lives and this is also true of the sporting element of our lives. Identity matters and it has been shown to be a significant factor in social change as well as a phenomenon that can reinforce the status quo in society.

Cultural artefacts and particular characteristics are central to identity formation and with the development of western society through industrialisation, globalisation and the civilising process, identities become one of the main seats of self-actualisation through recognition.

A further consideration is the use of language in identity formation and particularly the reciprocal relationship between language within the sport, health and fitness milieu and society. The following chapter features a piece of primary research undertaken to further explore the language of sport, health and fitness and ascertain whether the governmental Olympic legacy agenda has similarities with a popular presentation of sport, health and fitness via glossy magazines.

Chapter five – Sport, Fitness and Health in Print

Identity has been shown to be central to the place of individuals in society and the factors discussed in the previous chapter included a consideration of language. In keeping with the main aims of this thesis, this chapter will examine the language used both in governmental documents and glossy magazines to identify any similarities therein and subsequently the potential impact in terms of promotion of health and fitness agendas these have on society.

The messages given regarding health and fitness have, in this thesis, been shown to be powerful and are a useful indication of the imperative to link the two phenomena. Participation in sport is increasingly seen as a means to desired outcomes of governmental policy on health and the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Olympic Games) in London were utilised to encourage people to engage in sports and physical activity and thereby better their health.

An analysis of several documents linked to the legacy of the Olympic Games to uncover the messages within was undertaken and the emergent themes identified in the discourse used therein were noted. The next step was to analyse several contemporary health and fitness related magazines to determine if and how governmental messages are conveyed to the public. The thrust of this thesis is to assess the social impact of sport and in some way, ascertain how this impact dictates how we live our lives, therefore an analysis of this kind is warranted because the range of messages conveyed from a variety of arenas can, it will be argued, have an impact on our interpretation of our own status.

It is appropriate to assess UK governmental policy because the essence of living in a representative democracy means that policy must have an impact on most

aspects of our everyday lives. Indeed, Blakemore and Booth (2013) list the many areas of our lives and the many academic disciplines that social / governmental policy both impact upon and draw from. These will not be listed in full here but it remains that policy is relevant to how we live.

The relevance of assessing mass media sources is highlighted by King (2003:101) who pointed to the “power of media constructions of health and the way in which public perceptions of health are influenced by the media”. The way in which we access information has changed dramatically in recent times and the internet plays a greater part in this, indeed for Deuze (2007:141) “the internet makes all other types of news media rather obsolete (especially for young adults and teenagers)”. However, the importance of print is arguably still significant. The fact that shops still display large racks of magazines and newspapers is evidence that there is still a market for this kind of information. A scan of such shelves shows the importance of print media in terms of special interests and there was no shortage of magazines to choose from when looking to analyse the messages conveyed in the field of health and fitness. The fact that these magazines still survive in not only a competitive market but also one increasingly serviced by online coverage demonstrates their significance in terms of circulation, which sees them still commercially viable. Despite some decline in circulation, the magazine market is still viable and strong due to different modes of distribution such as free copies and distribution via special events (Sweney, 2016; Degun, 2016).

Notwithstanding the above, the governmental documents were accessed via the internet. Ó Dochartaigh (2007) informs us of the vast extent of archived

governmental documents and the way in which they can be accessed and this confirms the logic behind seeking such material online. However, the importance of print format was reinforced as all documents were printed and analysed as hard copies.

Governmental documents: *Creating a sporting habit for life*

The London 2012 Olympic Games were typified, as so many major contemporary events are, by extensive media coverage. As a *mega-event* they, according to Palmer (2013), shared the characteristics of a *media event*. This enabled many people to witness the spectacle of sport. A stated aim of the Government was to harness the power of this spectacle and build from the games a legacy that would see development in several key areas.

Sport and healthy living, and bringing communities together were two such areas and in evaluating five legacy related documents the aim was to understand how these areas are presented. The documents chosen were:-

1) Ministerial Written Statement on Sporting Legacy – Ten Point Plan

September 2012

2) Government Response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology – Sport and Exercise Science and Medicine: Building on the Olympic Legacy to Improve the Nation’s Health

October 2012

3) Inspired by 2012: The Legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

July 2013

4) The Long-term Vision for the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

February 2014

5) Moving More, Living More: The Physical Activity Olympic and Paralympic Legacy for the Nation

February 2014

Themes of interest were physical activity and health, young people and children, women, disability, older people, community and the economy. The language in the reports features use of the words (or derivations of) *encourage, enable, support and inspire*. The intention was to see how this language conveyed the desired motivational messages.

Document 1 is a ten point plan produced by the minister of state for sport and tourism. Its aim was to continue the upward trend in sporting activity witnessed since London won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. The aim to “Inspire a Generation” is indicative of the fact that the plan is largely focussed on young people, with disability and community also featuring.

The strategy seeks to encourage young people to “develop a sporting habit for life” by financially investing in sporting facilities in schools and communities thereby increasing opportunities for everyone to engage in sporting activity. References to community and schools feature heavily framing the strategy as something that contributes to the common good.

As with young people, the strategy seeks to invest financially to enable “disabled people to take part in sport and physical activity more often.” This again frames the strategy as a force for societal improvement.

Document 2 is a governmental response to eleven recommendations made by a House of Lords select committee’s inquiry entitled Sport and exercise science and medicine: building on the Olympic legacy to improve the nation’s health. The inquiry looked at:

“how robust is the research and evidence base for improving the performance of elite and non-elite athletes (and) how can this knowledge be translated into treatments and preventative interventions to improve the nation’s health?” (Parliament.UK, 2012:online).

As with document 1, this document mirrors the intention to “create a sporting habit for life” by focussing on the health benefits of physical activity. Financial support is highlighted as a contributory factor here and indeed, the word *support* appears several times in terms of economic assistance. Unlike document 1, this document does not significantly feature reference to community; rather it discusses public health concerns on a wider societal level.

There is discussion of exercise referral schemes, which are seen as a method of treatment for medical conditions with the government agreeing “the role of health professionals in promoting physical activity to their patients and the exciting potential for the prescription of exercise to manage chronic conditions” is of significant importance. The over-riding feature highlighted in this document is that of physical activity and health, and links are clearly made between health and sporting bodies.

Document 3 is a report produced jointly by the UK Government and the Mayor of London. It outlines what are seen as the successes brought about as a legacy of staging the 2012 Olympic Games. Much emphasis is placed upon the inspirational nature of the Olympic Games. Indeed, the word *inspire* appears more than forty times in the document.

The main themes of this report are health and physical activity, community (particularly East London) economy and disability. A major message in this report is that of the economic benefits of staging the Olympic Games and interestingly the word *support* appears over thirty times mostly in the context of supporting business and the economy.

Again, the phrase “create a sporting habit for life” appears in this report and the links between sport and health are highlighted by a case study in which a sports organiser states the health benefits of physical exercise are “astonishing”. The words *encourage* and *enable* appear several times thereby further highlighting the desire to harness the power of sporting activity to impact on everyday lives.

Document 4 sets out the long term vision for the legacy of the Olympic Games and again asserts that health services should utilise the benefits of physical activity to prevent, treat and manage long term medical conditions. There is an assertion that the Olympic Games “have helped drive forward aspects of social change such as gender and disability equality” and that within the next decade “Every man, woman and child can find a sport they enjoy and in which they are able to get involved easily, regardless of their ability or disability.”

The document is evenly weighted in terms of its themes and offers a clear vision of how sport can effect social change. The language is in-keeping with the other documents with the word *inspire* featuring several times.

Document 5 sets out the governmental commitment to promote physical activity across the UK. The key word here is *encourage* as it appears nearly twenty times in the stated aim of getting people engaged with physical activity. The word *support* appears several times in the same vein. Again there is mention of GPs prescribing exercise and the links between good physical health and the benefits to employment, such as reduced absenteeism are highlighted.

A section of the summary “Recognises that some groups in society including disabled people, older people and some ethnic minority groups are less likely to be active than others” However, there is no mention of women here. The document later sets out the fact that fewer women and girls take part in physical activity but does not set out any strategy to address this as it does with young people, older people, disabled people and those from minority ethnic communities.

It is clear from these documents that there is a will at governmental level to harness the momentum from the Olympic Games in order to get the population engaged in physical activity. Words such as *inspire*, *encourage*, *enable* and *support* are used extensively in order to try and motivate people and facilitate actions deriving from this motivation. For Soos *et al* (2007:114) “There is no doubt that the ability to motivate individuals to become involved in physical activity and sport is an important part of health promotion” but motivation alone is not enough without ease of access to exercise.

In presenting the *exercise behaviour model* Soos *et al* report that “The final decision about exercise is made as a result of the comparison process of perceived benefits of, and barriers to action” (2007:109). In essence, people will not exercise if there are perceived barriers that make the task seem not worth the effort. In trying to minimise the effect of any barriers the approach from government is to show that they are supportive of any attempts by individuals to exercise. For Palmer (2013) the popular appeal of the Olympic Games was an ideal vehicle through which to move the legacy agenda and to increase physical activity.

Health and fitness magazines

Six magazines were chosen to reflect a range of interests to both men and women. The magazines were all dated July 2014 which means they appear in the shops around the month of June. Therefore the emphasis appeared to be largely around being “in shape” for the summer months. The magazines chosen were:-

- 1) **Health and Fitness** aimed at women
- 2) **Women’s Health**
- 3) **Men’s Fitness**
- 4) **Men’s Health**
- 5) **Runner’s World** aimed at men and women
- 6) **Cycling Fitness** aimed at men and women

The covers

An initial scan of the covers reveals images of slim, muscular, active and attractive men and women indicating a desirable state that can be facilitated by

subscribing to the ideas offered by the magazines. All titles bar **5** include the words health and / or fitness indeed title **1** is *Health and Fitness*, which immediately adds to the message that the two are linked.



All magazines apart from **6** have reference to tummy shape and size. *Blitz your belly* **5**, *lose your gut watching the world cup* **4** and *bikini body now! Blitz your wobbly bits in 20 mins* **1** are examples of the promises made by the covers. Magazine **6** does offer to enable you to be *race fit in just 6 weeks*. Indeed this magazine appears to be the only one that offers a programme based on a significant timescale and commitment also offering 12 week plans to get you *fitter* and to go *faster* and *further*. Magazine **3** can help you *build a six pack at your desk* and **1** and **2** assert they can help you to the *bikini / beach body* in 20 / 30 minutes. Magazine **5** can help you *burn fat fast* and *train less and beat your PB!* (personal best time).

A direct correlation between the messages on the covers and governmental aims is offered by magazine **6**, which proclaims *exercise is better than medicine*.

Magazine **3** proclaims that taking part in obstacle races will help you to *win at*

life! These messages are a clear indication that exercise is framed as more than just a way to physical fitness.



The covers offer what amount to be perceived “quick fixes” to the “problem” of dieting and exercise. Magazine 1 enables one to *burn fat before brekkie* and *get fit in half the time* and magazine 2 offers the opportunity to attain a *14-day beach body*. Magazine 3 will help you to *build a six-pack at your desk* and magazine 4

offers *96 new 6-pack cheats*. Magazines **5** and **6** enable you to *train less and beat your PB* and *be race fit in just 6 weeks*.

The notion of the quick fix evokes the aforementioned exercise behaviour model in that it offers a chance to gain benefits by taking away perceived barriers such as lack of time to exercise and the “difficulties” of prolonged physical exertion.

The editorials

The editorials near the beginning of popular magazines serve several purposes. They offer a preview of what is to follow in the current issue and commentary on contemporary issues. With this, they also offer a feel for the underlying philosophy of the magazine. For McDonnell (2014), the editorial can use data in such a manner that information can be interpreted in a way to form opinion on the subjects under discussion.

Magazine **1** leads with the idea that we should be concerned about looking good for beach holidays and open air picnics asserting that *the last thing you want to be worrying about is how you look in that bikini or sundress*. The claim is that the magazine will *reveal the secrets you need to feel confident*. The message that confidence can be built echoes the language of the government in which encouragement and inspiration featured heavily.

The editorial in magazine **2** bears the title *Foreword thinking* and it offers a clear message with a concomitant philosophy. The opening line reads *The human race is inherently tribal* and the editor asserts that we have seen the time of *hippies* and *yuppies* and we are now we are in the time of the *wellthys*; people who are concerned with health and well-being and who appreciate that *a strong,*

healthy body is worth far more than a second home in the South of France. The assertion that people can be grouped in this way offers a feel of the governmental drive toward community. Indeed, the editor argues that this tribalism is *less about copying and more about connection.*

There is an argument that *wellness...(is) an accessible and aspirational lifestyle.* The editorial continues the theme of identifying and breaking down barriers in the assertion that our *enemies* are the *modern world's dual antagonists: stress and the diminution of time.* This is reinforced by the statement that *health doesn't have to be a joyless or painful pursuit.* The editorial in magazine **2** offered much in the way of identification with the governmental agenda on health without actually stating as much.

The short editorial in magazine **3** reaffirms the community spirit of sporting endeavour when it highlights *the sense of togetherness* experienced by those who take part in extreme obstacle races, which are growing in popularity. The editor in magazine **4** claims that the advice offered by his publication is *pointing people in the right direction for a better life*, which clearly meets the criteria in terms of the drive to encourage people to get fit and healthy and thereby improve their lives.

In talking about running as a route to weight loss, the editorial in magazine **5** echoes the governmental theme of motivation when it talks of the importance of *motivational drivers.* A further parallel with the governmental agenda is evident when the editor asserts that four runners featured in the magazine turned *lifestyle changes into lasting habits* thereby ensuring the weight they lost stayed off. Magazine **6** continues the theme of a habit for life when the editorial asserts

that *cycling is a sport for life*. Magazine 6 also echoes the theme of accessibility by highlighting the myriad ways one can take part in cycle events and fact that there are many *older riders who are still fit*.

The advertisements

A feature of magazines in general is the proliferation of advertisements (ads). Indeed some magazines display several pages of ads prior to displaying any of the magazine's own content. Deuze (2007) reminds us that the advertising industry is one that enables its produced content to occur in a variety of commercial media therefore special interest magazines offer a fertile ground for advertisers to exploit with directed campaigns.

In reviewing ads that covered more than half a page an overview of themes was taken. The ads could be bracketed in broadly defined categories that largely seek to service two major areas. Firstly they offer products consistent with the general fitness theme of the magazines. Categories identified here were *fitness products* such as food and drink supplements, exercise equipment and gadgets, and *experience products* such as events, personal training and gym memberships. Secondly, the ads offer products consistent with an aspirational theme that appears to be concomitant with the general well-being messages they seek to convey. Categories identified here were *cosmetics and personal products* such as make up, shampoo and fragrances and *clothing and accessories* such as luxury watches, motor cars and jewellery.

The governmental themes of encouragement and inspiration are evidenced in the headline text of several ads. Examples include:

Take the decision and make it happen

Walk, run, climb, play – you can!

Boost your skills and build your confidence

MONA

TAKE THE DECISION & MAKE IT HAPPEN!

CHANGE YOUR LIFE in ONLY 7 DAYS!! with MONA

Are you living the life you dreamed of?
Do wake up everyday excited to start your day?
Are you in a passionate caring relationship?
Do your SCREAM for SUCCESS!

MONA CELEBRITY LIFE COACH & TRAINER IS HERE TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN ONLY 7 DAYS!

Whether it is getting the job you love, repairing a damaged relationship (or move on to the next one), losing those extra pounds or just simply turning the page to a whole new kind of existence!

The Life you dream of and deserve is at your finger tips!! So its time to Take the Decision to change your life!!

JOIN Mona in her "Take the Decision & Make It Happen" MONAVATIONAL Retreats
Mona's skills will inspire you to immediate Impacting results!
Move yourself out of good and into GREAT!!!!

Register Now for Mona's Signature Retreat and receive a 20% savings on h
MONAVATIONAL Bikini Bootcamp
in Costa Rica December 2014

Contact MONA Today & MAKE IT HAPPEN
www.monavation.com
mona@monavation.com

Telephone:
289-464-MONA (6662)
1-844-464-MONA

BOOST YOUR SKILLS & BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE

Join our mountain bike coaches on a weekend skills course and feel your confidence grow by the minute. Learn on our on-site skills course and enjoy scenic journeys along the remote mountain trails of Snowdonia. Visit www.pyb.co.uk for a free colour brochure.

PLAS Y BRENIN
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Plas y Brenin The National Mountain Sports Centre Capel Curig, Gwynedd LL24 0ET. Tel: 01690 720214. Email: info@pyb.co.uk
www.plaspybrenin.com www.facebook.com/plaspybrenin www.twitter.com/plaspybrenin

Enablement and accessibility feature in headlines such as:

I do it because I can

Redefine your evening commute

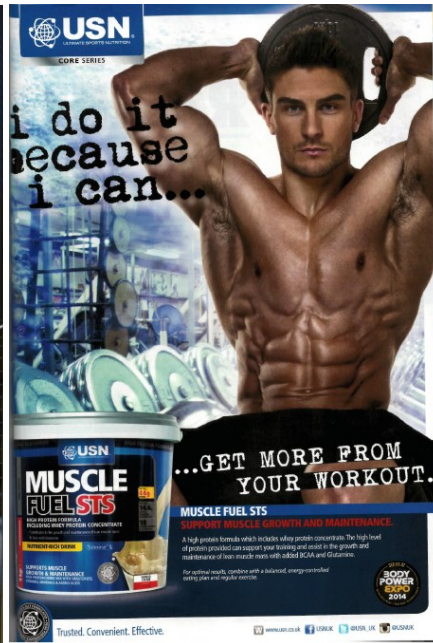
Rewrite your expectations

The general message of a "better" life through fitness is conveyed in headlines such as:

"I got 99 problems" – but a beach ain't one

Life is better when you Tri (an abbreviation of triathlon)

Who else wants to look this good and in time for the summer?



A smaller category of general food and drink appeared in several ads and it is worth noting that these products such as bottled water, yoghurt, muesli bars and even low alcohol beer are presented in a way to indicate they would form part of a health conscious lifestyle. This is done by presenting images of blue skies and holiday / beach settings featuring citrus fruits and flowers in the cases of yoghurt and beer and an image of a competitor in the *Tough Mudder* obstacle race holding a bottle of water with the headline *have you got the bottle?*



An aspirational lifestyle is promoted in the ads featured in all the magazines and these ads do convey messages concomitant with the governmental themes set out in the vision of the legacy of the Olympic Games.



Feel good for further and *inspire* are examples of the language adopted by ads for automobiles and earphones respectively. Clearly, driving does not add to one's fitness but the message that driving this particular car can make one feel good about fuel efficiency is placed amongst the "feel good" messages of health

and fitness. An ad for *Eat Natural* nut bars offers the promise of *a bit of motivational know how* and one for *Madison* clothing presents the benefits of accessible cycling offering *urban city style* with their motto *cycle everywhere*.

Interestingly, ads for both automobile companies and cycle companies feed not only into the feel good message of health and fitness but also into the message that one can feel good about contributing to a healthy planet. This taps into the current debate and seemingly increasing obligation to lead a lifestyle that minimises one's impact on the environment. The "Green Agenda" is high on the list of many people's priorities and these messages make the link between sustainable health both of the individual and that of the environment.

The content

A review of the main content of the magazines was the final stage of the magazine reviews and what follows are samples of where the governmental agenda permeates this content.

Magazine 1 (Health and Fitness - directed at women) features a letter from a reader who extols the virtues of the health and fitness regime she has started due to the fact that she has not *felt the best version of myself* recently. She concludes by stating that she *can't wait to be my best me at 33!* The letter is written by way of a thank you to the magazine for being the inspiration to get the reader exercising and feeling *better* again. This is clearly a reflection of the governmental desire to inspire people to be fit and healthy.

Drawing parallels with the exercise behavioural model, magazine 1 presents a workout which exemplifies the requirement to provide accessible exercise that is:

perfect for modern living...it's a cardio workout that doesn't require covering lots of miles, plus it burns body fat in a short time because the exercises use multiple muscle groups together. The low impact movements can be done by people of all ages and abilities yet it pushes everyone and is guaranteed to raise your heart rate, no matter how fit you are.

This theme is continued with a feature that encourages readers to *stay fit on holiday* by offering advice on how to continue to exercise while on holiday without letting this impact on rest and relaxation with loved ones.

General health messages permeate magazine **1** in the form of dietary advice with one article bearing the title *Bikini Body Foods*. The theme of the body continues with a presentation of an exercise regime that can enable one to *stand out from the crowd with an upper body to be proud of*. The identified themes of physical activity and health are echoed here.

One article in magazine **2** (Women's Health) continues the theme of improving oneself by offering to enable you to attain *your best body* in a limited amount of time. The theme of a *better body* is also linked to diet in an article entitled *Eat Smart – the latest nutritional know-how for a better body*.

The articles in magazine **2** cross a range of subjects that reflect the interests of the advertisers in the magazine and this is evidenced in promotional features such as one that picks up the theme of the *bikini body* in offering to help you to *get Speedo fit this summer*. Articles that discuss diet are positioned alongside full page ads promoting food and nutrition products.

One article in magazine **2** bears the line *real life inspiration* in the top corner of the page and it features a woman who *hit 16st 8lb on the scales and her health started to fail* but started a health and fitness regime to reduce to 9st 6lb in a year. The story tells of the fact that the woman started to play hockey again and now trains four times a week. The sporting habit for life message is reflected in her assertion that *losing almost half my body weight is only the beginning – keeping it off is a daily commitment*. This article is a clear example of the overriding link made by governmental messages that joins sport, exercise and fitness to health.

Magazine **3** (Men's Fitness) features the motivational message in an article written by ex world champion swimmer Mark Foster in which he *shares the motivational tricks that helped him succeed*. Also featured is an article by ex world and Olympic champion cyclist Chris Boardman, who discusses the accessibility of cycling as a route to sport, exercise, leisure and commuting. Boardman discusses mass participation rides (*cyclosporives*) and offers a clear link from their rising popularity to the legacy of the Olympic Games by stating:

They're certainly one of the most exciting legacies of the Olympic Games in terms of the British public being inspired to get cycling – people from all walks of life are getting involved.

Boardman's views on cycling, reflecting the governmental message of accessibility, whereby he wants to see people able to ride safely on the transport infrastructure and be able to ride in "normal" clothes are highlighted in this article in which he states as a positive that he has, in cyclosporives:

seen people taking part in cut-off jeans while others are decked out from head to toe in high-end Lycra. Some go hell for leather, while others enjoy a leisurely ride.

Magazine **3** offers targeted dietary advice in an article that shows how you can derive the effects of performance enhancing drugs from “normal” foods. Again this article offers an accessible route to sporting lifestyle by placing *normality* at the heart of a “healthy” lifestyle. The accessibility theme is continued in an article entitled *Kings of YouTube*, which highlights *a new generation of coach (that) is making fitness ever more accessible thanks to the wonders of the internet.*

Several keywords appear at the start of this article including *fat loss, diet* and *motivation.*

An article that appears in stages throughout magazine **4** (Men’s Health) features *1000 fastest health tips ever!* This list spans a range of themes including *lose weight, not time.* The theme of short cuts to fitness is echoed in *add muscle, cut corners* and *less is more;* the theme is repeated in *fast track to stamina* and *build a beach body in 3 weeks flat.*

The transformative power of motivation to become fitter is reflected in an article titled *Rewire your mind and body* in which the assertion is *the only tool you need to transform your life is the one behind your eyes, use your head to get ahead.*

Magazine **4** also includes a *get Speedo fit this summer* promotional feature although this time aimed at men rather than women.

The links between fitness and health are highlighted in an article in Magazine **5** (Runner’s World) the title *Doctor’s orders* is accompanied by an image including fruit and a stethoscope. The transformation of individuals is a theme repeated in

an article in which a runner asserts *running has changed my life*. This article focuses not only on the fitness derived through running but the weight loss of the runner, which is seen as a positive thing. Weight loss is a major feature in magazine **5** as evidenced by an article focussing on four individuals who have lost weight and are afforded the title *The biggest losers*.

Magazine **5** also continues the theme of accessibility and time constraints with an article that states *'run faster by running less' may sound an odd option, but what if you could smash your marathon PB by chopping your mileage?* The theme of inspiration and accessibility for women is reflected in an article that features women only races. The theme of motivation also features in an article *Winning the mind game*, which discusses issues such as *mental toughness, resilience* and *focus*. The *hot tip* in this article is *mental toughness is built by doing something difficult over and over again, especially when you don't feel like doing it*.

Magazine **6** (Cycling Fitness) includes an article directly linking exercise to health; the title *A ride a day keeps the doctor away* is prefaced by the assertion that *exercise is a universal health panacea*. The article reflects the encouragement message of the government with the claim that *encouraging more people to engage in cycling is crucial to improving the health of the nation and reducing the prevalence of obesity*.

Although magazine **6** does not stress the "quick fix" notion of exercise it does feature an article that seeks to enable a cyclist to be *race fit in six weeks*. Older people are featured in *Golden oldies* and motivation is featured in *Ditch your excuses* an article that claims to *show you how to strengthen your resolve*. The

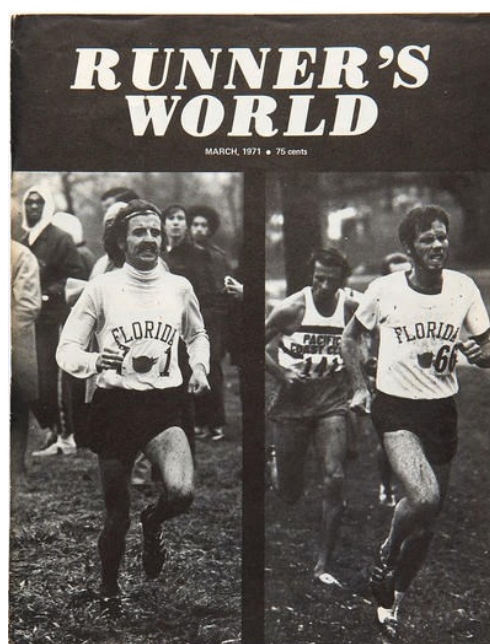
Health and Nutrition section of magazine **6** features dietary advice and it would appear almost inevitably, weight loss.

The findings from the magazines show that health and fitness magazines do indeed promote health and fitness and this should come as no surprise.

However, what the findings do reflect is the previously discussed notion of accessibility in terms of making the pursuit of health and fitness a lifestyle choice.

There is a strong theme of effective exercise in limited amounts of time and there is also a theme of exercising anywhere (at one's desk, while watching television etc.).

I have previously mentioned the notion of exercise and training making the transformation from “sweaty gymnasias” to luxurious health clubs and the magazines reflect this as highlighted in the case of *Runner's World*. In the 1970s and early 1980s I used to subscribe to *Runner's World* and the covers almost exclusively featured images of competitive runners in races such as the one below.



This is markedly different to the issues today that feature far fewer obviously competitive runners and more *ordinary* people on beaches, in fields etc. making what appear to be choices that fit with the healthy, rather than competitive, lifestyle.

Discussion

If the remit of this thesis is to assess how sport can impact on society, then consideration of how mega-events such as the Olympic Games also impact on society is essential because they are a globally mediated event with sport at the heart. Rowe (2012:286) argues that sport is socially constructed “and mega-events are, by virtue of their scale and conspicuousness, of profound social, cultural, political and economic significance”. Therefore the need to scrutinise the messages of the Olympic Games and how they relate to their legacy is imperative.

The Olympic Movement and the games it organises are based on seven principles of Olympism set out in the Olympic Charter (I.O.C. 2013). The first of these principles is worth sharing in its entirety as it offers the philosophy that ultimately informs the legacy of the Olympic Games:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles (I.O.C. 2013:11).

The fourth principle offers that “the practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport” (I.O.C. 2013:11) and this is clearly reflected in the stated desire of the government in setting out the legacy of the 2012 Olympic games whereby they seek to include as many people as possible in sport / physical activity. The impact of the Olympic Games on society is large in terms of political advantage, economic gain and ostensibly improved environments (Boykoff, 2016; Karen & Washington, 2015) and in recognising this, the Olympic Charter states that sport occurs in the framework of society and that:

The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity (I.O.C. 2013:11).

These principles inform what impact the Olympic Games can have on society so it is no surprise that we can speak of a “legacy of the games”. Indeed Rowe (2012) asserts that the notion of legacy is a routine feature of the Olympic Games as well as other sporting mega-events. This is confirmed in the Olympic Charter which informs us that within the International Olympic Committee’s role and mission is the duty “to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries” (I.O.C. 2013:17).

In studying policy implications of sporting mega-events, Palmer (2013) points directly to the London 2012 Olympic Games from which the government derived national policies through the legacy agenda. She states that increasing physical activity was identified as a key feature of this legacy agenda. In reading the legacy related literature one can observe the use of the language of

encouragement and motivation and the fact that the vision to *create a sporting habit for life* is one that permeates the agenda.

There is however evidence of the Olympic legacy not enduring over time and Gibson (2015) points to a governmental failing to harness the momentum particularly at grassroots level and in schools. Notwithstanding this, as previously stated, increasing numbers of people are running and “the UK health and fitness industry is continuing to grow” (LeisureDB, 2017:online) with 1 in every 7 people being members of a gym (this representing a 5.1% increase in just 12 months). This growth is largely driven from the private sector’s involvement in gymnasia and major sporting events being largely funded by commercial sponsorship (LeisureDB, 2017).

Local initiatives are helpful but can remain untapped if people do not know how to access these. Therefore there is a need for a visible medium through which individuals can learn how to access the methods and utilities to indeed *create* that sporting habit. Glossy health and fitness magazines can and do offer this medium and there are clear reflections of the governmental agenda throughout these magazines. The imagery of “healthy, attractive” people on the covers of the magazines serves as a hook to draw individuals to them. Bold assertions that offer ways to get fit, be healthy and develop a desirable image add to the imagery on the covers. One could argue that these messages were contained in the magazines before the London Olympics but the impact the games has had and the calls to lead a *healthier* life make the messages more relevant and arguably speak to more people than those who might have read them pre 2012.

Health and fitness magazines are ostensibly apolitical therefore it would seem they offer a politically neutral message. However, on closer inspection one can see the manifestation of the aims of governmental policy within the magazines. It can be argued that the magazines add to a concept highlighted by Chalabi (2013) called *Nudge Theory*. This offers that people respond to suggestions to change their behaviour if these suggestions are mediated through ostensibly neutral sources. Indeed, in 2010 the government set up a Behavioural Insights Team, also known as the “Nudge Unit”, who’s remit is to use behavioural insights in order to gain what they refer to as “social purpose goals” (Behavioural Insights, 2014). The social purpose here is to create a fitter therefore “healthier” society and the nudges toward this goal are provided, in part, by the easily accessible and highly visible glossy magazines.

“Nudges are not mandates” (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008:6) so for Thaler and Sunstein they are suggestions of a “better” option. When looking at food buying options they suggest “Putting fruit at eye level counts as a nudge. Banning junk food does not” (Thaler & Sunstein 2008:6). The glossy magazines follow this theory in that rather than focusing on the negative aspects of behaviour, they promote the positives. Words such as *can*, *boost*, *fun*, *beat* and *improve* appear on the covers of the magazines thereby couching exercise in a positive light. For Thaler & Sunstein, behaviour modification to attain a goal does not offer a quick fix; if we partake in exercise or eat less in order to lose weight / get fitter, we do not see the benefits immediately. They refer to the actions we take as “investment goods” (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008:80) and the benefits are seen at a later date. However, the magazines counter this issue and the potential for lack of willingness to invest by using words such as *instant*, *now* and *just one hit*.

Goodwin informs us that nudging, according to Thaler and Sunstein, is underpinned by what they call “‘libertarian paternalism’, a philosophy that seeks to guide people’s choices in their best interests while permitting them to remain at liberty to behave otherwise” (Goodwin, 2012:85). However for Goodwin this philosophy is flawed; his stance is that the policy of nudging should be rejected because although its proponents argue that it is empowering individuals, it actually focuses on the negative aspects of their behaviour. In doing this, contrary to assertions regarding the freedom to choose, it manipulates choices to reflect the judgement of those referred to as the “choice architects” whose task is to instil “behaviour that is more beneficial for society and the individual” (John *et al*, 2011:13). Effectively the choice architects are deciding what is best and this could arguably limit the freedom of choice for individuals to act as they wish. For Dufour (2003), freedom is reducible to the capacity of individuals to think for themselves. Human beings are morally obliged to use their *own* critical faculties and applying this argument, one can understand the criticism levelled at the politics of nudge.

Indeed the criticisms of nudge are not new phenomena; Lakhani reported in 2008 that government campaigns were failing. She pointed to the idea that nudging people away from unhealthy lifestyles was quite ineffective and a policy of selling healthy options would have been much more effective. She pointed to assertions that the commercial sector had been very successful in marketing *unhealthy* options and there would be much to learn from this approach. Indeed, Jones *et al* (2013) confirm Lakhani’s (2008) assertion when pointing out that, amongst other outlets, even school canteens have subliminally promoted unhealthy eating practices.

Lakhani's argument offers insight into the value of today's glossy health and fitness magazines as they are funded by not only sales but also advertisers who use marketing to promote their goods and services, which are selling the healthy lifestyle options the government would like us to adopt. For James & Beer (2014:27) however, "Giving people a nudge in the *right* direction is a necessary part of a multifaceted strategy" (emphasis added) and they feel that policy design should not only consider why people make bad choices but also how to normalise healthy choices.

James & Beer (2014) argue that policy and regulation can create a cultural shift that creates attitudes concomitant with healthy lifestyles. As an example of this, they point to the smoking ban in public places and argue that the legal prerogative not to smoke in certain areas has added to a general aversion to smoking in society. Indeed, the current policy debate around smoking has stretched from restrictions on the display of tobacco products in retail outlets to the proposal that packaging be standardised for all cigarettes.



This is one of the factors that represent a sea change in public attitude toward cigarette smoking from one, which saw advertising campaigns featuring iconic

images such as *Marlboro Man* (shown above), who was seen as an aspirational figure by many, to one that now frames smoking as an undesirable activity.

Arguably, today's most memorable advertising related to smoking is that which conveys the messages of the harms done by smoking. No longer are we offered images of iconic figures like *Marlboro Man* rather we are offered graphic images of the damage cigarettes can do to one's body.



The above image shows a cancerous tumour growing on a cigarette as it is being smoked and featured in a campaign funded by the Department of Health in 2012. The aim of the campaign was to encourage smokers to make the decision to give up smoking in 2013 (Campbell, 2012). Interestingly the campaign was an example of the aforementioned critiques of nudge theory in that it focused on preventing negative behaviours rather than promoting positive ones. The Guardian newspaper ran an online poll to ascertain the efficacy of the campaign and notwithstanding any undeclared limitations to the poll, it showed that 57% of respondents felt the campaign put them off smoking (Guardian, 2012).

Although *Marlboro Man* offered an aspirational image, there cannot have been many people living in the UK at the time of the advertising campaign who genuinely believed they would be able to spend their life as a modern day

cowboy in the United States. There was an unreal offering associated with an everyday aspect of life. This assertion calls one to question just how real the offerings of the health and fitness magazines are. The images shown and discussed above depict men and women who represent the optimum body shapes promoted by the magazines. Flat tummies, “washboard abs”, toned biceps and pectorals are promoted as the desirable form and the images show perfect examples of these.

However, do these images represent body shapes that are attainable by those of us leading everyday lives without access to professional training and the time it would take to develop such bodies? The magazines actually offer images for readers to look at but aside from offering motivation, they do not offer a reality for most. The magazines offer an experience akin to pornographic magazines in that they, for most, present a world that does not represent normality. This parallel is reinforced by *Men’s Health* magazine that features articles including *37 Ways to Blow Her Mind*, which offer sexual advice accompanied by semi-pornographic images of women (who themselves present as slim and toned albeit in a sexual nature).

Scriven (2007:256) argues the presentation of unattainable body images impacts on the health and well-being of (particularly female but with a growing number of male) individuals. Her argument is summed up with the assertion that:

The health impact of feeling that you do not match up to the ubiquitous media images of the perfect female body can be deeply negative, influencing the emotional, social, mental and physical health, well-being and quality of life of women

This argument is continued with the contention that those mixing training with full-time employment sometimes adopt diets and training regimes that do not have a healthy balance thereby contributing to an “eventual picture of fitness that is not necessarily a picture of good health” (Yianni, 2008:157). Why is this?

Elsewhere in this thesis, I have pointed to some people’s desire to emulate their sporting icons and acknowledged the power of celebrity in shaping what they strive for. This is particularly the case when looking at body image. The magazines offer images that are seen as the desirable body for both men and women. The images above show that the contemporary western ideal includes being slim, toned and muscular. If we accept the premise in my discussion regarding the civilizing process that we run to fulfil an innate need that is not a requirement of modern society, then we can see that the need for an athletic body shape is concomitant with this.

If men were the hunters in pre-civilized society, they will have been *fit* and *muscular* by necessity. Men are not necessarily required to fulfil such roles today so why pursue the muscular shape? It can be argued that in a society in which gender roles are blurring and men might be feeling increasingly emasculated due to a perceived eradication of the *traditional* roles, the last bastion of their assertion of masculinity could be the muscular physique.

Debates abound regarding how females present their bodies and the clothes they wear; issues such as safety and appropriateness feature in such debates (Horeck, 2014; Dodge, 2015). A further discussion of some of these debates will be presented later. However, the argument I present here is that when men acquire the aforementioned muscular physique, it is generally framed in a

positive manner. Compliments are bestowed and terms such as *you are looking well* or *you are looking fit* add to the general picture of positivity. This reflects social expectations of what is a good body shape and “social expectations of the body can shape the physical body” (Senior and Viveash 1998:27). Molnar and Kelly (2013) confirm the perceived desirable image for both men and women when they say that images of women who are slim and toned and men who are muscular and toned are deemed to be attractive.

Discourse

In the exploration of identity elsewhere in this thesis, an assessment of language offered ways in which the discourse of running can contribute to identity. Here, I would like to further explore the discourse used in the documents and magazines and ascertain how it contributes to attitudes regarding health and fitness. In his analysis of discourse, Fairclough (1995) informs us that text does not only refer to written tracts but also to cultural artefacts such as buildings, pictures and pieces of music.

The work of Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997) shows us that texts within the study of discourse contribute to analyses of context and situated use. The context here is health and fitness and the situated use is the desire to promote a particular agenda. My primary interest is how the words used in the documents and magazines present messages but it must also consider how the images presented alongside the words add to the discourse around health and fitness.

Of the governmental documents, only **3** and **4** featured images alongside the text. These images included pictures of a variety of people engaging in the very activities being promoted. The reader is left in no doubt as to the political nature

of these documents as the forewords are written by and feature images of politicians including the Prime Minister and the mayor of London. It can be argued that the positive messages and images presented draw from the feel-good momentum of the Olympic Games and offer a variation of the party political broadcast.

In his analysis of political rhetoric, Reisigl (2008) suggests political persuasion can be brought about in several ways. One of these is the use of “non-argumentative *linguistic force* such as emotionalization, suggestion, demagoguery, propaganda...[and]...manipulative persuasion” (Reisigl, 2008:97) (emphasis in original). Reisigl (2008:97) refers to this as *ethos*, the goal of which is to “create a gentle and constant attitude or emotion as part of the hearers’ and readers’ habitus”. In recreating this ethos, the governmental Olympic legacy documents seek to create a habitus including “a sporting habit for life”.

The previously identified words *encourage*, *enable*, *support* and *inspire* are deployed throughout the discourse to enhance the linguistic force identified by Reisigl (2008) and to manipulatively persuade people to buy into the pursuit of a “healthy” lifestyle. This is political rhetoric in the sense that it is the use of discourse by policy makers in a way that will influence the thought and conduct of an audience (echoing the politics of nudge). That audience comprises members of society who, in the view of the policy makers, need to adapt their conduct and pursue the proposed lifestyle. Although it stands that some governmental documents might have a limited reach in terms of who might read them, these documents are part of the milieu of policy and this is disseminated in many ways in society.

Although Hodge and Kress (1993) recognise the value of spoken language to promote ideology through such things as intonation, they also acknowledge the power of written language in which the writer can control the discourse. Any slips of the tongue or inconsistencies in meaning can be edited out to present the required message. In this way, written documents from policy makers are used as effective media in which to present ideologies. They are a more reliable vehicle than that of oral discourse, for example in debating chambers, via which meanings can be blurred by “momentary loss of control, or accidental revelations” (Hodge & Kress, 1993:13).

Mautner (2008) posits that high circulation glossy magazines reflect the mainstream in society, therefore it is important to analyse the discourse in said magazines. The question to be asked is, do the magazines actually reflect society or do they, via their content, shape society? It has been shown above that the aim of the governmental policy documents is to shape society and the discourse used is a powerful tool to enable this. Although I do not argue that glossy magazines on their own shape society, I do offer that alongside other forms of mass media and government policy, they form part of the discourse that can shape society.

The governmental documents use carefully selected terms in order to create an ethos but do this in a way that suggests subtlety. The magazines however, present in a brash and up-front manner offering no suggestion of ambiguity in terms of the messages they convey. They are part of a media that offers lifestyle options in an uncomplicated and unrestrained style. The term *lifestyle* is used purposely as what is being sold by the magazines is not only a set of images of

what the body should be but also a set of values. This reflects the idea of ethos and the construction of ideology becomes apparent.

The discourse of the magazines follows certain conventions driven by factors such as intended audience and intended outcomes and this creates a formulaic mode of presentation that is repeated across the range. For Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1997:155) “the fit between organisational patterns and functions depends less on the articulation of content and more on conventions of presentation” and this strengthens the place of pictorial imagery within the magazines. For the consumer, a readily identifiable pictorial image together with a bold written strap line is a means by which interest is engaged, which is important because generating interest to meet perceived needs is a necessity of survival for businesses within a consumer culture.

Magazines are part of a consumer culture and Horne (2006:129) confirms the above assertion when he states “Values and stylised images of the body are constructed and circulated through advertisements, the press, television and cinema”. Magazines offer a powerful medium because, unlike television and cinema, the images are fixed and serve as a constant reminder when purchased and left on coffee tables, in magazine racks etc. Horne argues that like cars, the body needs regular attention and “servicing” and if this is the case then in the same way car manuals such as *Haynes* offer advice, then health and fitness magazines offer advice for the body. Indeed the *Haynes* brand has not been ignorant to this fact and has released manuals covering sporting and lifestyle activities such as running, mountain biking, surfing, climbing and kayaking (Haynes, 2015).

Technological discourse such as that used in car manuals is mirrored in health and fitness magazines. Terms such as *upgrade*, *boost*, and *performance* feature and, in the case of fitness related goods, the magazines offer *test runs*. The magazines offer readers an opportunity to consume the messages in a private space and make decisions addressing concerns they may have about presentation in the public space. Horne's (2006:129) assertion that "Body shape has become a critical sign of success, control and personal worth, whilst fatness has become a metaphor for ugliness, indulgence, greed and sloth" provides insight into the importance, for many, of the motivational worth of the magazines. The discourse of *can do* coupled with bright images offers a therapeutic message somewhat akin to a treatment regime for illness. Indeed, the previously highlighted *exercise is better than medicine* strengthens this proposition.

In using the term *therapeutic*, the intention is to highlight the views that inform the approach of both governmental agenda and the magazines. Williams (2014:11) speaks of the holistic view of the body, which includes mental well-being when she points to the "worldview that excess weight is shameful, and to shed it is a dream come true". This is an indication that the discourse surrounding health, fitness and body shape has a pervasive and powerful impact on people. For Illouz (2008:6) "the therapeutic outlook has become one of the centres of that amorphous and vague entity known as Western civilization" and this has become institutionalised and mediated via various channels including magazines. Illouz (2008:5) proposes the psychological outcome of the therapeutic outlook is a way of defining and performing the self; the meanings derived from this should be used "as tools enabling us to accomplish certain things in daily life".

The discourse in the magazines centres on accomplishment; *get beach ready* and *get the body you want* are instructions for the reader to attain certain goals. Another instruction that indicates the therapeutic nature of the message is *win at life*, which offers the prospect of not only boosting power and endurance but also *happiness*. Madsen and Ytre-Arne (2012:21) point to a “therapeutic ethos” which is put forward by Illouz and confirm this is mediated via popular magazines. This extends the notion above regarding the magazine as a health and fitness manual and adds to the argument that they can be viewed as self-help manuals.

Commercialisation

Much of the above has highlighted the power of advertising and it has been shown that bold advertisements are used not only by the commercial industries but also in the promotion of governmental campaigns. Nudge theory (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008) has complemented advertising to effect change in individuals and therefore society in general. Sport has been identified as a phenomenon that reaches most echelons in society through participation and / or spectatorship. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that advertisers have harnessed the reach of sport and associated drives toward “healthy” lifestyles to promote all manner of goods and services. Blakey (2014:110) sums this up when asserting:

Historically, sport organisations, sports celebrities and, specifically, sports events have attracted the highest level of sponsorship investment across the arts, culture and music industries, as sport has become an integral part of an emerging global culture with widespread appeal across all ages and lifestyles

Sponsorship is an increasing phenomenon in UK sports (Trimble *et al*, 2010) exemplified by company logos / names on sports kits and the re-naming of stadia as highlighted by the City of Manchester Stadium being renamed the Etihad Stadium, thereby offering the airline company a highly visible advertising platform due to the popularity of English Premier League football and Manchester City Football Club who play their home matches at the stadium.

A visit to any sporting arena (football, cricket, athletics etc.) will reveal a great many advertisements displayed via media such as billboards, electronic banners, sponsorship of the match ball, sponsorship of a particular athlete etc. Therefore, the more people watch sports events either by attendance or via televised coverage, the more exposure advertisers will acquire. It follows then that it is in the best interests of advertisers to help maximise spectatorship in order to maximise exposure. Indeed, Horne (2006) informs us that sport, as a mass-mediated spectacle, encourages sports enthusiasm and this enthusiasm often manifests itself in increasing sports participation. This is evidenced by observable examples I have witnessed such as local tennis courts experiencing increased use during the annual Wimbledon tournament and an increased amount of road cyclists riding at weekends during the three weeks of the Tour de France.

Trimble *et al* (2010) further reinforce the links above when they point to the obligation of professional sports clubs to improve the lives of others through encouraging physical activity and sports participation. The enthusiastic fan / spectator can therefore become an enthusiastic participant with the added benefit of forging a link with the club with which they affiliate.

Increasing commercial activities by sports clubs have seen them transcend the status of a being merely a football, cricket, cycling etc. team and become businesses with many entities beyond the playing field. They are now part of the commercial sector which “helps increase the UK’s sport and physical activity levels, and complements the public and voluntary sectors” (Trimble *et al*, 2010:112). This is a reflection of the aforementioned influence of the private commercial sector on the health and fitness landscape. Haynes (2016:293) points to the argument that sport “is fashioned by transnational corporate interests of governing bodies, sponsors and media organisations” and this adds to the impact of commercialisation.

This brief précis of the extent to which commercialisation has an impact on sport highlights two of the main themes of this chapter. Firstly, the importance placed on participation as well as spectatorship; this certainly adds to the overarching aim of *a sporting habit for life* and demonstrates how the commercial world can play a part in this. Secondly, the ways in which messages are mediated are shown to be diverse but the health and fitness magazine industry are well placed to be part of the drive; they not only advertise health and fitness related products but also unrelated *lifestyle* products which add to the aspirational messages promoted overall.

Conclusion

The research undertaken here focuses on the emphasis placed on media messages regarding health and fitness. Creating a sporting habit for life is the stated intention of the governmental agenda and this is seen as a route to a fitter and therefore healthier society. The discourse used in governmental documents

has been shown to follow a particular remit and the use of key words has reinforced the messages offered. There is reflection of the governmental agenda within health and fitness magazines and this is made more readily available to the public due to their popularity and appearance on shelves in newsagents and supermarkets.

Images in magazines offer weight to the messages and in doing so fit with the pursuit of a seemingly *healthier* society, fitting with the requirements of governmental agendas exemplified by the Olympic legacy documents. Although the legacy initiative has been shown to be failing in parts, what has been shown is the increasing reach of the fitness industry. Further to this, the images offered by the magazines are deemed acceptable and change is highlighted by the fact that once widely used images such as that of *Marlboro Man* no longer fit with a drive towards better health, therefore consequently appear to be deemed unacceptable.

The psychological impact of such messages is strengthened by the use of (intentionally or not) nudge tactics which serve to manipulate the behaviour of individuals and groups of people. The advice offered in the literature can be seen as therapeutic in parts, offering a route to a “better” life reflecting the discourse of self help. The following chapter will develop the concept of self help and assess the role sporting activity and fitness has in this. The phenomenon of self-regulation will be explored as it will be shown that to help oneself, there is a need for an element of self-regulation.

Chapter six – Self-Help and Well Being: or is it Self-Regulation?

Part of the remit of this thesis is concerned with social impact in terms of health and well-being outcomes and I have made links between the individual and society; my tenet is that change for the individual in terms of health and fitness outlooks will ultimately result in societal change thereby impacting on society. This chapter looks at the ways in which individuals can change, in particular focusing on the concept of self-help.

The most disturbing thing about self-help literature is that overall it affords considerable relevance to a particular manner of treating ‘the human problem’ – specifically, how we should live our lives” (Madsen, 2016:159).

What is the human problem? There are as many answers to this question as there are commentators who would seek to answer it. Class divisions, the inability to self-actualise, the inability to reach one’s economic potential, ignorance and sin are all identified in various quarters as the human problem. Madsen (2016) points to the overarching tenet of the human problem and that is *how we should live our lives*. The previous chapter discussed the messages offered in society in terms of health and fitness. What emerged was a finding that instruction on how to live our lives is offered by various sources and in a variety of guises.

The language of self-help was evident in the literature analysed and this reflected the thoughts of interviewees earlier in this study with one identifying her running as a means to weight loss and consequently combating depression. Another stated *I was feeling really shit and I thought it would make me feel a bit better*. A review of the magazines highlighted in the previous chapter shows

much writing using the discourse of self-help targeting the very people / feelings exemplified in the interviews.

The transference of sovereign power over the body to the individual and the responsibility this brings is discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Further to this, the responsibility to self-regulate has been identified, and Burr (2015) points to the thoughts of Foucault in which he asserts that self-regulation has led to surveillance becoming internalised. Individuals are aware at a conscious and unconscious level of the external monitoring in society whereby accepted norms and standards prevail and are therefore constantly on guard to project the *correct* traits. As can be seen from the above examples, projecting the correct traits is linked with one's self-esteem therefore helping oneself by becoming *healthier* and *fitter* and *looking good* is evidently a means by which one can be a *better* person. Carr (2011) points to studies that have found self-esteem is improved for those who undergo changes in physical fitness due to exercise and lifestyle changes. Carr (2011:240) informs us that "self-esteem is concerned with global evaluations of self-worth".

We gauge our own worth and we hold ourselves accountable for our appearance; however we are concerned about how we are judged by others. Foucault (1977) feels that in this way, we subject ourselves to self-discipline because we subject ourselves to the scrutiny of others. Perinbanayagam (2000) informs us that a human being casts him/herself as a social subject as well as object. Objectification according to Foucault, as cited by Perinbanayagam, is realised by testing, examining and monitoring oneself to achieve the formation of the subject. Hence the concept of self-help is one that is important to those who seek to improve upon their answer to the human problem of how to live a life.

Delanty (2010:98) discusses this in terms of individuation in which he asserts “The self has become more self-reflexive in the sense that the identity of the individual is constituted in increased self-monitoring and self-control”.

Furthermore, he states that this view is one that sees the individual as being able to shape their life project. Tied up within this are anxieties and insecurities brought about by being at the behest of freedoms brought about by “a social fate” (Delanty, 2010:99).

These anxieties and insecurities are for many individuals quite significant and can often be somewhat debilitating. Therefore, the need to address them is evident and for many, self-help plays a significant part in this. Originally writing in 1859 and still published a century later, Smiles (1958:35) was in no doubt as to the efficacy and significance of self-help when he stated:

The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigour and strength. Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates.

Smiles’ repetition of the adage *Heaven helps those who help themselves* is an indication of his belief in the importance of individual striving for success rather than the reliance on external influences. Although his work is mainly focussed on economic success, there is a link to the importance of health and fitness with the assertion that:

The success of even professional men depends in no slight degree on their physical health; and a public writer has gone so far as to say that ‘the

greatness of our great men is quite as much a bodily affair as a mental one' (Smiles, 1958:306).

The argument forwarded is that success is linked not only to one's mental facilities but also to one's physical health, and Smiles (1958) talks of the importance of healthy lungs and its equality of worth with a healthy and well advanced intellect. It would appear the union of body and mind is one where each is as important as the other. Smiles talks of the body impacting the mind and this is flipped in the popular maxim *healthy mind, healthy body*.

Success, acceptance and self-esteem are some of the factors contributing to the concept of *well-being*; a concept which is as difficult to qualify as it is to quantify. In searching for a definitive idea of what well-being is, the variety of perspectives is exemplified by the diversity of disciplines via which it is discussed. Writers discussing political theory (Shorten, 2016), psychology (Carr, 2011), social policy (Blakemore & Warwick-Booth, 2013) and health promotion (Seedhouse, 1997) have all included well-being as an element worthy of inclusion in their work.

Shorten (2016) asserts well-being is what is good for a person and what makes their life worthwhile. He points to the hedonistic doctrine stating well-being consists of nothing more than sensations of pleasure and he contrasts this individualistic stance with the utilitarian stance that well-being is concerned with the satisfaction of desires thereby maximising utility.

Carr (2011:39) compares psychological well-being, which he describes as "the achievement of one's full psychological potential" with social well-being, "positive states associated with optimal functioning within one's social network and

community (Carr, 2011:39)". Again, these comparisons can be cast as individual versus utilitarian fulfilment.

Blakemore and Warwick-Booth (2013) discuss well-being in terms of fulfilment of defined needs, which fall into four categories; felt, expressed, normative and comparative. These include both the individual and public domains and introduce concepts of relativity.

Seedhouse (1997) instigates a lengthy discussion of well-being in which he summarises several perspectives. Ultimately, he highlights the difficulty of being able to reify the concept as he argues it is not something that can be discovered and given a formula in the same way the relationships within sciences such as physics are able.

Whatever well-being is, it is clear it can be cast as a societal as well as an individual issue and there is a link between these domains. This link is the landscape via which professionals such as social workers address the issues they are concerned with when trying to assist individuals and groups. Cameron & McDermott (2007) discuss the various models of practice adopted by social workers and they assert that in adopting the *biopsychosocial* model there has been a tendency to eschew the *bio* in favour of the *psychosocial*. The argument presented is that in a society requiring bodily health, as argued throughout this thesis, then social work should play a part in the promotion of this. Social workers will need to subscribe to a broad programme of interventions that might include the prescription of exercise regimes to improve health and well-being.

The social work profession is concerned with maximising the benefits available to people in terms of positive lifestyle. It seeks to enable people to live the *good*

life in whatever form that might take. This is the idealised view of what social work is but there are radical perspectives as highlighted by Dickens (2010) that see social work as an instrument of a welfare state with an interest in capitalist ideology. This ideology would see people conform to the status quo in society therefore those who are at a disadvantage will always remain that way. People have to be active members of society in that they go to work and pay taxes and those who do not, should receive minimal intervention in terms of state benefits and provision of welfare. This concurs with the increasingly influential neo-liberal agenda, which according to South *et al* (2013) is concerned with cutting public services.

Whichever perspective one takes regarding social work, enablement is arguably one of the main goals of the profession. The concept of enabling certain members of society is linked with self-actualisation and is therefore concerned with well-being. In their study of social work and the body, Cameron & McDermott (2007) discuss well-being throughout their work. They highlight the importance of aerobic and anaerobic exercise in terms of positive mood. They make a definite link between physical fitness and well-being in terms of positive emotions.

As a social work educator I tell my students that as a profession, social work seeks to render itself redundant by enabling individuals to achieve that sense of well-being that would see them reach a point at which they no longer require intervention. This reinforces the opening statement of this chapter in that individual change can effect societal change and the social worker is influential in enabling people to be agents of self-help. For Cameron & McDermott (2007) the capacity for change is within human beings and this change includes behaviour

change, such as the adoption of healthier lifestyles, being instrumental in creating a sense of well-being.

This brings us back to self-help. The social worker might be seen as a facilitator in the individual's quest for *empowerment*, which according to McLaughlin (2012:88) is "a key principle of modern day health and social policy" but can be criticised because when one *empowers* an individual, there is an implication that one is bestowing power and this in turn demonstrates an imbalance of power. Smith (2010:2) would argue that power imbalances are inevitable in the relationship between social workers and their service users because they are derived from the "'problems' of the kind associated with social work [suggesting] the possibility of exclusionary and unfair treatment". This acknowledgement would necessitate social workers to accept the imbalances and in doing so, seek realistic ways to address the concept of and instigate the process of empowerment. Therefore, the concept of self-help can arguably be a way in which the power imbalances can be minimised and potentially eradicated in society.

Furedi (2004:66) might dispute the above proposition because for him, self-help is entwined with therapy culture and is "the idea of helping yourself through seeking help and support". Furedi illustrates this by highlighting the plethora of self-help books available covering a diversity of subjects from *surviving your 20s* to *surviving divorce*. I have argued in the previous chapter that this concept is reflected in the discourse of the health and fitness industry and that the magazines studied offered opportunities to enhance happiness, eradicate stress and deal with the *problem* of one's body. In promoting healthy images and

lifestyles, the magazines highlight our *problems* thereby appealing to our vulnerabilities and convincing us of the need to seek help.

One could argue that these vulnerabilities are actually created by the magazines and the images they portray. By being presented with the *perfect* image, a reader who might not have been previously concerned with certain issues could be inculcated with the notion that they now have problems to be solved. In this way, the magazines not only highlight problems but they actually *construct* them.

Lawler (2008:54) argues “that the self is a project to be worked on” and reflects Furedi’s assertion regarding self-help books when she points out “The self-help section of bookshops groans with books on how to change yourself” (Lawler, 2008:54). Indeed, books offering advice on the self are not a new phenomenon and Smith (1999:83) reminds us that both Norbert Elias (cited in Smith, 1999) and Michel Foucault (cited in Smith, 1999) referred to such texts when writing works including *The Civilizing Process* and *The Care of the Self*:

The advice books cited by both Elias and Foucault are guidance about how one *should behave* as human beings within particular situations.

They help one decide what to do or not to do. The “should” is prudential and practical, a guide in getting through life in such a way as to ensure survival, maximise success and avoid physical, psychological and social penalties (emphasis in original)

Lawler (2008) points out that the proliferation of self-help literature urges an individual to be oneself and to become an autonomous being freeing oneself from the shackles of power exerted by others. Again, the question of power / empowerment arises and it could be argued that it would be difficult to truly

unshackle oneself from the influence of others because, in this case, someone (*an expert*) has written the self-help literature, which seeks to advise us how to live our lives.

One could question my discussion of the social work profession here and ask what is its relevance to this thesis? Although social work is a complex area, I feel it needed to be acknowledged for two main reasons. Firstly, as a social work educator with an interest in the impact of sport, health and fitness, I wanted to explore why I should be interested and thereby defend this interest.

Secondly, what has been shown here is that social welfare can indeed be linked to health welfare. Therefore, social workers need to be au fait with the relevance of the health and fitness landscape and understand the part this plays in enabling the best outcomes for their client groups. Cameron & McDermott's (2007:196) discussion of social work and the body points to the concept of "health capital", which is linked to said best outcomes.

Health promotion

Returning to the problem of how we should live our lives, I have argued that in contemporary western society we are being encouraged to live *healthy* lives. The image of the athletic body has been shown to be concomitant with healthy lives and the literature previously analysed has used discourse which casts our bodies as a problem to be solved. However, how do we solve the problem of health? Do we have a health promotion framework capable of supporting our attempts to solve the problem?

Seedhouse (1997) foresaw difficulties with this issue when he argued that most professions using problem solving techniques relied on robust, underpinning theories to inform their approaches. He advocated for a stronger health promotion framework and stated “There is much vague talk, countless gestures to a healthier world for everyone, but scant attention to the bedrock question ‘what is the *point* of promoting health?’”(Seedhouse, 1997:5) (emphasis in original).

Health promotion messages abound today with proclamations that we should eat healthy food, drink less alcohol and take regular exercise. Health promotion “is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy lifestyles to wellbeing” (South *et al*, 2013:vii). What drives the health promotion agenda is debatable. One stance could be that health promotion is economically necessary; health and caring professions are stretched and the increasingly libertarian approach to government in western society has seen a reduction in public funding for such services therefore citizens need to stay healthy in order not to present as a financial burden on society.

Even those countries that lack well-established health promotion policies realize that promoting healthy lifestyles is not only an effective way of improving the health of their populations, but also a crucial strategy for reining in escalating health care costs” (Blank & Burau, 2014:241).

Seedhouse’s (1997:69) points on health promotion have been outlined previously in this thesis but it is worth revisiting the two options he offers as to what drives health promotion.

1. ***Evidence drives health promotion*** – some conditions and behaviours are *as a matter of fact* unhealthy, therefore health promoters must be opposed to them.
2. ***Values drive health promotion*** – people's values *determine* what is taken to be good or bad health: health promoters' values set health promotion priorities, health priorities do not set themselves.
(emphases in original)

Seedhouse argues that it is the second of the two options *values drive health promotion* that holds true. This is supported by the fact that in spite of evidence that for example, alcohol, smoking, fatty foods etc. offer *unhealthy* options, people still make these choices because they sit within their framework of values but might still claim to subscribe to a healthy lifestyle. Indeed, the magazines analysed previously are unashamed to advertise alcohol amongst their pages which are full of *healthy* messages.

The place of alcohol in contemporary western society offers a seat of debate when discussing values. My own teaching interests include coordinating a module on addictions and a regular feature of this is discussion regarding personal and societal attitudes to alcohol use and smoking. The discussion is invariably informed by students' own behaviour and what they feel is acceptable. The dangers of smoking and alcohol use are discussed and interestingly, alcohol use appears to be viewed as less problematic than smoking. The policy driven drive toward reducing smoking is discussed in the previous chapter.

Notwithstanding current debates regarding minimum unit pricing, it would appear policy makers have not focused on alcohol use in the same way and other than

drink driving campaigns and a focus on pregnancy, alcohol use that is not *problematic* is not overtly discouraged. Indeed, tobacco advertising is banned in many media whereas alcohol advertising is not.

The acceptance of alcohol use is confirmed by the fact that not only do the magazines analysed include advertising for beer but one of them (*Men's Health*) includes an article extolling the benefits of moderate alcohol use. These points add to the argument that values drive our behaviour in that we feel a need to conform to what we perceive to be the *correct* way of life. As with the Foucauldian (2008) argument that we self-regulate due to how we project externally, we try to adhere to the values presented as the best, regardless of the evidence as to their *actual* benefit.

Policies of health promotion can be traced back to the prerogative to maintain life as described by Foucault (1976). For Foucault (1976:298), the sovereign power to order death was “supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life”. He points to the rapid development of various disciplines and the political and economic need to observe and manage phenomena such as longevity and public health. In this way, institutions such as educational establishments and the military would be charged with disciplining citizens by subjugating bodies heralding what Foucault describes as an era of “bio-power”.

Bio-power was a necessary component of capitalism as it cast humans as the components of machines necessary for production. Foucault (1978:140-141) explained:

bio-power was, without question, an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.

Therefore, the promotion of health was seen as vital in terms of extending lives in statistical rather than existential terms. The need was to determine how to maintain lives, not necessarily whose lives to maintain (Buchanan, 2010). McNay (1994) points out the shift in focus meant that targets such as increased life expectancy, birth-rates and levels of health became the goal of government in society. It can be argued the need to maintain healthy lives was derived as a result of industrialisation and the value of the body as a means of production whereas increasing de-industrialisation means the same need today is not concerned with the value of the body but its potential as a burden on society. When considering the politics of health in the eighteenth century, Foucault's assertion "The imperative of health: at once the duty of each and the objective of all" (in Rabinow, 1984:277) still holds as much significance today as it did in the eighteenth century.

Watson (2007:97) reinforces the argument that health promotion is value driven when he compares *bad* behaviours and *good* behaviours, the latter of which offer "the opportunity for redemption by following *appropriate* regimes" (emphasis added). He continues with the assertion "Health promotion discourse implicitly validates certain appearances over others and devalues those who do not conform to prescriptions of normality" (Watson, 2007:101). These factors contribute to an assessment of the social worth of people as implied by the value

judgements levelled at those, who for instance, “eat too much and exercise too little” (Watson, 2007:101). Watson also points to Foucault’s thoughts on surveillance and highlights the role of health promotion in defining *normal* and *abnormal* behaviours.

The neo-liberal idea that individuals are increasingly seen as largely responsible for their own health and the link between this concept and the health promotion model is highlighted by Cook (2013), who points to the changing face of medicine. Where once the patient was directed by medical practitioners, they are now increasingly advised and given choices in what, in some cases, might be “critical life decisions” (Cook, 2013:345). Practitioners are required to consider not only the scientific options offered by biology, pharmacology etc. but are also required to consider the impact of societal factors including environmental and economic issues.

In doing the above, the domain of health promotion requires citizens to consider their responses to extrinsic factors and take responsibility for an area of their lives they would once have left in the hands of *professionals*. The good citizen is asked to be a professional in his / her own domain thereby shifting responsibility to a more personal sphere (Blank and Burau, 2014). There was a “development of policies exhorting, and enabling, people to alter their behaviour” (Alcock & May, 2014:135); diet, smoking and exercise were targeted and the theory was that this would bolster public health (Blank and Burau, 2014). A criticism of this is highlighted by Alcock and May (2014), who point to the effect of wider factors such as poor housing, low income and employment issues and the fact that societal inequalities such as these have an impact on health outcomes.

Notwithstanding the impact of social inequality, the World Health Organization (2016:online) asserts “Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health” so with this in mind, it can be argued health promotion and the concept of self-help are linked.

Back to self-help: or is it therapy?

Increasing personal responsibility and the necessity to stay healthy are features of the discussion presented here but, if as Furedi (2004) says, we turn to others to facilitate self-help then there may well be an argument we are seeking therapy to enable the fulfilment of our responsibilities. For Furedi (2004:143) “Preoccupation with the self is a distinctly modern phenomenon”. Social experience dictates how we view ourselves and how we view ourselves is continually modified as society makes new demands. The new demands under discussion here are those health related messages and we need to develop ways to meet the pressures exerted upon us to meet the demands.

We are increasingly made to feel vulnerable to the new exigencies placed upon us by modern life therefore we need to seek support in our quest to conquer this vulnerability. Therapy can be a way in which people seek this support. King and Watson (2005:144) point to the work of Giddens who argued therapy had become so significant it had replaced religion “as a source of meaning and a resource to navigate the complexities of high modern life”. Talking therapies such as counselling have steadily expanded over the years to become part of the mainstream series of interventions (McLaughlin, 2008), however there is also an increasing landscape of therapeutic interventions that require a best fit with day to day activities (Nettleton, 2013). Although Nettleton is largely concerned with

medical interventions, her work points to the need for alternative approaches to the maintenance of health.

One such approach is holistic intervention. This is not a new phenomenon as in the 1990s, Curtin (1996) wrote of the benefits of a [w]holistic approach to health, which utilised an assessment of and adjustments to lifestyle choices, nutrition, physical activity etc. More recently, Sorenson *et al* (2014) pointed to the importance of holistic interventions, particularly amongst elite athletes, thereby cementing the importance of a multi-faceted approach to health for even those who might be viewed as being at the peak of their physical fitness.

Holism is, therefore, a set of principles or a philosophical approach to health (Haggart 2003) that goes beyond the medical paradigm and addresses the interface of the person as an entity with that of the total environment he / she lives within. Medical and sociological approaches combine with psychology to offer people a therapeutic approach to solving what was referred to, at the beginning of this chapter, as the human problem.

Holistic approaches require an element of interdependence and are in contrast to the classical Epicurean doctrine of self-sufficiency. George (2012:24) informs us Epicureanism viewed self-sufficiency as a social value and “that the individual and the community are not interdependent” Epicureans eschewed politics (Foucault, 2008) and the concept of self-interest was at the forefront of their doctrine meaning it was very much the domain of the affluent. As a retort to the pressures of society, Epicureanism eventually lost its prominence in ancient society, however, it is certainly reflected in the aforementioned policies of Libertarianism, which have gained favour in contemporary Western society.

Therefore it is vital for some to be able to draw from a holistic range of interventions when trying to address health and fitness issues.

Interdependence

The Epicurean argument that effectively decries interdependence did lose its influence somewhat during the days of imperial Rome (George, 2012), but as mentioned above, this influence has returned to a certain extent due to the increased emphasis on individualist and libertarian thinking in some quarters. A feature of this thesis in parts is the contrast between individualism and collectivism, and it is interesting to note that as individualism rises in prominence there are still seats of collective behaviour. This is particularly evident in the field of health and fitness.

There are still many running clubs, cycling club membership is increasing (British Cycling, 2016) as evidenced by the rising numbers of riders cycling in club rides on weekend mornings and one can observe increasing numbers of gymnasia and health clubs opening in town centres and out of town trading estates (LeisureDB, 2017). Even within gymnasia where one can exercise in a solitary fashion, classes see many people come together to workout in groups; these classes are often over-subscribed and operate booking systems for participation. Having been a member of a running club, cycling clubs and various gymnasia I have experienced the benefit of exercising with others. Mutual encouragement and the sense that one is part of a collective therefore somehow obliged to take part means that what could be lonely pursuits become social events in which interdependence develops. Even when partaking in individual cycling time-trials (riding alone for a set number of miles in the quickest possible time), I

experience the sense of camaraderie and encouragement before and after the events. Indeed, it is the interdependent nature of the club system that allows these events to be facilitated.

For Perinbanayagam (2000) interdependence is based on the sociability and group-centeredness of humans that developed from the dependent nature of infants on adults to nurture them. This contributes to the reason why people are drawn to clubs and classes to exercise. Tomasello *et al* (2012:679) propose that interdependence is rooted in altruism and that helping our “partner during a mutualistic collaborative activity pays direct dividends...as this will improve our chances for success toward our joint goal”. Because altruists can benefit as a secondary consequence of their behaviour, altruistic acts are in the long term best interests of the altruist (Roberts, 2005). This reinforces the argument that altruistic collaboration as evidenced by the popular maxim *you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours* offers a route to self-help by engaging the services of others.

Interdependence in the health and fitness field is also evident in an unlikely fashion via mobile device applications (apps). Individuals can record and keep track of a variety of types of physical activity such as running and cycling by using apps utilising satellite tracking technology. These apps not only track distance covered, but also altitude climbed and average speeds. They also offer another dimension to the health picture in that they offer information on hydration levels and calories burned. Apps that feature calorie counting enable users to set targets for weight loss via a calorie-controlled diet.

Adopting the use of apps can be construed as quite an individualistic approach to health and fitness; however another feature of these apps is the ability to add other people to one's profile. In much the same way social media sites such as *Facebook* and *Instagram* enable individuals to connect and share experiences, exercise and diet apps allow individuals to connect too. In this way, "friends" can monitor each others' progress and offer encouragement to one another. Furthermore, apps such as *Strava* enable runners, cyclists etc. to compare times taken to cover particular segments of routes and via an online table, compete with one another without actually meeting.

Apps allow people:

to 'take control' over their health via contributing to and harnessing online information and engaging in self-monitoring and self-care practices using digital technologies (Lupton, 2014:608).

The aforementioned concept of self-surveillance acquires another dimension here in that the app user enters data regarding his or her exercise / diet progress to self-monitor but is also fully aware that others are able to monitor them too.

This can foster a sense of obligation in the app user similar to the one felt if he / she had agreed to go for a run with a friend and therefore did not want to let the other person down. In this way, interdependence takes on a new perspective influenced by technology and the increasing manifestations of social media but still holds with the thoughts of Tomasello *et al* (2012) regarding collaboration.

These *club* examples, be they real as in running clubs or virtual as in online apps, are examples of people coming together in a civil society, whereby they seek to reap the benefits of Bourdieu's club effect (1999), as discussed

previously in this thesis. It could be argued that those who want to associate with desirable others are not only seeking approval from outside but also seeking gratification and fulfilment from within.

There is an argument forwarded by Lupton (2014) that the use of apps is a form of promoting health for oneself which is consistent with a neo-liberal individualist agenda. This self-health promotion is enhanced by the *Quantified Self Movement* first discussed and proposed as a movement by Gary Wolf and Kevin Kelly in 2007 (Wolf, 2016), in which people use technology (typically mobile phone apps) to track personal data about many aspects of their lives. “The importance of mobile phone health applications cannot be overemphasized in realizing health” (Swan, 2012:104) and the range of data to assist this is diverse. As well as information about calories burned, miles ran etc. there are apps to track sleep patterns, mood, blood pressure etc. (Bottles, 2012). There are also apps which enable users to enter data regarding environmental conditions around them such as light levels, air quality etc in an attempt to draw a correlation between the environment and its impact on health.

“The “quantified self movement” lauds patient self-monitoring with electronic devices as an important, even revolutionary, clinical advance” (Forsdyke, 2015:1026) and this brings the concept of self-help well and truly into the 21st century. We are able to monitor our own fitness levels by checking our own blood pressure, heart rate, mood etc. in a way that was once solely in the domain of medical practitioners. This point is further reinforced by Gilmore (2016) who offers the term *everywear* for the variety of devices such as mobile phones, heart rate monitors and sports watches with GPS tracking capabilities.

His argument is that in using such devices people can in some way “occupy the role of the doctor in monitoring his or her own body” (Gilmore, 2016:2529).

Due to the connectedness of apps and the contemporary landscape of social media, what is presented here is a discourse arguably dismissing the concept of self-help in that it places emphasis on the collaborative nature of activities that seek to *improve* health and fitness. Why is it that we need others to assist, encourage and cajole us in our efforts? Is it, as Gilmore (2016:2529) asserts, we constantly see ourselves as “subjects needing care”? Furthermore, is it that we have problems with self-control?

Self-control

In the previous chapter there was discussion regarding nudge theory and how this is used to encourage people to make *better* choices. The use of nudge theory has been shown to be an effective way to manipulate behaviour. If this is the case, then there must be a question as to the effectiveness of people’s ability to exercise self-control. Would an individual be unable to avoid the unhealthy option in terms of food shopping, lifestyle etc. if he or she was not nudged into the healthy option?

Gentle nudges are more efficient than overt attempts to persuade because attempts to manipulate behaviour via persuasive commands can evoke what Vogel & Wänke (2016) refer to as *reactance*. Reactance is a state in which people resist suggestions and devalue them to the point of complete dismissal. Is this a show of strength when discussing the adoption of healthy (seemingly less attractive) lifestyles or is it a sign of weakness in people who cannot exercise self-control? Thaler & Sunstein (2008) propose that because people are

aware of their weaknesses they are willing to engage help from outside to control aspects of behaviour.

The origins of self-control can be traced via the civilising process (Inglis, 2012) and the need to regulate one's bodily functions as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Lack of hygiene and the projection of bodily functions were seen as undesirable and therefore became signs of immorality at worst, and weakness of spirit at best.

Crawford and Novak (2014) suggest self control is part of the wider picture of social control and point to the concepts of embarrassment, shame and guilt as instrumental in one's ability to self-regulate. They assert that in avoiding these feelings and receiving positive evaluations from others, we experience pride and the fact that it is "rooted in the evaluations of others, pride promotes normative conduct" (Crawford & Novak, 2014:255). The overarching tenet is that in seeking pride and avoiding embarrassment, shame and guilt, we adopt stable patterns of behaviour that characterise society (Shott, 1979). For Shott (1979:1324) "Social control is, in large part, self-control. Because people can view themselves as others do, social control can operate in terms of self-criticism"

Foucault (2008) links the above with ancient Greek philosophy in which the notion of a harmonious society is linked with the symphony of citizens and society. In order for this to happen a citizen must become in control of oneself and exercise self-control over "one's desires and appetites, and more especially temperance with regard to food, wine and sexual pleasure" (Foucault, 2008:270). He reiterates that temperance is defined in terms of the power the individual holds over him/herself and that it is often seen as a virtue.

Guilt in particular is tied up with morality and as with the aforementioned need to control bodily functions for fear of being viewed in a negative manner, we are sometimes driven by feelings of guilt when we do not conform to the contemporary need to conform to a healthy lifestyle. A piece of chocolate cake is eaten and referred to as a *guilty pleasure*; one might fail to go for a planned run after work and later feel guilty for not doing so. Conversely, if one avoids the cake or goes for a run, even when they do not feel like doing so, a sense of pride comes with fulfilling what might be considered a duty to oneself and ultimately, society. For Crawford and Novak (2014), guilt is an internalised emotion derived from not acting in accordance with recognised norms, however the feelings of guilt are resultant of a self-driven need to conform as wider society will not necessarily know if one adopts (or does not adopt) a particular course of action. Interestingly, Crawford and Novak (2014) offer a glossary of terms in their text and they describe guilt in terms of acting against one's own beliefs and values. This raises the question as to how we formulate our beliefs and values and the assertion here is that societal pressure via regulation is the primary dictator.

Regulation and Foucault

If we have a duty to society, how has that duty evolved? What is it that dictates the parameters of that duty and who or what decides if we indeed have fulfilled that duty? In keeping with the overall hypothesis of this piece, the need to conform to standards of health and fitness has derived from the civilising process and developed through policies that seek to engender healthy individuals leading to a healthy society.

There are many means to regulation and these are driven by what is acceptable in terms of normative behaviour and bodily appearance. As soon as we are born, we are weighed and comments such as *what a big baby* or *s/he is tiny* are made. This continues and is legitimised by developmental charts. Babies are visited by midwives and health visitors and their growth in terms of weight and size is monitored and plotted on a development chart. This chart is divided into centiles from 0.4th to 98.6th and the closer the baby is to the 50th centile, the more s/he conforms to the normal weight / height across the population as a whole (BPA, 1992). This continues into our adult lives and measurement of age, weight and height are correlated to produce a Body Mass Index, which is another scale indicating what a 'normal' person should weigh. If you do not fit into the accepted range, you may be considered underweight or overweight (NHS Choices, 2014). NHS Choices uses words such as ideal and healthy when discussing weight and this use of language offers no doubt as to the expectation for people to conform to the accepted regulatory means.

This is evidence of the argument forwarded by Nettleton (2013:105) "that as society has become more secularized, it has also become more medicalized, with medicine now serving a moral as well as a clinical function". The diminishing influence of both religion and the already discussed power of the patriarch over the body have lead to bodies being regulated by social institutions; this *disciplinary power* (Foucault cited by Nettleton, 2013) is enforced in institutions such as schools, prisons and hospitals.

Foucault (in Rabinow, 1984:191) asserted that for the process of building a military school (École Militaire) "The very building of the École was to be an apparatus for observation" and its purpose was to train vigorous bodies thereby

fulfilling the imperative of health. Foucault's argument was that building design enabled a high degree of surveillance and in his 1975 treatise *Discipline and Punish* he asserted the "institutions secreted a machinery of control that functioned like a microscope of conduct" (Foucault, 1977:173).

Foucault used the term *micropenality* in his description of the ways in which individuals might be punished due to a range of misdemeanours from lateness through lack of cleanliness to indecency. He showed how the behaviour of individuals was regulated and that correct behaviour was linked to corporeal phenomena as well as interaction with the exigencies of life. In short, the regulation of people leads to normalization. "Like surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power" (Foucault, 1977:184).

The above quote offers insight into the philosophical background to the societal imperative to use the aforementioned developmental charts and to employ mechanisms such as Body Mass Index as a way of exerting an element of power over its citizens. Foucault argued the power of the *Norm* joined with other powers such as the *Law* in standardising many areas of society, including health. His assertion is that in highlighting norms, differences can be identified and worked upon as necessary to offer a fit within society. Therefore, the answer to where is the seat of this power is that governmental policy, norms and standards increasingly influence us via regulation as well as the need to *fit in*. This is further explored below.

Social norms

“Social values and norms guide action” (Inglis, 2012:43) and it is this which maintains social order. Transgression of norms, be it in the function of roles or in rule breaking, can bring about sanctions. In contemporary western society, the penal system deals with the worst transgressions and most citizens adhere to the requirements of societal norms for a variety of reasons, ranging from the aforementioned feelings of shame, guilt or embarrassment to being afraid of punishment. In this way, norms and sanctions combine to contribute to the maintenance of order. Blau (1964) spoke of the obligations a citizen has as dictated by social norms and asserted one’s failure to discharge obligations left one exposed to the sanctions of the group, in this case, society,

Inglis (2012) cites Blau for whom social norms are an integral part of mediating society and contribute to the ability of members of society to enter into association with each other. This could be viewed as a desire for individuals to be part of a collective but the concept of rational choice theory would suggest that individuals only “choose to act in favour of others if there is also a clear benefit to themselves” (Buchanan, 2010:397). Therefore “It is not *in spite* of the fact actors are self-interested that they adhere to social norms, but precisely because of it” (Inglis, 2012:141) (emphasis in original).

This means individuals relinquish some autonomy in order to benefit from the regulatory powers that adherence to social norms offer. These benefits range from not being subjected to punishment when transgressing the law to being rewarded by positive affirmation that one has the *correct* attitude to phenomena such as health and fitness.

Rational choice theory would suggest that choices made are driven by self-interest and it would follow that in an increasingly individualistic society this would be a natural course for people to follow. However, it is the fact that as individuals we are part of a collective society, and we derive positives from excelling within that society, one could argue we are and always will be subject to the mores of the collective. Although there will always be those who refuse to conform to these mores, they are indeed value driven and contribute to the importance of norms within society.

The utilisation of indices such as charts and the maintenance of norms have been discussed earlier and these are an example of the need to conform not only to modes of behaviour but also to “ideals” of visual appearance. Foucault (1975) discusses the *Panopticon* as a central point of surveillance and highlights the fact that as a mode of imprisonment, it is unlike the dungeon in that it leaves the captive person illuminated and easy to see. For Foucault (1975:315) “Visibility is a trap” and it is this visibility that is translated into the requirement to project the correct body image. People can be “trapped” in their bodies and wish to escape this trap by adopting the kind of lifestyle driven by exercise and diet that would see them liberated.

The Panopticon renders the captive visible to the guard but not to fellow captives. Therefore not only the presence of the guard but also the perception that the guard is there even when not present, is the powerful agent in the arrangement and it is the need to acquiesce to the will of the guard that maintains order and adherence to the norm. “Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1975:315). In this

way, we can see that those who feel vulnerable due to visibility when considering body image do so because of the felt need to acquiesce to the power inherent in the perceived constant gaze of society. The gaze of society is the gaze of the guard and the societal view takes on more importance than the view of individuals, or in the example of the panopticon, the view of other inmates. For McNay (1994:94) “The panoptic idea of permanent visibility also encompasses a notion of constant assessment or judgement: control through normalization”. McNay (1994:95) asserts the power of the norm is significant because rather than operate through repression, it uses “standards and values associated with normality” and this use of ostensibly positive phenomena to regulate led to Foucault’s assertion that power is a positive phenomenon.

Regulating the body beautiful

We have now seen how self-regulation and a need to adhere to social norms can be a driving force for people in their quest for acceptance. The club effect and wanting to belong offers an explanation as to why people strive for this acceptance. The identity chapter included in this thesis offers explanations as to why people act in particular ways in quests to belong. What I wish to explore here is the impact of sport and fitness in terms of the quest for the *body beautiful* and how this contributes to a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Brierley *et al* (2016) discuss the body beautiful and attraction to potential partners. They conducted research into perceptions of attractiveness and compared these with perceptions of healthy bodies among men and women. Their discussion includes the assertion that “attractiveness reflects physiological health, and attraction is a mechanism for identifying a healthy mate” (Brierley *et*

al, 2016:1). Therefore it can be argued that acceptance by a partner on the basis of attraction to body type is a start in the quest for belonging.

Interestingly, Brierley (2016:10) *et al* found participants in the study were attracted to low fat mass in women which they argue is an internalisation of what they refer to as the “thin ideal”. This, they argue, is as a result of heavily mediated images of thin women as discussed in the previous chapter. As has been indicated elsewhere in this thesis, the perception of attractive bodies is not necessarily one that is consistent with healthy bodies and Brierley *et al* state this is particularly the case for women’s bodies. They state in their findings however that men’s bodies are deemed attractive when they present as lean and muscular and in contrast to women, this is consistent with healthy male bodies and that this is “consistent with the evolutionary view that attraction is a mechanism for identifying a healthy mate” (Brierley *et al*, 2016:12).

Haynes (N) (2015) explores the classical view of the body beautiful and her documentary programme discusses ancient Greek representations of the male body and the fact that the muscular ideal presented in classic sculptures still exists in society today. The assertion is made that people go to the gym in order to have the *ideal* body and further to this, we are in the age of the *gym selfie* (taking photographs of oneself) and that one’s image is one’s currency.

Resonant of the discussion previously in this chapter is the presentation of the ancient Greek philosophy that if you make your body beautiful then you make your mind virtuous; physical beauty was intimately connected with moral goodness.

Canter (2002:71-72) echoes the above when presenting the idea of the person as a product. He argues:

The quest for the body beautiful is an interesting development of the corporocentric perspective. Some of this may be a search for a better quality of internal life but much of the quest relates to the way a healthy body symbolises a good person.

It is worth here recalling Bordo's previously cited work (1990) in which she asserts that the firm, developed body is linked to ideas of correctness in attitude and the ability to succeed in life. Reischer and Koo (2004) speak of the power of the body in terms of agency and if, as they argue, the body mediates our relationship with the social world then our appearance and the adherence to what we feel is the *correct* shape will be of importance. Reischer and Koo argue the body has such cultural significance that it is a vehicle for social interaction and signifies social realities, therefore if we have control over our bodies we can utilise the symbolic nature of positivity to our own ends.

Conclusion

Better health outcomes for people create better outcomes in society. People are increasingly aware of the importance of their health and fitness and for many, the pursuit of the *healthy* lifestyle is a way to address the human problem. They seek help from within and are conscious of the power of external surveillance; they regulate themselves to fit within the mores of a society that requires self-discipline leading to self-care. The body becomes a site of assessment and judgement. Therefore, sport and the concomitant phenomena of health and fitness do matter.

Despite the increasingly dominant ideology of individualism, there is still evidence of collective behaviour and a willingness to share experience.

Reflecting societal advances in technology, many people are using mobile apps to share, encourage and compete within the landscape of sport, health and fitness. The following chapter recognises the importance of mobile phone apps and offers research based around the messages therein.

Much of the discourse regarding the body beautiful and the judgements made regarding body shape is centred on women in today's society. Women appear to be under much more scrutiny than men and the pressures that result in instances of eating disorders, over-exercising etc manifest themselves in women more than they do in men (Agüera *et al*, 2017).

The following chapter includes primary research, which is concerned with the representation of women in the sporting milieu. Any consideration of the landscape of sport, health and fitness should consider the reality that the pressures and expectations on men and women are different and my hypothesis is the media potentially perpetuates these differences and gender is regulated through performativity (McLaughlin (J), 2003).

Chapter seven – Gender Transgression: The Changing Place of Women in Sport

At my bike club's recent AGM a proposal was made that references to women in the club handbook were brought in line with references to men. This was due to the fact that references to men were made as either male or men and references to women were exclusively made as ladies. The suggestion was, where male is used then female should be used and where men is used then women should be used. Further to this, in the results section it was pointed out that women are referred to as Mrs. or Miss whereas men are referred to by name only with no title.

Ostensibly, the above can be viewed as a discussion about language and its use to differentiate the status of women from that of men. Indeed, the suggestion was made that if the handbook referred to gentlemen, then using the term ladies might be appropriate. Furthermore, when listening to TV and radio commentary of sports events one can hear the different terms used. Women are often referred to as girls but men are rarely referred to as boys. First names are often used for women but men are invariably referred to by their surnames. This issue is symptomatic of the different attitudes shown towards women in the sporting milieu and Jeanes *et al* (2016) point to the fact that in order to address the inequalities within the sporting environment, feminists challenged the use of sexist language. This challenge is not an easy undertaking as Weatherall (2002) argues that the use of sexist language is tied to the prevailing social and moral order.

The previous chapter looked at the concept of the body beautiful and one of the issues identified was the differing expectations of what a woman's body ideal

should be compared to that of a man. This is indicative of the differing expectations of women's engagement in sports compared to that of men. Here I would like to assess the changing face and place of women in sport starting with a focus on long distance running because of the significance marathon running in particular has as a prism through which to assess change.

If one social group more than any other has come to embody the modern day marathon, it is women. The marathon has not only provided a mirror for the development of women's sport during the 20th century, but it has also provided a visible expression of female liberation" (Carter, 2016:4).

It is hard to imagine in this age of high profile female athletes that women's marathon running has only been sanctioned and widely accepted comparatively recently. Indeed, it was not until 1984 that a women's marathon race was staged at the Olympic Games (Carter, 2016). This is hardly surprising when one considers the fact that "Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics and influential in international sport, publicly opposed women's participation in sport well into the 1930s" (Jeans *et al*, 2016:137).

Coubertin reflected attitudes towards women's participation that, according to Jeans *et al* (2016), included medical assertions that women may be physiologically damaged by sporting activity. Furthermore, attitudes that women participating in sport were unfeminine and not adhering to the expected gender based roles associated with femininity prevailed and this contributed to the exclusion of women from many sports activities. Boykoff (2016:17) gives a sense of the depth of Coubertin's feelings with this extract:

Coubertin was a man of many talents, but penning feminist theory was not among them. “The Olympic Games must be reserved for men” he frequently proclaimed...“Woman’s glory,” he said, “rightfully came through the number and quality of children she produced, and that where sports were concerned, her greatest accomplishment was to encourage her sons to excel rather than to seek records for herself.”.

Boykoff confirms the fact that Coubertin felt women’s athleticism was improper and damaging not only in terms of physiology but also in terms of what he saw as the *natural* order of gender roles.

Carter (2016) points to the above ideas as being a key factor in the banning of women from marathons. Carter shares examples of women running marathons outside of the auspices of official entry but perhaps most illustrative of attitudes is the story of Kathrine Switzer who in 1967 completed the Boston Marathon.

Switzer (2016) recounts her experience in which she was physically attacked by the race manager who objected to a woman running in *his* race. The hostility towards Switzer was not just confined to race officials but also demonstrated by members of the press, who assumed she was merely executing a publicity stunt and would withdraw from the race before completion. Switzer did complete the race under difficult circumstances and much of her motivation derived from wanting to prove that women can indeed undertake arduous sporting activities.

Reflecting the legacy of Coubertin is the fact that it was not until 2012 that all events in the Olympic Games had both male and female competitions (Jeanes *et al*, 2016). This in turn, reflects the argument forwarded by Jeanes *et al* (2016) that sport is no more suited to men than it is to women. They point out that

through a history of male control, sport has been masculinised by way of shaping it to fit with male purposes and abilities. Therefore, sport has served “as a powerful mechanism for reinforcing the divisions that exist within broader society” (Jeanes *et al*, 2016:134) and “we should never underestimate the significance of sports in preserving male power and privilege” (Kane, 2013).

Imagery

While researching this chapter I was in a coffee shop reading about gender and sport and in a serendipitous moment a furniture truck similar to the one below drove past.



The image on the side featured female cyclist Laura Trott and it struck me that the advancement of women in sport can be measured through imagery. For Gledhill (1997), early feminist approaches to media representation questioned dominant images that reinforced stereotyping. These images propagated the view of masculinity and femininity that would see men and women adhere to the *proper* roles. Therefore, it is interesting that in a period of major successes for British Cycling in which both men and women are winning many competitions and medals, we can see change in that this company chose to use a woman at the forefront of its promotional material. However, there is a caveat even within this apparent drive towards equality.

The DFS website features a *meet Laura Trott* page, which includes an embedded video (http://i1.adis.ws/v/dfs/DFS-Athlete-Laura-H264-Final-150416/mp4_240p); this video shows Trott returning home from a training ride and taking to the gendered role more familiar with societal norms. She is pictured painting her nails, applying make-up and cooking; she discusses her home and the fact she was proposed to on the sofa. Trott discusses the fact that when she returns home from training or competing, she likes to lead a *normal* life and this depiction in the video arguably affirms persisting attitudes to gender. Sherry *et al* (2016) highlight this issue when they assert the continued reference to athletes' additional, non-sport related roles actually undermines the athletic achievements of female athletes and in this way, male dominance in the sporting milieu is perpetuated. A further consideration of this example is that the company / products being endorsed by Trott are related to homemaking therefore my initial surprise at the choice of a female over her male contemporaries is ultimately not so surprising. Mellor (2010:39) points to media representations of multiple gold medal winner, Fanny Blankers-Koen and the prevailing attitude of trivialisation was summed up thus:

Consistent with the media appreciation of women athletes at the time, the media reports focused not on her precocious abilities but rather on the fact that she was a 30-year-old housewife and mother of two. Rarely have such profound athletic achievements been so trivialised

The media plays a large part in the representation of sports people and:

coverage has historically been a major contributor to perceptions of sport's limited relevance to women and the lack of value and worth

attributed to women's engagement and involvement in sport" (Jeanes *et al*, 2016:143)

Jeanes *et al* conclude that media coverage of sportswomen persistently trivialises or sexualises them rather than highlight their performances and capability. Cooky *et al* (2013:223) went further than this conclusion in their research by asserting when the media did not cover sportswomen in a trivial or sexualised manner they "pretty much ceased to portray them at all". With this in mind, it would be useful to consider representation of sportswomen in the media together with an analysis of the text associated with those images to ascertain if there has been a significant shift in representation that might contribute to a shift in attitudes.

In order to start this process, an initial *Google* search was utilised. The search phrase entered was *images of sportswomen* and this immediately offered an indication as to the aforementioned issue regarding sexualisation. The first page included seven hyperlinks and these included:

- Women's sports are sexy
- Ultimate list of hottest female athletes in the world
- Sexy female athletes' bottoms
- Women in sports: 50 camel toes

A similar search for men, *images of sports men*, also featured 7 hyperlinks on the first page; however there was only one that sexualised males; *Photos: 25 sexiest male athletes in the world*. From this it can be seen that even the most basic and cursory assessment of the issue forewarns us that sportswomen are indeed viewed through a different lens to that of sportsmen. Duncan (1990:24-

25) concurs with this assertion when she argues “Photographs do not simply create images of women or girls, men or boys; they construct differences between females and males”. Clayton and Harris (2009:141) assert that the media has “traditionally celebrated male physical prowess, ‘lionized’ its male participants and simultaneously eroticized and trivialized women athletes”.

The problem of imagery is clearly in need of addressing and in making strides to redress the balance, the Women’s Sport Trust (founded after the 2012 Olympic Games with the aim of increasing the visibility and impact of women’s sport) has entered into partnership with a major photographic agency (WST, 2016). This partnership with Getty Images seeks to “redefine imagery of female athletes in commercial and editorial storytelling” (WST, 2016:1). In striving to facilitate this redefinition, the partnership has set guidelines for photographing women’s sports and the most telling and relevant to the aforementioned discussion on sexualisation asserts the need for “Sport appeal not sex appeal” (WST. 2016:2) and requires photographers to “Focus on the skill, strength, speed, passion and drama of the sport instead of how the athletes look” (WST, 2016:3).

The question to be asked is does the prevailing representation of women in sport enable the above initiative coupled with the frequent identification of inequality by the aforementioned researchers / academics to facilitate a landscape of equality when representing women in sport. In seeking to answer this, my intention is to look at internet platforms via which many people access sports news and reports. Web based sports sites offer dedicated sports coverage, which people can turn to via computers, tablets and smartphones therefore, as a convenient conduit are used regularly by many people (Statista, 2015).

I looked at internet based sports news sites over two seven day periods to gauge the level and style of representation of women's sports. I accessed these sites via mobile phone apps as this is an increasingly used method for consuming sports coverage and news. Hutchins (2014:510) agrees with this when he states "mobile technologies are a burgeoning means by which fans access results, news, information, highlights" and I have increasingly been part of, and witnessed this phenomenon with not only myself but also many of my contemporaries accessing sports coverage via our mobile phones.

The apps I chose were *BBC Sport* and *Sky Sports*. As major media companies the BBC and Sky include comprehensive sports coverage as part of their portfolio of services, with each of them developing the above apps to tap into the increasing landscape of mobile provision.

The BBC Sport app uses a format whereby one can access 18 headline articles via the homepage with the Sky Sports app offering in excess of 60 headline articles. I decided to look at two separate blocks of seven days in order that the research is not skewed by the presence of one major sporting event. The need to look at two separate blocks became apparent once I began looking at the first week because this was a week in which the Sydney International tennis tournament was closely followed by the Australian Open tennis tournament; these high profile tournaments both feature women's and men's events therefore it is possible that women's sports would feature more than at other times.

The reason I chose to present the results from two weeks' of reporting and not review any further weeks was I believed I had reached a point of data saturation in that there was little difference from day to day and week to week; this was

despite the presence of a high profile tennis tournament. My argument regarding data saturation was confirmed by the fact I often revisited these apps and there was no remarkable deviation from the findings of the two weeks under scrutiny. Indeed during a teaching session in which I was discussing research with students, I revisited the apps to illustrate issues around quantitative and qualitative data; again there was no deviation. It is worth noting that this teaching session was in November 2017, which is significant because for many sports, this represents a different cycle of the sporting calendar to that of January and February, yet the data remained the same.

The reason for this research

It is claimed that, when women enter the masculine world of sport, institutional, cultural, social and economic powers are used to reinforce gender differences and patriarchal ideology through their subordination (Vincent, 2010:174)

The reason I undertook this research was because I wanted to test two elements of a hypothesis that the inequality experienced by sportswomen is perpetuated by sports coverage.

Firstly, I wished to undertake a quantitative assessment regarding how many news items featuring women's sports appeared as compared to those news items featuring men. This would simply be in the form of counting the number of articles featuring women and those featuring men and my expectation was to find considerably fewer pieces regarding women.

Secondly, my intention was to undertake a qualitative assessment of the language used in the articles and assess whether it reinforced stereotypes such as those discussed above. The qualitative aspect was facilitated by reading the articles in full and making notes regarding the discourse used therein. I used highlighter pens to colour code the emergent themes (discussed later). Again, my expectation was that the language in the reporting would be nuanced with regard to gender and reinforce the aforementioned stereotypes.

Data collection – Week one commencing Friday 13th January 2017

Friday

BBC Sport

Of the 18 headline articles only one featured an article regarding women's sport. This was a piece reporting tennis player Johanna Konta's victory in the Sydney International Tournament final.

Sky Sports

Of the headline articles, again, the only female sports article was about Johanna Konta; this was the 32nd article and one had to scroll quite a way down the page to discover it.

Saturday

BBC Sport

Again, of the 18 headline articles, only one featured women. This was an article in which the impending Australian Open tennis tournament was discussed. The American tennis player Serena Williams featured heavily in the piece and rather than include a match report, it was a discussion piece.

Sky Sports

There were in excess of 60 articles on the Sky Sports homepage; however, there were no articles referring to women's sport.

Sunday

BBC Sport

Of the 18 headlines, again, only 1 featured women's sport. Again this was an article regarding tennis player Johanna Konta. This article, however was not exclusively about women as it was a piece discussing the chances of both Konta and the male tennis player, Andy Murray in the soon to be played Australian Open.

Sky Sports

One article concerned women's sport and again, this was a feature regarding Johanna Konta. As with the BBC article, males did feature heavily in the discussion regarding Konta's coaches.

Monday

BBC Sport

BBC Included 3 articles regarding women's swimming (Fran Halsall's announcement of retirement), tennis (a report of the opening matches in the Australian Open) and cycling (a short piece regarding an injury to Laura Kenny (Trott)).

Sky Sports

Sky featured three tennis articles to include the women's game; however, only one was exclusively about women, again, a piece about Johanna Konta. The other two were pieces regarding order of play at the Australian Open for both

men and women and the chances open to the British men and women in the tournament. In addition to these was an article regarding Fran Halsall's retirement.

Tuesday

BBC Sport

Again a feature on the Australian Open tennis tournament covering both the men's and women's game was included. The BBC also featured a very short article regarding the departure of the coach of the Scotland women's football team. There was also an article regarding women's hockey and news of the Olympic squad.

Sky Sports

Sky featured an article solely regarding Johanna Konta's progress in the Australian Open tennis tournament. Also featured was an article about WWE women's wrestling, which featured a video clip. Sky featured an article regarding diversity in sport and the assertion from football executive, Moya Dodd that a more diverse culture in football could have prevented a number of cases of sexual abuse. Sky also ran a longer article regarding the departure of the Scottish women's football coach. Also featured were a piece about the Olympic women's hockey team and a piece on the progress of both men and women in the Australian open tennis tournament.

Wednesday

BBC Sport

Three articles regarding women featured. The headline article was about the death of former England cricketer Rachael Heyhoe Flint. Also featured was an

article regarding the signing of Heather O'Reilly by the Arsenal women's football team and an article about skier, Lyndsey Vonn's desire to race against men.

Sky Sports

Sky also ran an article about the death of Rachael Heyhoe Flint albeit further down the page than the BBC's. They also featured women's tennis in Australian Open reports and a report regarding Sky's decision to televise England women's rugby matches. This report also asserted that Sky was developing its portfolio of women's sports on TV stating it will be showing sports including netball, cricket and golf. They also point to the development of what they state is the UK's only dedicated women's sports show, *Sportswomen*. Finally, Sky also featured WWE women's wrestling with this article also featuring men's wrestling.

Thursday

BBC Sport

The BBC app featured an article regarding the Australian Open but this covered both men's and women's tennis. Also featured was a short article about the retirement of world champion diver, Rebecca Gallantree.

Sky Sports

Sky featured two articles about women's tennis at the Australian Open although one discussed both women's and men's matches.

Data collection – Week two commencing Monday 27th February 2017

Monday

BBC Sport

One article covered women's football with a report on the England international team. The only other article was a mixed gender piece reporting on the FA

People's Cup initiative in which both men and women are encouraged to take part in five-a-side football tournaments across the country.

Sky Sports

From their large range of headlines, Sky only included two articles featuring women's sports. As with the BBC they reported on the England women's football team. They also ran an article on WWE women's wrestling.

Tuesday

BBC Sport

The BBC featured three articles featuring women. One reported on Jess Varnish's desire to resume her career after a controversial incident when she was dropped from the British Cycling elite programme. This is particularly relevant as Varnish had accused the technical director of sexism after being dropped and the report talks of a possible cover-up of evidence. The two other articles feature women's rugby one of which speaks of the steps made in promoting the women's game.

Sky Sports

Sky also featured three articles about women's sports. One was a report featuring Sky Sports Scholars in a variety of sports but also featured males. Another article featured female boxer Katie Taylor and her impending fight, which was on the undercard (supporting slot) of a major men's fight. The third article featured rally driver Louise Cook and her heroic performance in a race in Sweden.

Wednesday

BBC Sport

The BBC featured no headline articles regarding women's sport among its eighteen pieces.

Sky Sports

Sky featured two articles. One was regarding women's netball, which Sky TV have begun broadcasting and promoting. The other article was about Olympic athlete Dina Asher-Smith and her recovery from an injury.

Thursday

BBC Sport

There were four articles that in some way referred to women. The headline feature included an interview with the head of British Cycling who made a formal apology for the culture within the organisation that included bullying and sexist behaviour. On a similar theme, another of the articles reported that the International Olympic Committee would not stage the golf tournament in Tokyo at a particular club if it did not give full parity to women members. A further article discussed boxer Katie Taylor's ambitions of fighting for a world title. The final article featured an interview with twin sisters who will be competing in athletics events for the GB team.

Sky Sports

Sky included three articles. They also featured an article about boxer Katie Taylor; this article made comparisons between women's and men's boxing. A further article featured the wrestler Sasha Banks, who discussed being a role model for "little girls". There was also an article regarding tennis star, Maria Sharapova's return from a doping ban.

Friday

BBC Sport

Again, BBC featured three articles. The first featured women runners competing in the European indoor athletic championships. The second reported on triathlete Jodie Stimpson's second place in the World Series race in Abu Dhabi. Finally was a piece regarding skiing star Izzy Atkin, who won a world cup event.

Sky Sports

Sky ran only one article regarding women's sports which reported on runners in the European indoor athletic championships.

Saturday

BBC Sport

Two articles featured women's sports but these were both joint pieces; one reported on the European indoor athletics and one featured the FA People's Cup.

Sky Sports

Sky also featured just two articles. One was a joint gender piece about WWE wrestling in which the women's story was secondary to the men's report. The second piece was about the netball Super League.

Sunday

BBC Sport

BBC Sport ran with three articles regarding women's athletics in the European indoor championships. In addition to this was an article about para-cycling championships featuring both men and women. The BBC also ran an article regarding the England women's football team.

Sky Sports

Sky featured WWF women's wrestling in one article and women's athletics in another. They also ran a feature regarding the England women's football team following their win against the USA. Also featured was an article regarding women's tennis and a boxing match, which was on the undercard of a men's fight the previous night.

Findings – the numbers

Before discussing the numbers, it is worth noting that the figures for coverage on these sports apps do have some difference to numbers in print media nearly a decade ago. Boyce (2009) reports a 2008 study by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, which found just 2 per cent of articles and 1 per cent of images in printed sports pages in the UK featured women and women's sports. At most, the apps looked at reached 22 per cent (only on one occasion) but they did not regularly go above 10 per cent.

Before the above study reported by Boyce, Weatherall (2002:13) refers to *invisible women* due to their "absence as the subjects of stories or topics of articles". While the two weeks of news reporting under consideration here show that women are not necessarily absent as subjects or topics (although Sky featured no articles on Saturday of the first week the BBC featured none on Wednesday of the second week), it can certainly be seen that they are very much in the minority. Out of a possible 18 articles that were run each day by BBC Sport the highest number featuring women was 4. This only happened once over the periods assessed. Out of a possible 60 plus articles that were run each

day by Sky Sports the most featuring women was 6; again, this only happened once and one of those articles was a mixed gender piece.

These numbers clearly indicate a bias towards reporting men's sports. Indeed, even on what might be considered *slow news days* (days on which there was no major sports story to report) both the BBC and Sky found plenty of material to write about men's sports in terms of discussion pieces and peripheral stories. Articles featuring women's sports were largely confined to events such as sporting contests, retirement of athletes, deaths and departures from roles, teams etc. Of the 66 articles featuring women over the period studied, 14 were not solely about women's sports but also featured men. For example, during the Australian Open tennis tournament, articles would report on the progress of both men and women. Articles of this nature regularly featured the men's news as the lead followed by reporting of the women, reflecting Hodkinson's (2017) view that women's role in media content is often secondary to that of men. This is despite the fact that John (2017) asserts women's sport today makes headlines. It is worth noting however that John made this assertion subsequent to the England women's cricket team dramatically winning the World Cup and the progress made by the England women's football team in the European Championships.

The articles featured by Sky Sports reported similar news to those of BBC Sport however there was a different dimension to some of the reporting in that several news items featured sports that Sky wished to promote and publicise due to their televising of said sports. For example, Sky TV had the rights to televise the Netball Super League and they also televised the WWE wrestling tournaments. These tournaments have an added dimension in that they often feature pay-per-

view contests and Sky would promote these more robustly than others. This is confirmed by Boyce (2009:125) who reports “The more revenue the sport and sporting event produces, the more likely it is to receive more significant coverage”.

The fact that men are disproportionately represented is for Boyce (2009:123) because:

Essentialist notions of men and women are manifested more frequently through sport than in any other public domain and this differentiation of physical prowess is confirmed by the disproportionate media treatment of men’s sport over women’s sport.

The identity chapter of this thesis includes a reference to essentialism whereby I was accused of taking an essentialist stance regarding local identities. Boyce shows here that essentialist standpoints, be they positive or negative, do have an impact on individuals and groups.

Findings – the language

Given the nature of the history of attitudes toward sportswomen and some of these views still being perpetuated as shown in the above example regarding Laura Trott, my expectation was that the news articles appearing on the BBC Sport and Sky Sports apps would use language that also perpetuated the attitudes and differences. The quantitative evidence above certainly shows a difference in perceived importance between sportsmen and sportswomen, therefore I wished to ascertain if this difference was indeed writ large in terms of the way reporters speak of women’s sports.

Analysis of the language and subject matter uncovered several main themes. The first and perhaps most surprising to me was the fact that the reporting of women's sporting events / matches used largely gender neutral writing. This could be tested in the fact that if the names and use of the terms *she / her* were redacted from many of the pieces, it would not be possible to discern whether the articles were about women or men. Indeed, when reporting on Johanna Konta's match in the Sydney International tennis tournament, both the BBC and Sky used terms such as *powerful, aggressive, breathtaking and emphatic*. Another example of language disproving my expectation was use of the term *ruthless* in an article Sky ran on women's football.

Perhaps less surprising were reports such as one by Sky, which spoke of a *fairytale ending* for Johanna Konta and used the term *giddy*. Added to this, was a BBC article reporting on women's football in which all of the teams were referred to as *ladies*. It could be argued the BBC is merely reflecting the women's game here because many (but not all) teams include *Ladies* as part of their name.

Another emerging theme, which was less surprising to me and added to the quantitative evidence was the dominance of reporting on men when articles were reporting both women's and men's sports. These articles almost exclusively started with the men and then continued to discuss women. Other examples of men appearing in the articles about women included a report by Sky on a women's boxing fight that would be on the undercard (supporting slot) of a men's fight. Also featured by Sky was a report about a woman rally driver (Louise Cook) who had recently given a *heroic* performance in a race; however, this

article largely discussed the fact that Cook's own hero was a male rally driver and how he would have been proud of her performance.

Reporting that largely supported the hypothesis centred on a sport that itself provides evidence to support the hypothesis. The sport is WWE Wrestling; it is not to be forgotten that WWE is an abbreviation of World Wrestling *Entertainment*, which gives an indication as to the seriousness or otherwise of WWE as a *sport*. However, it is presented, and consumed by spectators as a sport, and features in the sports reporting within the apps, therefore appropriate for study. It cannot be denied that both the women and men who compete are athletically gifted but much of the presentation of WWE, including the reporting, is of a theatrical nature. Gender differences are exaggerated and the men present as muscular and warrior-like; although the women are also presented as strong and warrior-like, they wear heavy make-up, have styled hair and wear revealing clothes to present in a sexualised manner.



Indeed one of the competitions for women in WWE is called The Divas (sic) Championship and the image above features the belt worn by the champion, which features a pink butterfly. One of the Sky articles featured an interview with a woman wrestler who discussed her role as a carer for her brother who had autism and the fact she wanted to be a role model for little girls with ambition. As

with the aforementioned video featuring Laura Trott, this article placed a sportswoman in the wider context of the *expected* female role as carer / homemaker.

During the period under review, cricketer Rachael Heyhoe Flint died. She was a significant figure in the sports world as according to the BBC article, she was a pioneering figure in the women's game. The Sky article however emphasised Flint's importance as a sportsperson and her son was quoted as saying she had the tenacity to break glass ceilings. Flint was also reported to have been the first woman to be admitted to the committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) this is significant because similarly to golf, cricket clubs have been places in which women have not been afforded the same rights as men and even barred from joining.

Inequality due to sexism and the promotion of women's sport feature in four articles. Sky's promotion of women's sports is very much tied up with their portfolio of televised sports. This can be viewed as Sky promoting the sports to further their profits from television revenue but it could also be viewed as Sky identifying the rising popularity of women's sports and taking advantage of this. Either way, it could be argued that Sky is more concerned with maximising profits than promoting women's sports for reasons of gender parity.

Gender transgression

Lasch (1979:103) asserted sports served "as one of the strongest bastions of male chauvinism". It should come as no surprise then that sportswomen, in a bid to combat this chauvinism and the concomitant inequality, might adopt techniques and characteristics that could be seen as indicative of gender

transgression. Visual representations of sportsmen and sportswomen contribute to the maintenance of male hegemony in sports (Sherry *et al*, 2016) and in order to redress the balance, women will increasingly adapt to portray more masculine images. Sherry *et al* (2016:301) point to Goffman who:

argued that visual representations present gender relations in a manner that is not reflective of reality, but rather, the images fulfil a social function: to convince society that that is how the two genders are, how they wish to be, and how they ought to be

Sherry *et al* (2016:304) echo the discussion regarding representations of sportswomen adhering to *traditional* stereotyping when they discuss the nature of heterosexual representations of sportswomen; they assert:

Research has consistently shown that photographic coverage serves to highlight athletes' heterosexuality and conformance to traditional notions of femininity. In so doing the gender transgression represented by their participation – or perhaps more accurately their success – in sport is mitigated and the primacy of their role as a heterosexual woman is reasserted

The success of women being able to manage the competing identities presented by being a sportswoman depends on the dismantling of barriers that define women as the social actor that should adhere to a particular stereotype. Jary and Jary (1995) point to the phenomenon of *gender stratification* whereby stereotypes are reinforced by a system that sees feminised people ranked below masculinised people. This ranking is evident in society in the workplace and significantly for this research, in the sporting landscape.

Godoy-Pressland (2016) argues that the media are particularly culpable for the reinforcement of gender stereotyping and the under-representation of women in the sporting milieu. She points to the fact that bodily representation of sportswomen is quite different to that of sportsmen. Godoy-Pressland likens newspaper reporting of sportswomen to the *gaze* of reporters as it impacts on women. This thesis has considered the panopticon and Foucault's (1977) interpretation of it with regard to external surveillance impacting on internal surveillance. Godoy-Pressland (2016) likens newspaper reporting to this in that the person being reported on might not see the reporter (as the prisoner in the panopticon cannot see the guard) but they will know the reporter is there and the potential effects of the material produced by the reporter. As has been mentioned above, females are often trivialised by the media and Godoy-Pressland (2016:748) says of trivialised bodies in the media:

Sportswomen's bodies can be trivialised in a number of ways, which are being dependent on men (particularly partners, husbands or coaches), using task-irrelevant reporting (focusing on sexuality, clothes and activities outside of sport), relationship status and highlighting appearance and personality over sporting achievements

In terms of internet and mobile communications, the above can be greatly amplified due to the potential reach of reports. Traditional newspapers are limited to their physical reach but internet platforms such as BBC Sport and Sky Sports can reach globally wherever one has a suitable connection. This is something that traditional newspaper outlets are capitalising on in that most of them have internet platforms complementing their portfolio of services. Therefore it is not

surprising that the impact of the gaze is significant. Godoy-Pressland (2016:745) asserts “The power of surveillance then invites people to regulate their behaviour towards a particular norm when they feel they are being watched” and the consequences of this are enacted through, amongst other things, the body.

An exemplification of the dilemma for sportswomen and the heteronormative dominance of the sporting landscape is offered by Heineken (2004) when she discusses the case of the late WWE wrestler Chyna. When she first appeared on the wrestling scene Chyna was extremely muscular, had quite a large under-bite / prominent chin and did not fit into the expected mould of what wrestling commentators would see as being a *woman*. Instead, Chyna was referred to as a *freak* and a *monster*. Her wrestling career saw her take on several guises including one of the heel (villain) of the ring due to her transgression of the norms and her apparently feminist stance.

However Chyna’s largest transformation was when she underwent surgery to address her under-bite and have breast implants fitted; although still maintaining a muscular physique, she also became considerably slimmer. This transformation in Chyna’s appearance saw commentators who had previously demonised her, change their attitudes by referring to her as *all woman*. The images below highlight the difference in Chyna’s appearance; indeed the image on the right shows us that her transformation from *freak* to *woman* was evidenced by her inclusion as a cover model for *Playboy* magazine.



Although Chyna's transformation saw her *accepted* as a *woman*, an interesting addition and confirmation of language reinforcing stereotypes is highlighted by Heinecken (2004:189) who reports a conversation between two commentators pondering the issue of a woman fighting a man in the wrestling ring:

And she is absolutely fearless. I wonder if – as a male – what you would do J. R. if she hit you? I mean she is a lady. Well, no wait a minute, she's a woman, not necessarily a lady.

For Heinecken, the commentators' admiration of Chyna's strength was coupled with their implication that she did not fit accepted feminine modes of behaviour. This is a dilemma replicated in the world of bodybuilding as highlighted by McGrath and Chananie-Hill (2009:237), who point out that "female bodybuilders' experience is one of contradiction, often leading to attempts to "balance" popular notions of femininity and muscularity". These attempts by bodybuilders, similar to Chyna's attempts include breast implants, feminising hairstyles and the wearing of outfits to counteract the masculinising effects of muscle development. Similar to Chyna's appearance in *Playboy* magazine many bodybuilders attempt to

adhere to heteronormative ideas around desirability by posing for erotic photo spreads (McGrath and Chananie-Hill, 2009).

Although it will not be discussed at length here, it is worth noting that an added layer of complexity for black sportswomen and bodybuilders includes notions of animalism and an exclusion from the white, middle class standards of femininity (McGrath and Chananie-Hill, 2009). Clifton (2017) speaks of the sexist and misogynistic characterisation of the black tennis players Venus and Serena Williams' physicality and bodies. Again, similar ways of addressing this were apparent with sprinters like the late Florence Griffith Joyner, who competed wearing heavy make-up and long, manicured and boldly coloured fingernails (Denham, 1999).

Performing gender

For Bradley (2007), gender is a social construct; it is a basic way of categorizing and defining social relations. However, it is not a fixed construct and what it means to be a man or a woman has changed throughout history. Indeed, in different parts of the world today there are different meanings attached to what it is to be a man or a woman.

These meanings can be derived from our social learning; from birth, we are dressed in a certain way, referred to using certain language and placed very much in the category of *boy* or *girl*. McLaughlin (J) (2003:150) offers that "When a baby is born and identified as female and given an identifiably female name, the ongoing process of citing cultural norms of femininity has begun". We learn a gender schema and we adhere to the need to conform to that schema. Everyday activities such as shaving (legs / faces / armpits) are the ways in which we

perform gender. Judith Butler (1990:34) argues that gender is constructed through the repetition of specific acts in that “gender is always a doing” she asserts that gender is not a noun nor a set of attributes; rather gender is “performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence” (Butler 1990:34). These regulatory practices are viewed as norms and Butler (1993:94) asserts “The “performative” dimension of construction is precisely the forced reiteration of norms”.

Gender, is for Butler (1990), produced in what she terms the *heterosexual matrix*. This is the site in which “expressions of masculinity and femininity are embedded within a presupposed hegemonic heterosexuality” (Renold, 2006:493). This places heterosexuality as the norm and the performance of roles should reflect the masculine / feminine binary. Butler (1990) argues that deviation from normative masculinity and femininity can place heterosexuality in doubt.

The maintenance of hegemonic heterosexuality is therefore policed and reinforced by a process of othering and shaming those who transgress the norms. This was demonstrated in the above case of the wrestler Chyna, who clearly threatened the hegemony of masculinity and was referred to in derogatory terms until she transformed her appearance to fit more neatly with normative views (albeit exaggerated) of femininity. Chyna’s initial performance of gender did not fit with the cultural codes making up the heterosexual matrix therefore it threatened the authority and power therein.

The sporting arena has seen alternative responses to masculine hegemony and one of these is highlighted by the skater community. Kelly *et al* (2005) point to

the phenomenon of emphasized femininity whereby girls (particularly of high-school age) feel pressured to make themselves attractive within the scope of the heterosexual matrix. Kelly *et al*'s study focused on high-school age girls who identified as being, to varying degrees, skater girls. They found that these girls eschewed emphasized femininity and instead, engaged in activities that were at times hazardous suffering from 'face plants' (falls) and 'road rash' (scrapes and cuts). More telling was the fact that they liked to wear clothes that were casual and comfortable and not those they perceived to be 'slutty'.

The girls in the study disassociated themselves from the performative aspects of emphasized femininity and in doing so adopted an alternative to the "many' unspoken 'rules' to being a girl today" (Kelly *et al*, 2005:246). For Jarvie (2012) this adoption of an alternative to the mainstream could be seen as rebellious in that skateboarding is viewed as rebellion against the sporting choices of one's parents.

However one criticism of this perceived rebellion is that the skater girls, despite a desire to adopt alternative attitudes to the mainstream, still adhere to the notion of slut. The term *slut* is at the heart of a series of current global protests sparked by the comments made by Canadian police officer in which he said that girls should not dress like sluts in order to avoid victimisation (Ringrose & Renold, 2012). Ringrose and Renold report that women are advocating for the right to dress how they like and the idea that they should not be judged for this. There is evidence cited by Ringrose and Renold (2012) that girls are *reclaiming* the term slut in order to minimise its impact in much the same way that black people have reclaimed the term *nigger* as documented previously in this thesis.

Is the sports world still a man's world?

During the writing of this chapter issues around the position women hold in the sporting milieu have arisen again due to the reports that Sunderland football manager David Moyes had threatened to give a female reporter a *slap even though she was a woman* due to her line of questioning that he found uncomfortable (BBC, 2017). This BBC report (2017) highlighted that the debate has included representations that Moyes made the comments in a jocular manner, he apologised immediately and that the reporter, Vicki Sparks, had accepted his apology. The opposing view offered is that the comments were sexist and that they could easily deter women from entering the sporting environment in any capacity (BBC, 2017).

Whichever perspective one takes on this debate, the fact remains that Moyes qualified his comment about a slap by adding *even though you are a woman and just be careful next time*; these comments would not have been made if the reporter was a man and the jocular manner offered in Moyes' defence has been used time and again to minimise oppression of women in a variety of settings including the home and the workplace.

It can be argued that the above interaction saw David Moyes assert his dominance in the sporting environment by reminding Vicki Sparks that she was in an unnatural setting as a woman in the male dominated world of association football. Sexism in this environment is by no means a new phenomenon and the difficulties women face were highlighted when football commentators Andy Gray and Richard Keys were inadvertently caught on microphone discussing a woman assistant referee in derogatory terms. They were saying that she was not

capable of fulfilling the duties required of the position due to their view that a woman would not know the offside rule (BBC, 2011b).

The examples above and the continued trivialisation of sportswomen show that although in some quarters, such as gender neutral reporting and a drive to encourage positive *sporting* photographic images, the words of Boyce in 2009 still hold fast; “the overarching maleness of sporting culture in Britain still clearly comes through” (Boyce, 2009:128). Furthermore, the examples above confirm Vincent’s (2010:174) assertion that “The underlying hegemonic message is that athleticism and femininity are contradictory and that female athletes must balance their athletic prowess with femininity to be socially accepted”. Indeed, Vincent’s study of media reporting of women tennis players includes a sub-heading, *Freaks* under which he discusses the aforementioned issues of labelling deviant those women who present as muscularly strong (as in the aforementioned case of the Williams sisters) . Gilroy (1997) discusses this and critiques the work of Bordo, who felt that women could have weight and bulk within certain parameters; however for Gilroy any acceptance of this would still be framed by cultural norms. This echoes Berthelot’s (1986) assessment of sports sociology, which holds that even where the body might be considered relevant to the sport, it is still held accountable within the parameters of structural and cultural mechanisms. Furthermore, Cardwell (2013) highlights the fact that the social pressure on women to maintain their femininity contributes to the barriers to their physical and sporting development.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to add to the assessment of the landscape of sport, health and fitness and its impact on society by considering the position of women within this landscape. As can be seen, there are contradictions highlighted for women in society when they seek to be part of the sporting milieu. Changing attitudes have seen great strides made towards parity with men (as highlighted by the changing nature of Olympic competition and particularly marathon running) but there are still clearly attitudes towards and ideas of femininity that see male hegemony prevail (as highlighted in the world of WWE).

Despite the progress made by women and the advance towards parity there is still much influence on society due to the ingrained nature of attitudes around masculinity and femininity. This was perfectly evidenced on one of my bike club's weekly rides when we were told that one of the members was not coming that day due to having "too much to do around the house". It was telling that another member said "he's such a lady isn't he"; even more telling was the fact that the member making the comment was a woman. This, it can be argued, is not so surprising due to the concept of internalisation (Butler, 1990) which has seen many years of attitudes regarding performing gender become so normative that for many they become part of the psyche and this contributes to the oppression of women.

Chapter eight – Conclusion

The overall question within this thesis is: How does the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society today? In seeking to answer this, I have sought to fulfil three main aims as proposed in the introduction. I will address each aim individually here and then offer a summary of my research findings.

- To critically review the landscape of the sport, health and fitness milieu as it impacts on individuals and society.

I have argued and I feel, demonstrated the fact that sport is a major phenomenon in the shaping of society. Not only do professional sports and professional sportspeople have an impact in that they offer sites of aspiration and role models for individuals to focus on but they also shape society in several ways. Professional sportspeople have been shown to be actors in society when addressing such issues as civil rights and the successes their sporting abilities afford them enable them to occupy a platform from which to effectively reach society. For Brohm (1989) sport can shape public opinion and offer a site of ideological framing in society.

Concomitant with any political influence sportspeople might have is their influence in terms of offering examples of health and fitness to which many individuals aspire. I have shown that although not everyone can emulate their sporting idols in terms of sporting success, they can emulate them in terms of striving for their own optimum fitness outcomes. One can run in the same London Marathon as a world champion regardless of whether they are as accomplished as said champion or not.

- To understand the nature of this impact and how it can shape the health and welfare discourse of contemporary society.

What drives individuals and then groups within society to strive to follow the healthy lifestyle? We have seen a discourse in society that has developed since the civilizing process saw individuals gain sovereignty over their bodies. This discourse has been reinforced by the increasingly individualistic political landscape of western society. The messages people receive are that they should look after *themselves* in terms of maintaining their health so as not to be a burden on the welfare systems of society.

A major vehicle for individuals to comply with the above is for them to become fitter and as a consequence, seemingly *healthier* via exercise and sporting activity. I have shown that an easily accessible and increasingly popular way to do this is to take up running. Running in major and smaller events is something people aspire to and in taking up the challenges therein, they are ideally placed to seek financial sponsorship in order to contribute to the charitable sector. Indeed I have shown that particularly within the London Marathon (as well as other major running events), it is increasingly an expectation that one will raise money for charity. This money has been shown to contribute to the welfare systems in society and in doing so, has created an impact in terms of modes of welfare delivery.

- To examine how identities are influenced by language and discourse from a range of sport, health and fitness media.

As my thesis has developed, I have placed greater importance on the nature of identity. It has been my assertion that identity matters. It matters because it gives

us a sense of what we are as well as who we are. I have shown that recognition is linked to identity, and belonging is also an important factor linked to our sense of identity. We have a multiplicity of identities and these can include sporting identities; I am a runner, I am a cyclist are terms that indicate an aspect of our identity and at the same time can identify us as belonging to certain groups.

In analysing print media and online media, I have evaluated the impact of the discourse therein. Race and gender are two areas I have been keen to discuss as the landscape of the sporting milieu has been both a site of success in terms of progress in addressing inequality and a site of frustration in terms of how individuals and groups are represented whereby inequalities are perpetuated.

In keeping with technological advances in society, I have highlighted phenomena such as the *Quantified Self Movement* and the increasing use of apps to share one's health progress. In addition to this, I have recognised the growing significance and offered analysis of mobile phone apps in the reporting of sport and shown how this can impact on society particularly in the case of sportswomen.

Overall summary of research

Reflecting the especial emphasis in the thesis, my initial thoughts were focused on running as a force for social change and this developed into a consideration of the general landscape of sport, health and fitness and my focus shifted to assessing the current picture in terms of the impact of this landscape.

I wanted to uncover and understand the links between running and charitable fundraising and in order to facilitate this, I undertook a series of preliminary interviews. These interviews with runners were carried out as initial public

engagement in order to identify further avenues of research. Having established a correlation between running and charity I further explored how this might impact upon the delivery of welfare.

The largest of all single charity running events was a feature early in this thesis and the London Marathon offered an ideal example of the interface between running, charity and the impact on welfare delivery. The impact of running is not only felt at an individual level but also evident at a societal level.

Sport and the civilizing process is an area in which aspects of social change can be traced. Within a consideration of the changing nature of physical activity, one can see that in contemporary western society, physical activity, in particular running, is less concerned with survival and more concerned with leisure.

Social capital is a major site of impact for sportspeople because they have been able to gain *status* in society. Social change is linked to this in that the idea of the development of social capital facilitating agency has an impact on the lives of sportspeople such as Harold Abrahams, Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Muhammad Ali.

The idea of sovereignty over one's body is linked to a more personal responsibility regarding the maintenance of health and fitness. Responsibility is an element of the obligation to health that comes with sovereignty and this links with a consideration of welfare in society and the concept of burden.

Identity matters; it is at the heart of who we are and how we want others to perceive us. Identity is a relevant topic of research here because it can be shaped by our belonging. The sporting milieu offers several seats of belonging

and, linking to the concept of social capital, wanting to be part of the *correct* club is closely linked with the concept of identity. Language can impact upon identity and the language of running has permeated society and consequently impacts on identity and society today. Everyday conversations that are not linked to running and indeed, sports in general often feature terms associated with the sporting milieu.

Essentialism is a concept that offers a seat of debate and this offers a challenge in that some may well question the usefulness and even argue the possibility for damage of taking an essentialist stance. I feel that there are still strong indicators pointing to a desire for people to be associated with particular groups, and strategic essentialism can be a useful approach for the advancement of underrepresented groups.

Thematic analysis of the language used in governmental reports and glossy magazines found the language in the magazines reflects the language in the documents. This language is very much tied to the previously discussed idea of citizens needing to stay *fit and healthy*; a message that successive administrations are increasingly concerned with due to the mounting burden on health and welfare services.

The idea of responsibility is linked to nudge theory and the fact that text and imagery influences discourse is something that can be highlighted using historical context such as in the comparison of *Marlboro Man* and the way smoking is framed today.

Ideas around self-help, well-being and self-regulation offer a natural progression within this research in that much of the language used in the magazines

somewhat mimicked the language of self-help. The models of health promotion are useful in a consideration of self-help and this can be widened to a discussion of Foucauldian perspectives regarding self-regulation and self-control.

The landscape of sport, health and fitness is one in which people can enhance their self-esteem by regulating their bodies. This helps in the quest for the previously considered phenomenon of recognition in which the pursuit of the *body beautiful* is something that many believe to be a contributory factor of this quest.

A consideration of the social impact of sport via the representation of women shows elements of change are evident. Long distance running offers an example of this in that the case of Kathrine Switzer offers historical perspective and highlights changing attitudes to women in the sporting milieu when compared to runners such as Paula Radcliffe today.

Further primary research looking at two separate weeks of sports reporting via mobile phone apps shows a disparity in representation in terms of frequency of articles regarding women. The language used in the apps uncovers gendered nuances showing there are still differences to consider. Although the language in the apps is largely gender neutral, there are still instances of gendered language contributing to the trivialisation of women in sport.

The treatment of female wrestler Chyna highlights the fact that discourse around sportswomen can dramatically change dependent on adherence to heteronormativity. Butler's heterosexual matrix further considers this issue within the concept of gender performativity and is shown to be applicable in the case of

sportswomen who might transgress the *expected* norms in the way Chyna initially did.

Limitations of the study

In seeking to explore the social impact of the landscape of sport, health and fitness, I have offered a broad range of topics that initially might seem quite disparate. However, on further investigation and by making the connections from chapter to chapter, I feel I have investigated issues that are important, relevant and ultimately, linked.

Identity, discourse and the use of language are major themes occurring throughout this thesis. They are themes that are explored and applied to the impact and changing nature of representation of people from *minority* communities and of women. Sportspeople such as Tommie Smith, Harold Abrahams and Kathrine Switzer are offered as examples of how sport can impact on individuals and ultimately, through a process of changing attitudes, on society.

Focussing on race and gender was a way for me to be able to offer theoretical explanations to explore the impact of sport, health and fitness. One could argue that I have made omissions in my thesis and indeed, I acknowledge that I have not offered a detailed analysis of the impact as it relates to children and young people. The same can be said about a lack of acknowledgment regarding those with disabilities. The World Youth Games, the Special Olympics and the Paralympic Games are all examples of major events that contribute to the milieu of sport, health and fitness regarding young people, those with intellectual disabilities and those with physical disabilities respectively. Identity, the use of

language, discourse and representation are all phenomena that could be applied to these groups and explored within the context of sport, health and fitness.

Does the landscape of sport, health and fitness impact on society today?

Yes it does, in myriad ways and I feel this thesis elucidates some of the major ways in which the sport, health and fitness milieu has been a part of the phenomenon of social change and continues to have a significant impact on contemporary society.

Suggestions for further research

As suggested above, an exploration of the landscape of sport, health and fitness as it relates to young people and those with disabilities would offer a wider assessment of the impact on society. The perspectives added here would give yet further insight into any impact for a wider range of society.

I have looked at a traditional media format in this thesis when analysing magazines; further to this, I have looked at a more contemporary format when analysing mobile phone apps. An area that has grown in terms of sports and fitness is television. Dedicated sports channels offer 24-hour coverage and, as discussed in the thesis, there are many different exercise programmes available on DVD or on Television. An interesting area for further study would be an assessment of the impact of televised content. How does this affect consumption of sport? Does it create more accessibility in terms of fitness programmes?

A major interest for me is the relationship between sports, health and fitness and the use of substances. This is an ever-changing landscape and, I feel, one that

could offer rich material for someone to explore a particular relationship between this and the changing mores of society.

My study has made reference to the *Quantified Self Movement* and this is linked to the abundance of mobile phone applications that enable us to track elements of our health and fitness. A changing feature of this is the interconnectivity afforded by the ability to link with others online. A study of the impact of this sharing of data / experiences would offer insight into a growing phenomenon and its potential impact on our behaviour.

Of particular interest would be whether young people access such technologies and if not, the reasons for this. This would be significant because one could argue that young people are at the vanguard of using mobile technologies and their attitudes to such devices might offer a sense of their potential for longitudinal impact.

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Appendix 1

Running as a Force for Social Change

Chris Yianni

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

I have asked to interview you for this study because you have identified yourself as someone who runs.

The study is being undertaken as part of my PhD programme and is concerned with assessing the impact that running has on society today, with a particular emphasis on charitable causes.

I will be recording the interview for the purposes of transcription and all recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study. All data will be reproduced in such a way as to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.

Please could you sign and date this form to allow me to use the data in the study.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2

Interview Schedule

This interview is aimed at you because you have identified yourself as someone who runs.

1. Approximately when did you start running?

(Question designed to give a sense of timeline in terms of the development of the phenomenon)

2. Tell me why you started to run.

(Responses might include running for a charitable cause)

3. In addition to that / those reasons could you tell me of any other reasons you started?

(This question will be used if charity does not come out initially)

4. Have you ever run for charity?

(Direct question to get it onto the agenda if not yet offered)

Which?

Why? (i.e. advert / personal reason / entry to race / requirement of race)

OR

4. Why not?

Under what circumstances would you consider running for charity?

5. In what other ways do or would you donate to charity?

Appendix 3

Copy of e mail confirming ethical approval not needed for interviews

Ethics

Carol Haigh

Thu 10/05/2018 17:21

To:

Chris Yianni;

Dear Chris,

Just to follow up on our recent conversation. I can confirm that the short initial interviews you conducted early in the study trajectory can be categorised as public engagement since their purpose was not to collect data or information for your research aim but was to simply offer further ideas for research.

This being the case there is no requirement for ethical review

Cordially

Carol

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