The Impact of Modernisation on Sport Policy Delivery in the Home Countries

L-J EDWARDS

PhD 2021

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LOUISA-JANE EDWARDS

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

Department of Economics, Policy and International Business

Sport Policy Unit

Manchester Metropolitan University

2021

Acknowledgements

policy academics across Wales, particularly R.M and C.S who reminded Westminster and the literature 'er gwaetha pawb a phopeth ry'n ni yma o hyd.'

Finally, I would like to write some closing words of thanks to my family and the special people who I love the most. Thank you to my Mum and Dad, for always encouraging me to keep reading and push onwards despite everything; no such word as can't, I will always be grateful. To Clare, my protector and sister, thank you for being my biggest fan and critical friend, your support to us all has been invaluable.

To DJ, an additional source of inspiration and understanding over two hills. Your arrival was unexpected, and our journey is turning out to be the most significant and exciting learning of all. I would have worked a bit quicker if I realised you were at the end waiting for me.

To end. I would like to thank my two sons, Joe and Tom, my inspiration. I love you both without measure and judgement. Please, keep being true to yourselves and find your own route to the answers you seek, I will be here for you.

Nothing is impossible to a determined woman (Alcott)

Abstract

Ongoing public sector reform is a priority across England and Wales in an era of dwindling budgets. In Wales, public sector reform has recently seen the transfer of local authority sport and leisure services to alternative delivery providers (Leisure Trusts) to preserve local presence, retain employment and create the local authority financial savings.

The development by former staff of employee-owned businesses to deliver a viable sport and leisure service is presented as an empowering option by policy makers but the reality equates to 'enforced partnerships' and financial support from the local authority scaffolded with contracting and performance indicators which brings into question the nature of the relationships involved and the state's role in shaping the direction of sport and leisure services through making up subjective individuals

The broad aim of this thesis is to develop knowledge through the Foucauldian lens of 'governmentality' of local authority responses to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services following wider public sector reform. This thesis uses a mainly qualitative comparative case study approach consisting of ten semi structured interviews and secondary data, across two sites in England and Wales.

The research draws attention to the hierarchical nature of the 'judicial power' evident in the sport policy process between external funders and Leisure Trusts. Funders relationships are predicated on New Public Management principles, an administrative process designed to maximise efficiencies, grounded in targets and monitoring. Foucault (1972) would argue that NPM is utilised as a 'a technology of government'

designed to retain a 'sporting gaze' over its partner using targeted funding agreements.

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Abbreviations

ABCD Asset based community development
AM Assembly Member
APSE Association of Professional Service Excellence
ASC Advisory Sports Council
BOA British Olympic Association
BV Best Value
CCT Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CEO Chief Executive Officer
CPA Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CSAP Community Sport and Activity Programme
CSP County Sport Partnership
DCMS Department of Culture, Media & Sport
DoH Department of Health
DNH Department of National Heritage
DSO Direct Service Organisation
GBSC GB Sports Council
IDM Indices of Deprivation Measure
KPI Key Performance Indicators
LA Local Authority
LAPA Local Area Partnership Agreement
LDP Local Delivery Pilot
LGA Local Government Association
NAO National Audit Office
NGB National Governing Body of Sport
NPM New Public Management
NM New Managerialism
NNDR National Non-Domestic Rates
PPA Planning, Preparation and Assessment
SCCG Salford Clinical Commissioning Group
SE Sport England
SDO Sport Development Officer
SCW Sports Council for Wales
SW Sport Wales
VCFSE Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise
WAO Welsh Audit Office
WAG Welsh Assembly Government

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.0. Introduction to the Thesis

This chapter will form a focussed introduction and provide a clear rationale for this thesis. The chapter will offer an overview of issues arising from the modernisation of local government sport and leisure service and the opportunities for community involvement in the delivery of these 'new' service models. In this chapter, the research problem, aims/objectives of the research and research question are discussed. Finally, this chapter concluded with a synopsis of the remaining work in the thesis.

1.1 Background to the Thesis

The global economic downturn of 2008, subsequent austerity measures and fiscal reductions to local government spending across England have resulted in budget cuts to non-discretionary sport and leisure services (APSE 2012, King 2013a, 2013b, Widdop et al, 2018). In a bid to retain these services within the community in an era of increasing demand, novel solutions have sought a reduction of the cost (and involvement) for the local authority and increased opportunities for the community 'to have a say' in how their service is delivered. The Welsh Government are keen to increase levels of democratic participation to take on responsibility for the running of public services and community assets.

Communities may also want to have more say over privately owned property, such as a village pub or shop or playing fields or owned by other public services. The Welsh Government believes community groups should have a right of first refusal when property of community value comes up for sale. They would normally have to buy the property at market value (Welsh Government, 2015).

One such model to feature in the modernised delivery of sport and leisure services are employee-owned businesses tasked with maintaining provision in arm's length companies distinct from parent local authority providers. These models usually form part of a larger merger of culture, heritage and library departments and are organised and 'owned' by former public sector employees who 'transfer over' from the local authority system. In recent work around the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of leisure service Nicholl et al. (2013: 829) recognise that to uphold the democratic governance of these new models, in addition to promoting volunteering, work is needed to promote wider ownership across the community. Whatever the model considered, long term viability, the terms and conditions of workers and accountability to the community have arisen as key issues to be addressed (Welsh Government, 2015).

This thesis which is set within an employee-owned sport and leisure context uses Foucauldian 'tools' to observe 'governmentality' and the development of knowledge and the relationships of power between key actors at two case study sites in Salford and Flintshire. Governmentality will be covered in broad terms in this chapter but in more detail in Chapter 3. Foucault developed 'governmentality' to exercise political power without the need for oppression. He perceived that liberal policy making was

supported by a method of governmentality, so to this end New Public Management, the 'modernised' approach to running public service along private sector lines, demonstrates itself as the neoliberal governmentality of our time.

Under Foucault, neoliberalism has several meanings, firstly relating to changes to societal economic and political structures cognisant with the transfer of sport and leisure to alternative delivery models. Secondly, Foucault, perceives neoliberalism to be linked to the NPM related 'surveillance' and 'examination' behaviours of 'technologies of power' that funders can use to enforce 'disciplinary power.' Thus, an example of the exercise of power here is demonstrated by top-down sport policy making by the UK Government which sets standards and policies that promote the modernisation and reconfiguration of existing public and sport and leisure services, and the way individual staff respond to it.

> To offer a robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area (UK Government,2012: 74).

There are already a wide variety of organisational forms involved in delivery of sport and leisure the community sport policy community (King, 2012, Findlay-King et al., 2018). The advent of using 'employee owned' models to deliver a publicly funded sport and leisure service in line with pre-determined state objectives, raises questions as to this organisational form's impact on democratic governance and the role of the state

in shaping the future direction of community sport (Grix,2010:169). This thesis intends to begin to explore these questions in more depth.

Depending upon the party in power and the country being governed, modernisation was promoted in differing ways (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013). Latham (1995) looking at Foucault's perception of modernity observed that early scholars in modernisation theory (Parsons, 1959) explored how the gross national product of poorer nations could be increased, using interlocking socioeconomic and political indices observations reflected upon making the shift from a traditional to a modern society. Modernisation theorists usually presented their work as 'scientific and modern' reflecting the best of the modernisation process, rejecting past ideas. Whereas Foucault (1970) embraced 'archaeological inquiry' to explore the 'order of things' and a 'modernity that we have not yet left behind'. Foucault's historical reflections highlight a commonality between standards and practices and provide and understanding for why events happen. Foucault's governmentality theoretical framework will provide a lens to observe public sector reform and its impact upon the delivery of sport and leisure services.

The Thatcher and Major Conservative Governments focused on the benefits of competition, whilst Labour placed greater emphasis on collaborative arrangements in rhetoric around "joined-up" government - and management - building partnerships and strategic alliances across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The sport policy sector operates with a whole host of partnerships and networks across its landscape. Attempts to modernise sport and leisure services represents what Foucault (1991:103) describes as governmentalisation and an attempt to recast its control through contemporary power relations with partners by extending the scope

of their operations into the lives of others who it has decided is responsible for meeting government objectives across space and time (Rose, 1999: 18).

The devolved nature of constitutional policymaking in the UK, has resulted in the development of differing political institutions across (in this case) England and Wales each with their own cultural traditions (March and Olsen, 1989; Bolton and Fleming, 2007). Inconsistencies in national government policy guidance across England and Wales around the modernisation of local authority services has seen the development of ambiguous innovative approaches in the management of sport and leisure service resulting in the transfer of this service rolling out at a differing pace and with mixed results (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012).

Across the UK, local authorities have reduced their direct service delivery via divestment, privatisation and the introduction of collaborative arrangements with third sector organisations (Clarke and Newman, 1997). There was a momentum from government for local governments to partner with social enterprises (SEs) as the combination of entrepreneurial skills and social purpose within its business model has been acknowledged as the basis for some of these delivery partnerships (Department for Trade and Industry, 2003: 28). Nevertheless, definitions of what social enterprises are remain undecided (Bull, 2015).

One such SE is the 'Leisure Trust,' Robinson (2004) and Simmons (2004;2008) propose that 'Leisure Trusts' were developed as either an Industrial Provident Society or Companies Limited by Guarantee. These trusts offered as a 'creative defence' against firstly, financial pressure on sport and leisure as a non-mandatory service by providing business rate and VAT relief and finally, the promotion of the social welfare orientation of the service, despite its increasing commercialisation as part of the move

to increase efficiencies (Simmons, 2008:283). The use of SE offered an attractive solution to solve the problem of the increasing cost of maintaining aging stock, however, the scale of responsibility transferred from individual local authority to Leisure Trust varied. In England, LT's have been in existence since 1997, conversely, LTs are only starting to make an appearance in Wales in the last few years. Here the role of local authorities as main provider of sport and leisure services is being challenged and currently in Wales, there is one employee-owned leisure trust model.

Local Government needs to review 'its unique role' taking account of the many changes and a growth in other providers in recent year (Sport Wales, 2016:4)
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Despite modernisation reforms purporting to reduce the power of local authorities in the delivery of its services, parent local authorities are still able to maintain influence over their social enterprise partners by contractual means, revenue grants and the power of ownership of facilities (Reid, 2003). Green and Houlihan (2006: 65) recognise that along with an 'intensification of interest [in sport as a site to impose public policy], has come innovation in the forms of intervention in sport policy'. This thesis intends to explore the degree to which creating employee-owned businesses in the heart of Salford and Flintshire offers an opportunity to develop observations and knowledge of its population so that the community can become more governable (Foucault, 1994:217).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A body of work from the sport policy community (Green and Houlihan,2006; King, 2009;2011 and Sam and Jackson, 2011) has identified that over time governments have become more influential in the administration of sport. Its 'power' being

demonstrated at the national level, through 'modernisation policies' introduced as a measure to manage 'failing' sports organisations. The result of changing central local relationships (Grix, 2010) has seen state interference continue to influence the development and direction of sport. In the public policy realm, there is usually a conflict between resources and knowledge (Weed, 2003).

Foucault (1988) argued that people and groups can be restricted by policy discourse but also contributory factors in reducing this domination by increasing their own knowledge. Therefore, this thesis seeks to contribute to debates around the development sport policy by using a Foucauldian analysis of employee-owned sport and leisure models in Salford and Flintshire. This work will apply governmentality to explore the level to which funders influence the direction of work toward other social objectives.

In England, the local government, which was the largest providers of sport and leisure at the grassroots level are now encouraged to engage in developing planning policies and evidence-based funding bids that reflect indoor and outdoor assessments of need and partnership working across their patch (Sport England. 2014). Thus, apparently reducing their primary role as service provider within the delivery sport and leisure supported by policy making designed:

> to PROTECT sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment; to ENHANCE existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management; and to PROVIDE new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet demands for participation now and in the future (Sport England, 2014: 4).

In Wales, the journey towards the modernisation of the council run sport and leisure service began in 2016, much later than England. Driven by austerity cuts and the subsequent The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) all public bodies, including local authorities were required to develop a long term, transformational change of their service which would include 'rationalisation, transformation or even closure – facilities' and a more 'mixed economy' of facility providers (Sport Wales, 2016: 12).

Changes within public sport and leisure delivery, linked to modernisation in both the public sector and sport policy agenda, have seen many sporting assets and services transferred to an array of external partners (Simmons, 2008; Hodgkinson and Hughes, 2012). Whereas Simmons (2004; 2008) considers that this modernisation policy process has created more autonomy for those involved with these New Leisure Trusts.

This thesis will observe and compare how two local authority sites in different countries have individually responded to the wider challenge of modernisation and its subsequent impact on the delivery of sport and leisure services. Each context is subject to its own home(national) and organisational policy community, due to the different geographical locations and devolution of sport as an area of policy making responsibility. This thesis will firstly examine, the case of Salford (England) and its previous manifestations under CCT before joining forces with partners in libraries and museums to develop an employee-owned business model. The second case of Flintshire (Wales) and its early service delivery under local authority, through to developing a modernised sport and leisure offering by reconfiguring its provision to retain viability, working with library, museum and play partners across the county.

Foucault would counter that using market-based policy making enforced through legally contracted funded arrangements demonstrates governmentality in action. Foucault used the term 'governmentality' to describe the governing of individuals, in this case the approach adopted encouraged employees to take on the running of a service or risk losing both the service and their jobs. Governmentality indicates an opportunity to extend further control over the wider community (both on the employee and customer level) through knowledge development and through the direction resources power can be gained by encouraging individuals to behave in a certain way, join a particular cohort and then measuring and scrutinising their behaviour.

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Transferring the service to the employee-owned model under a results-based contract increases the power of the parent authority and transforms power relations between organisation/funder, employer/employee and professional/customer. In the modernised sport delivery. there is a greater emphasis upon quantitative justification of work as part of NPM, thereby altering the power relationships involved as more classifying, surveying and disciplining individual subjectivities is required. Rose (1993,1994) reflects that the changes in public service create an illusion of autonomy, but the reality is this process develops opportunities for the state to 'govern by regulated choice' across families and communities.

In a recent literature review, Findlay-King (2020) observed that research around new forms of sport and leisure delivery are limited by their theoretical starting point. Other constraints include limitations of data sources and difficulty of access to politically sensitive situations. In addition, it being rare to juxtapose the views of, local

government employees, local politicians and the public using the facility. Where some of these perspectives have been compared, this thesis can demonstrate how power and knowledge interact (e.g., Rex 2018a; Rex et al. 2019; Reynolds 2017).

This work intends to fill this gap by demonstrating the juxtaposition of sports employees, local government employees and Home Nations Sport Councils staff to observe how they interact and how power is constructed in what has been described as a 'politically sensitive' (Interviewee 1, 2020) environment. This thesis will provide a clearer understanding of the impact of this new facet of community sport policy in action and offer some empirical understanding around the accountability of employee-owned models of sport and leisure delivery.

Piggin et al. (2009) work examined sport policy through the lens of Foucault and highlighted that policy can be used to both unfairly dominate, as well as lessen the dominating effects upon individuals and groups. In Wales, the Welsh Government recognise the pivotal role that sport, and leisure facilities play in developing both the wellbeing of the individual and community (Sport Wales, 2015). However, the state has a priority of contributing to an economically viable service, and as such the Minister for Sport in this Sport Wales (2016:3) notes:

The well-being and wellness of our citizens relies on their motivation, ability and opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis. The facilities that can provide those opportunities must be inclusive, attractive, accessible and efficient and they must be what people and communities need.

This thesis will explore how rhetoric used within national sport policy literature from both countries is enacted at the local level on the individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of community sport and leisure services at sites in Salford and Flintshire using Foucault's tools on governmentality and specifically concepts relating to knowledge and power, further exploration of the theoretical framework can be found below and in Chapter 3.

1.3 The Aims and Originality of this Thesis

This thesis considers as its main aim, to compare English and Welsh local authority responses to the modernisation of sport and leisure services. This thesis will explore the impact of the conflicting dialogue contained within modernisation policy making for public sector reform on actors involved in the process using the lens of Foucault as an organisational framework.

Drawing on Foucault's work around 'governmentality' which has been utilised to provide scientific exploration of social realms (Foucault, 1980).

What types of knowledges do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand . . .which speaking, discoursing subjects – which subjects of experience and knowledge – do you want to 'diminish' when you say: 'I who conduct this discourse am conducting a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist'? (Foucault, 1980: 85)

This thesis aims to offer insight into the subjects of experience and knowledge by conducting research on similarities and differences in organisational approaches to delivery and the degree to which the community (employees/customers/members) are disciplined by technologies of power (NPM practices/policy/contracts/objectives) and how they are subjectified in their daily work. This thesis will compare and contrast

examples from key policy documents and actor interviews across borders from employee-owned models, local government, sport and health partners.

An analysis of the interplay between knowledge and power is important as there both a theoretical and practitioner understanding of the role of sport in informing wider social and contributing to economic policy objectives (Piggin et al., 2009). To meet the aim outlined within this thesis, the following research questions will be answered Each case study has its own broad research question, namely:

How has Salford (English local authority) responded to modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How has Flintshire (Welsh unitary authority) responded to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How do these English and Welsh councils compare in their respective responses to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

The following objectives (Table 1.1 below) will be achieved:

Table 1.1 The Objectives for this Thesis

• To identify the key characteristics and key actors within (community) sport policy making to examine whether there is any converging or diverging factors as part of modernisation programmes implemented across English/Welsh local authority sites
• To identify and analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals have responded to modernisation within (community) sport policy following recent public sector reforms across English/Welsh local authority site
• To compare and contrast differing home countries perspectives on sport policy making in local government in England and Wales, by examining how modernisation has impacted upon decisions relating to community sport policy.
• To critically evaluate differing home countries perspectives and identify how any highlighted factors could impact upon future sport policy making.

Research conducted through the Foucauldian lens makes no attempts to understand how policy problems are solved (Piggin et al., 2009) therefore the purposes of these

objectives are to identify the relationships involved in order to articulate the underlying sources of knowledge and power and identify various other knowledges that 'assure the permanence and functioning of an institution' (Foucault, 198: 38).

Research will be conducted using mainly qualitative case study examples within Salford (England) and Flintshire (Wales) to explore in line with policy rhetoric the level and requirements of community involvement within these new delivery models for sport.

The first step in research should be to establish a focus for the project, or, as Merriam (1998:57) recommended, 'to raise a question about something that perplexes and challenges the mind'. The development, setting and pursuit of research questions within this work has been inextricably linked to the ontological and epistemological position in the work (Grix, 2010c: 69), to continue to create a directional logic towards the eventual research methods and sources.

The focus of this research is to critically evaluate an English and Welsh local authority response to modernised sport policy delivery. This work will uncover how local authorities have responded to the recent challenges of sport policy making within an era of changes to finance, governance and modes of delivery (King, 2014).

Following previous applications of 'hard' interpretivism (Grix, 2010; Goodwin and Grix, 2011; Grix and Phillpots, 2011), this thesis will collate case studies to explore these diverse sub-national policy making contexts (Laffin et *al*., 2007; Keating et *al.,* 2009) via the recruitment of and interviews with 'expert' participants and the collation of secondary data. The application of Foucault's thoughts around power and knowledge development was chosen as a theoretical framework to illustrate his interest in the governing of individuals. Governmentality is a process:

formed by institutions, procedure, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means of apparatuses of security (and including) a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses and a whole complex of knowledges (Foucault, 1994:219-220).

Foucault asserted that communities believed what their governments told them due to their use of positivistic methods in social problem and policy making rationale. Under modernised sport policy making, the use of quantitative technologies of government linked to NPM (auditing, surveying, contracts etc.) in a bid to recast the community into an 'imaginary space,' re-imagined but having a focus of individual responsibility and identification (Rose, 1996).

In Salford and Flintshire, the arrangements with their parent authority are promoted as 'formal-informal relationship' (Interviewee 10, 2020) linked to a

> 'model that had a high degree of social ownership as opposed to contracting, so we had a hybrid that we can track with a social enterprise that we have created. It ticked all the boxes for us in terms of values, modernisation and becoming more cost efficient' (Interviewee 10, 2020).

This employee-owned arrangement has increased the perception of autonomy in decision making but also the level of data and power of the local authority who now

have more knowledge of their delivery partner than under the public service when sport and leisure was considered to be a 'forgotten service' (interviewee 2, 2020) in both Salford and Flintshire. Naughton (2005:55) observes that evidence-based policies are a 'key technique of governmentality,' in this case if employee-owned business produce 'evidence' to support the local authority decision to reform the sport and leisure service, they will be 'allowed' to participate in policy making process.

The contract between the parent authority and provider is constantly under review, if the provider does not meet the standards required, they may lose their privileged access and 'remain on the margins of political decision making' (Naughton, 2005: 66). This thesis aims to use Foucault's work to highlight some of the conflicting fields in sport policy making and how NPM tools are utilised as a 'technology of government' to aid knowledge collection to influence the work of the business and address wider social problems in other policy agendas. Governmentality offers a lens to observe meanings within public policy and create an understanding of the how/what/why to aid production of results. Previous research by King (2009;2011) has identified that sport policy has offered on the one hand offers (in theory) empowerment to those that are involved with alternative delivery models of sport and leisure, together with (in practice) maintaining influence in delivery through techniques of control.

This is the first research conducted on employee-owned models which make comparisons across England and Wales. This initial offering may be because the roll out of the service is a recent occurrence within Wales and so this thesis aims to fill this gap with a small contribution of understanding towards some of the issues involved

with community members who also act as employees and partners to deliver this re-imagined public sport and leisure service.

The thesis will explore responses from key actors and partners involved across two employee-owned co-operative sites to identify and analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals have responded to modernisation within (community) sport policy following recent public sector reforms across English/Welsh local authority sites. These two case studies will examine the impact of changes to structural, policy and practices resultant from local government and subsequent sport reforms (as devolved and distinct areas of policy making responsibility).

The empirical section in this work utilises a mainly qualitative approach across these two case studies accessing publicly available materials and ten interviews conducted at the strategic level with a number of senior managers who were involved in the decision making around the management of leisure assets and community sport programmes. The interviews included mangers at the case study sites, within the local authority, Sport England and Sport Wales.

Policy decisions behind the delivery of community sport and leisure services can cover a broad remit; therefore, this thesis concentrates on national and organisational modernisation policies impacting upon the delivery of community sport services. In particular, the decision-making affecting the management of leisure assets and delivery of generic community sport programmes that are designed to increase sports participation in alternative delivery models of sport and leisure (King, 2013:349). King (2011; 2014) and Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) identified that these decisions can be

due to economic and political influences, this chapter will consider some of these factors within a short theoretical rationale later in the work. Some socio historical factors will be considered in this review due to the different country locations of the case studies.

The following section will introduce an abridged theoretical discussion from the literature designed to offer a primary rationale for these objectives. Further exploration of the themes raised within this Chapter will be explored across relevant areas within a more detailed literature review in Chapter 2 and 3.

1.4 Theoretical rationale for the thesis

Sport policy continues to remain a turbulent context due to its changing focus, which makes it subject to what Houlihan and White (2002: 206) describe as the 'whim and caprice' of the latest Secretary of State Minister for Sport. Green and Houlihan (2006:47) pose that 'whatever the reason for government interest in sport, central to the successful implementation of modernisation remains the relationship between relevant government departments and national governing bodies,' indicating that the management and delivery of sport takes places through an array of partnerships and networks.

This work recognises the modernisation of public sport and leisure service as synonymous with what Foucault refers to as a 'governmentality.' Governmentality refers to the technologies that govern others, exploring the methods in which governments and other actors draw on knowledge to make policies that regulate and discipline individuals/communities (Bevir:2010:423) 'who can govern, what governing is, what or who is governed' (Gordon, 1991: 3). Therefore, Foucault's work will be employed within thesis to understand whether there was any converging or diverging

factors around the partners' response to modernisation policy making within both contexts.

Modernisation as a 'conduct of conduct' synonymous with governmentality is important as it will reveal the ways in which forms of management such as (in this case New Public Management) are being presented as an opposite in rhetoric as freedom and empowerment (Bulley and Sokhi-Bulley, 2014). Public sector reform as part of modernisation policy making encourages partnership working to share resources and in the case of local authority, encourage 'active citizenship' as a means to rebuild public confidence in institutional decision making (Stoker, 2009). Despite a lack of evidence that collaboration leads to desired outcomes, governments continue to emphasize its importance in the design and delivery of public services (Dickinson and Sullivan, 2014; Denhardt and Aristigueta, 2011). In particular, the 2011-2016 Welsh Programme for Government reemphasized the importance of partnership working to strengthen local democracy, achieve continuous improvement in public services, and develop more efficient and effective forms of service delivery (Welsh Government, 2011).

Rose and Miller (1992:175) propose that governing cannot be explained solely by focussing on strategies and tactics around standardised control methods. Governing is enacted through 'assorted attempts at the calculated administration of diverse aspects of conduct through countless, often competing, local tactics of education, persuasion, inducement, management, incitement, motivation and encouragement.' (p.175)

Gordon, 1999 and Dean, 1991 add that governing is made possible through a variety of partnerships with a range of actors across the profit and non-profit sectors. The recent emphasis in Wales and England on collaboration not just between public services, but also between public sector and third sector providers has resulted in a disjointed approach to delivery with organisations retaining their own approaches to delivery, performance targets and lines of accountability (Martin et al., 2013; Oldbell 3, 2015).

Commentators (Grix, 2009; Goodwin and Grix, 2011 and Phillpots et al., 2010) argue that the application of modernisation policy in other areas of sport suggest that rather than create autonomy for these partnership networks, this context has never been so tightly managed, monitored and controlled by the state. Direct instruction from sport policy to engage with partnership relationships which are underpinned by contracts with performance indicators suggest that the previous freedoms that allowed local authorities to develop their own sport's policy have never been so tightly controlled by central government (Houlihan and White; 2002; King, 2009; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013:130). Evidence of this level of control is demonstrated by Sport Wales:

Local Government must establish fit for the future local and regional infrastructure plans that are, where appropriate, integrated with wider estates strategies and are supported or endorsed by others that might include Welsh Government, National Governing Bodies, Sport Wales, Education establishments and other facility providers (Sport Wales, 2015: 7).

This thesis will explore the effectiveness of policy maker's relationships and how individuals have responded across the professional and institutional level to understand similarities, differences and relative factors involved. This word will collect

data from two 'employee owned' leisure trust sites (1 in England and 1 in Wales) to understand and explain the impact of modernisation in the management and delivery of sport policy outcomes.

Employee-owned business have gained increasing interest from all sides within government as part of a 'plurality of ownership models 'representing a means to retain financial interest and influence through funding but reduce costs and risks associated with service delivery across aged stock and increasing overheads.

Findlay-King et al. (2018) delineates the asset transfer of leisure services into 'generations.' In England, the first generation was a timeous process led by employees with a voluntary board. The second generation is volunteer led. Whilst conversely in Wales, the impact of the asset of the transfer of leisure services has not been explored within the literature due to the contemporary nature of its occurrence.

King (2009:19) suggests that it is imperative to understand the key characteristics that influence the context when examining sport policy through a theoretical lens. Therefore, in line with Houlihan (2005:176) and King (2013; 2014), this thesis explores the evolution of two 'first generation' asset transfer sites and the impact of decision making within the sports and leisure context. By doing so, this thesis will respond to the criticism that academics and practitioners often know more about the politics of a reform than about its effectiveness (Ashworth et al., 2010; Laegreid et al., 2014; Pollitt, 2009)

In line with the work of King (2009) who explored the modernisation of leisure services in England, this chapter introduces an initial overview of relevant issues within the theoretical context around the following areas: economic, political, social, and historical, to illustrate related factors that influence the evolution of these

organisations' creation (across England and Wales) and illustrate the rationale for conducting further research within this area.

1.4.1 Economic Context

New Public Management and its shift towards the 'accountingization' of public administration heralded a brave new world to improve the delivery of state-funded services (Power and Laughlin, 1992:13 Hood, 1995). Lapsley (2009:1) describes NPM as 'a set of management techniques drawing on private sector performance criteria and practices' used to improve performance. Christensen and Laegreid (2011) attributes the NPM 'phenomenon' that became popular with neo-liberal forces and world leaders as being fuelled by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in their conflicting, *Reinventing Government* book. The book outlined how government improvements could be made possible if the public sector were privatised, creating a model for leaders to allow market forces to deliver public services.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) acknowledged that whilst it was commonplace for the inefficiency in public services argument to provide a rationale for reform, it could not explain the differing NPM implementation patterns across the globe. Kickert (2011) and The United Nations (UN, 2011) relate the operation of a Westminster style democratic government as key to the success and promotion of NPM in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada. Whilst in other areas of the world, authors make similar claims; Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland (Williamson, 1989) together with the Napoleonic states of France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy (Ongaro, Kickert, 2011). Conversely Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) identified that differences to NPM public service reform programme implementation resulted from

contextual factors; structure, culture and demographics which could enhance or obstruct their delivery.

Therefore, this thesis will identify if there are different approaches to modernisation within English and Welsh local government to assess its impact upon on the execution of grassroots sport policy. Given the centrality of the 'modernisation' process to this thesis, it seems pertinent to begin with the question of what it denotes. Bevir (2010: 895), for example, describes modernisation theory as drawing on a dichotomous paradigm in which human societies are either traditional or modern. Britain's role within the Industrial Revolution (Richards and Smith, 2002: 24) reflected the growth of 'modern' societies, integrated workforces and mass political participation that were dependent upon efficient leadership.

Conversely, 'traditional societies' resisted industrialisation changes, operating under blinkered democracy with simple economic and social structures (Bevir, 2010: 895). In short, advocates of modernisation theory argue that the emergence of modern values within society form the basis for the development of capitalist growth (Werner, 1995; Stark, 2006). Whereas Foucault (1979) would argue that the rise of a modern society is upheld through state led technologies of power intended to discipline individual practices to increase wider efficiencies. This thesis will compare and contrast differing home countries perspectives on sport policy making in local government in England and Wales, by examining how modernisation has impacted upon decisions relating to community sport policy.

1.4.2 Political Context

Local government is still the largest provider of sports facilities in the UK but works alongside other providers from the private, public and third sector (Mackintosh, 2021). In this mixed economy of sport and leisure the position of the local authority was established as the largest provider of sporting opportunities in the UK, following on from a period of capital works during the 1970s. Yet, the scope of its delivery and the financial amount each service received was somewhat of a postcode lottery. Commonalities in the public sport and leisure service included, owning, and operating a wide range of facilities, employing sports development officers in roles to increase sports participation across local communities and distributing funding and providing additional support to local clubs (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013:128).

Despite the well-established nature of the service, its non-discretionary status has equated to the localised sport and leisure service's position being constantly under threat of 'retention, revision or curtailment '(King, 2014:349) as part of wider restructuring across local government. In 2013, Widdop et al., (2018:2) identified that £64 billion was removed from the public expenditure through austerity driven policy (The Centre of Welfare Reform, 2013) with a further 20% cut in expenditure between 2014-2018 (Croucher, 2013) resulting in cuts to the DCMS of 20% (Widdop et al., 2018). Yet, sport and leisure creates an unusual position to deliver added value as a local government service, due to its capacity to income generate via service delivery and occupy a relatively small amount of the overall local government budget.

Over the past 30 years, a succession of UK governments has implemented public sector reform on a thin evidence base to mixed results or customer complaints (Hood and Dixon, 2015; Burton, 2013; Pollitt, 2013). Hood (1991:3-5) presented NPM as a 'marriage of two different ideas'. On one side there was 'new institutional economics 'which sought to promote public service reform away from bureaucratic structures and integrate the use of contestability, user choice, transparency, and close concentration

on incentive structures. Whereas managerialism reflected reform based upon autonomous scientific management principles which were required to achieve positive results.

Countries that implemented NPM did so through an individualised framework to suit their own 'trajectory' of reform (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). Furthermore, the degree of NPM penetration varied according to sectors and policies. Therefore, offering further evidence to counter the narrative from Osborne and Gaebler (1992), who portrayed NPM as a unification policy and 'moveable feast' dependent upon the country context. The existence of evidence-based policy making underpins many public policy arenas such as sport. applying positivist techniques within NPM serves to prove the existence or efficiency of related decision making. (Naughton, 2005).

Christopher Hood (1987; 1990; 1991; 1995; 2001 and 2007), as a seminal author on NPM argues (1995; 2007:96) that there is a distinctive 'English exceptionalism' with its 'home grown' interpretation of modernisation or what is described as 'preoccupation' with 'public service management by numbers'. For some people, management by numbers represents a uniquely English cure to public service management illness which provides target/ranking and intelligence metrics with intended and unintended effects upon funding outcomes (Hood, 2007:95 and Pollitt, 2007). Yet, due to relative brief history of the Welsh Assembly and limited scholarly content less is known about how modernisation and NPM has affected sport services in Wales (Bolton and Martin, 2013).

Firstly, for Hood (2006) the UK, demonstrated a unique position in comparison to other countries, with its focus on performance metrics. Secondly, both authors (Hood, 2006

and Pollitt, 2007) suggest that NPM was borne in the West from an English first language of hybrid interventions which experiences cross border/level translations in order to be operationalised at the grassroots resulting in differing emphases and priorities across contexts. Pollitt (2007) also emphasizes the unique link between the use of state sponsored performance rankings, league and subsequent funding awards which seems particularly prevalent in England in comparison to other home nations where this facet of NPM has been rejected.

Regardless of geographical location, from a Foucauldian perspective, the application of governmental technologies relating to NPM created opportunities for the state to influence the way that service providers operated. The process of quantification of practice can be as powerful as policy itself and operationalised through technologies such as target setting, contracts and performance indicators which are evident in the relationship between these employees' owned businesses and their parent authorities but are designed to create definitive behaviour change (Rydin, 2021).

For this thesis, the literature explores modernisation approaches in English and Welsh home nations. Several studies (Turley et al., 2015; Mackinnon, 2015; Andrews and Van de Wale, 2013; Andrews and Martin, 2010) compare public service reform and performance improvement practice across the UK. Existing literature researched home nation local governments to evaluate their performance assessment regimes (Martin et al., 2013), scrutiny arrangements (Nutley et al., 2012) and improvement regimes (Downes, 2012). However, all work identified distinct 'home grown' differences between the composite nations and their delivery of modernisation and public service reform. This thesis presents an opportunity to critically evaluate differing

home countries perspectives to develop modernisation policy in the context of sport and leisure, with a view to highlight any issues that could impact future policy making.

This thesis topic represents a contemporary theme for research that compares the impact of existing modernisation on local authorities' sport services in England and Wales. The literature discussed previously has identified that the process can be different or similar, depending upon the context and a range of other factors.

Power (2003:1) compares NPM as a positivist approach to public service management and a top down 'audit explosion' that needs change. Power's (2003) often quoted work on the 'audit society' (1997:1) suggests a hierarchical approach to public sector management which runs counter to the shared dispersal of power amongst networks as promoted within the governance narrative and de-centred approach as described by Bevir and Rhodes (2006;2008).

Mark Bevir and Rod Rhodes (2006; 2008), in their governance narrative' work, have described how public sector reforms have attempted to reduce hierarchy at the policy-making level, improve the delivery of services and encourage wider community involvement (Rhodes, 1994;1995; 1997 and Bevir and Rhodes, 2007).

Public sector reforms say the authors, have resulted in a 'leaner,' 'hollowed out' and 'de-centred' state, supported by autonomous multiplying internal networks (Rhodes,1997:15). The de-centred approach has attracted further comment in several studies (Grix, 2010; Grix and Phillpots, 2011; Goodwin and Grix, 2011) focusing on sport policy, this work indicates that while the decentred approach offered a welcome return of the 'voice' to governance research, there was limited scope to consider the impact of existing structures and institutions on agent's beliefs and actions (Goodwin and Grix, 2011:551) nor was notice paid to "the kinds of knowledge and power through

which social activity is regulated and through which actors – citizens, workers, institutions – are constituted as self-disciplining subjects" (Newman, 2001:20) due to its elitist perspective (Marsh, et al., 2014:343e)

Foucault would disagree with the existence of a dominant state, preferring to observe its power as 'decentred' through mobile power relations, 'the state has no heart, as we well know, but not just in the sense that it has no feelings, either good or bad, but it has no heart in the sense that it has no interior' (Foucault, 2008: 90) the perception of autonomy within new structures remain open to interpretation and forms the basis for the interrogation of this thesis and the observation of the network of power relationships therein

[Power] is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization. And not only individuals circulate between its threads; they are always also the elements of its articulation (Foucault, 1980:71). In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application (Foucault 1980a: 98).

In the case of modernisation of sport policy making, the local authority may decide to utilise NPM as part of managing sport and leisure on what is considered to be an efficient way of delivering the service. From a Foucauldian perspective, the application of NPM in this context demonstrates an application of a disciplinary power from an economic perspective latterly described as biopolitics. Foucault asserts that the governing of a population can be made easier through the application of bio-politics, the form of rule used to analyse, classify but above all control bodies in the community.

The premise behind biopower is to promote self-regulated individuals who adhere to the goals of production by developing capitalistic goals of production (through labour) and consumption (of goods and services) Veyne argues, Foucault understands power as "the ability to control the behaviour of others without exerting physical pressure, to get people to walk without physically placing their feet and legs in the necessary positions" (Veyne 2010: 94).

Therefore, this thesis provides an opportunity to identify and analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals responsible for sport and recreation service delivery have been disciplined by delivering on related sport policy outcomes following recent public sector reforms across English/Welsh local authority sites.

1.4.3 Socio-historical Context

Despite similarities and differences between public services in Wales and England, following devolution in 1997, the Assembly rejected the fundamentals elements of competition and customer choice as unworkable. Their focus was to create a Welsh model of collaborative public service reform which rather than emphasizing competition through performance regimes, focuses on collaboration between public services, auditors, and the Welsh Government to share resources and to maximise efficiencies (Haubrick and Maclean; 2006; Martin and Webb, 2009). This thesis compares data within respective community sport policies to examine whether there are any regional variations in the outputs measured or techniques applied across England and Wales.

While Wales is often portrayed as being overshadowed by its English neighbours, historical narratives can differ from those that describe sufferance under English

supremacy or part of a colonising force that dominated across the globe (Aaron and Williams, 2005). In further historical work by Williams (1985), Wales has been described as an artefact that can be subject to dynamic re-interpretation through its culture as a concept to coalesce and create a national identity. With evidence from literature pointing to sport being used as a unifying political medium to counter mass reluctance to attempts to implement nationwide modernisation policies (Johnes 2002; Harris, 2007; Holden, 2011).

This thesis uncovers a precis of the literature relating to sport in Wales, limited to diverse topics such as a history of sport in Wales (Johnes, 2005; Leeworthy, 2014); sport in Wales and identity (Johnes, 2000; Harris, 2007; Holden, 2011); and sport for children and young people in Wales (Griffiths and Rainer, 2009; Smith et al. 2009; Rainer et al., 2015). However, the development of sport in Wales is discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

Some contemporary work is evident in the literature about sports policy and delivery in an era of public sector reform in Wales. Bolton and colleagues have contributed to the debate by examining the impact on local authority staff (Bolton and Fleming, 2007; Bolton et al., 2008). It lacked the comparative range of including experiences from other countries.

Recent work conducted on behalf of Sport Wales have sought to identify children and young people's extracurricular activities (Bryant et al., 2016); theoretical evaluation models for funded programmes (Bolton et al., 2018) and the use of the Welsh language within the community sports clubs (Evans et al., 2019). Sport Wales (2012;2016) explored local governments' idea to consider community asset transfer

of its ageing sport/leisure stock. In its key messages, Sport Wales (2016:7) suggested that:

> Local Government needs to…careful consideration being given to essential future (sport/leisure) service priorities…Local Authorities should first review the stock and explore the most cost-effective and economically viable solutions to support future needs.

This thesis represents the first opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the favoured Welsh Government (2015:4) 'mutual' model delivering sport and leisure as this approach has been perceived as an alternative to privatisation, redundancies, or service closure. In Wales, 'the local authority owned and run leisure centre will eventually become an extinct species, yet without further research the success of this model of remains to be seen.

Further research and policy analysis are not distinctly Welsh ailments, as both issues need further addressing within the sports policy community (Coalter, 2007). This thesis provides a timely contribution to the limited amount of literature on public service reforms on (community) sport in Wales. It compares and contrasts differing home countries perspectives on sport policymaking in local government in England and Wales by examining how NPM has impacted decisions relating to community sport policy. It is as yet unknown whether modernisation in the Welsh sport policy community has resulted in hierarchical networks as in England (Grix, 2009; Grix, 2010; Goodwin and Grix, 2011 and Phillpots et al., 2010) or whether they take a more collaborative approach described by Haubrich and Maclean, 2006 and Andrews and Martin, 2010.

Global sport for development operates within a holistic backdrop of neoliberalism, as a worldwide ideology, NPM as a governance approach, and modernisation as a policy context (Hood, 1995, Christensen and Laegried, 2001, Finlayson, 2003; Mackintosh et al. 2014). From a UK perspective, the modernisation of sport policy was explored through the frameworks of NPM (Green, 2009; Iversen and Cuskelly, 2015) and New Managerialism (NM) (Grix, 2009), where debates centre around the subsequent reconfiguration of provision and accountability within the delivery of services (Grix, 2010; Goodwin and Grix, 2011 and Phillpots et al., 2010).

This thesis focuses on modernising community sport policymaking at the local authority level. An established framework (NPM) is in operation in England, and little is known in the literature about the effect of the collaborative model on this context within Wales. Therefore, it seems instinctive to use the NPM model as an organising principle to compare the effect of modernisation on community sport making across both countries.

In the previous discussion, which introduced the theoretical premise behind modernisation and its implication within sport policy, whilst there is still more ground to cover, there is some level of diversity in the application of modernisation and between public sector management in previous work conducted in England (Hood, 2007) and Wales (Martin and Webb, 2009; Haubrich and Maclean, 2006). The following section will introduce the structure of the thesis.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The next chapter reflects the contextual element of the work by discussing historical literature review which examines sport policymaking across England and Wales from 1960 through to 2015 and considers the impact that successive governments have had on the delivery of sport in respective countries. Chapter 3 provides an opportunity to review theoretical literature exploring modernisation in the community sport and leisure across England and Wales. This chapter explores Foucault's work on power and the use of new public management practices to develop self-disciplining citizens within this policy sphere. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and research design selected for this thesis and presents an opportunity to present the decision making involved from the ontological deliberation and beyond. It also demonstrates the value of using a case study approach to present the thick description (Geertz, 1973) and the reality of actor's lives. Chapter's 5 and 6 present the findings from the individual case studies set in Salford and Flintshire, respectively. Each of the chapters offer sporting context and are divided into three parts which are themes common to both sites and supported by primary and secondary evidence. Chapter 7 focusses on drawing out some of the key similarities and differences between the two sites and how these compare with Foucault's theoretical framework in a final discussion chapter. Finally, Chapter 8 offers the final conclusions in this research, along with recommendations for further study and personal learning reflections. Each chapter ends with a conclusion of the distinctive elements and key features of that part of the thesis. The thesis begins by presenting a contextual overview of sport in the UK, England/ Wales and relevant issues relating to the topics covered within the work to set the scene for the overall piece.

1.6 Conclusion

This thesis aims to explore the impact of modernisation on local authority sport policy making in England and Wales. Chapter 1 has introduced salient debates within the modernisation of public sport and leisure services, offered a rationale for the work, and provided a structure for overall thesis.

Chapter 2 – The History of Sport Policy Making in England and Wales

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an historical overview to sport policy making in England and Wales and offer a contextual background to this thesis. Chapter 2 will highlight the impact of modernisation policy on sport from the 1960s up to the present day. It is important to understand the roots of policy making, as like other public policy areas, sport policy making is an ever-changing field (Houlihan,1997; Green, 2004;2006; Bevir and Rhodes, 2016).

This thesis represents one of the first attempts to capture the changes in interpretation of modernisation and delivery of sport policy between differing home nations within the UK. What is not clear from Bevir, and Rhodes (2016) is the recommended source for this type of historical reflection. Hood (2007) and Martin et al, (2010) emphasised the effect of and differences in political ideologies that appeared to be contributing to public sector reforms conducted across England and Wales. Chapter 2 explores how ideology has continued to influence sport policy making and practices whilst demonstrating an outward appearance of research being the favoured tool of the state policy makers. (Bulmer, 1982, Davies and Nutley, 2001).

The historical development of public sport and leisure has been discussed at some length by Coalter (1990); Henry (2001) and Robinson (2004). The consensus within the literature suggests that key dates for early state intervention in sport are 1842: Bath and Wash Houses Act with the development of swimming. In 1937 'The Physical Training and Recreation Act' awarded the power to local authorities to determine their own level of sport and recreation provision.

Although, in 1960, the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) appointed John Wolfenden as Chair to a Committee on Sport to examine the status of sport in the UK. This 'Wolfenden Report' heralded a raft of changes during that decade that began to promote sport and leisure as a unique policy arena in need of improvement. However, even at this early stage the committee recognised the potential contradicting influence of sport policy:

whilst the introduction of policy may mean gains in efficiency both domestically and internationally, it would mean an increase in 'official' control and in the, to us, incongruous juxtaposition of departmental control and private leisure time activity (CCPR, 1960:97).

For local authorities, this time echoed a period to consolidate sport and recreation as a discrete area of responsibility and to standardise methods of service delivery (Houlihan, 2015:52). As this thesis will capture the impact of modernisation policy at community level, Lowndes and Wilson (2003) recommend an understanding of the contradictions within the agenda and the implications for local government. The existence of such different variants across the two countries provides what Martin et al. (2010:37) describe as a 'social science laboratory.' Thus, this allows the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of modernisation in sport policy to be analysed in more depth across the home nations further on in the thesis.

In Bolton and Fleming's (2007:727) work around modernisation of the local authority sport delivery in Wales, it was identified that cultural traditions were central to political decision making. This thesis represents the first attempt to compare the ideology contained within the modernisation of sport in England and Wales and its enactment within administrative structures at local authority level.

In conclusion, Chapter 2 will provide a historical context to sport policy making within England and Wales and is split into four sections: I) section one recounts the period of leadership between 1960-1998 (Wolfenden to Devolution) and the impact to changes in sport policy making across the UK; ii) section two will describe the raft of changes and devolution of sport policy making to home nation sports councils and county sport partnerships in England from 1998-2010 (under New Labour); iii) section three outlines the fortunes for sport in England from (2010 – 2015) ; iv) section four provides a brief precis of the history of sport policy making in Wales from (1998 – 2015).

2.1 1960 - 1979

During the mid-20th Century, the perception of sport as a tool of social control in England and Wales began to take shape (Coalter *et al,* 1986; Houlihan and White, 2002; Green; 2006 and Bloyce *et al,* 2008). It would be impossible to trace all these changes during the last century, as sport policy making has been somewhat inconsistent (Roche, 1993; Houlihan, 1997; Green, 2003) Key sport policy directives from 1960s to date will be discussed below, as the 1960s were generally considered as an era when sport became an area of 'legitimate government responsibility' (Houlihan, 1991: 27). Albeit a time when sport policy making across Wales followed England by virtue of appointments and policy decisions within the British Government. A factor that Coghlan with Webb (1990:165) describe as 'an odd constitutional happening that never ceases to bewilder.'

During the 1950s it was apparent that the Government lacked a clear youth and sport policy for the home nations. Therefore, a key partner in sport policy making was the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR), a state funded alliance of the many governing bodies within sport that was accepted at regional and local level (House of

Commons, 1957). The CCPR commissioned an independent committee in 1960, with Sir John Wolfenden as Chair, to examine the status of sport in the UK. Coghlan with Webb (1990) note that the home nations were permitted advisers to the committee and each devoted separate chapters, with common issues found across all Home Nations (Wolfenden Report, 1960:89).

The report findings of 'Sport and the Community' (Wolfenden Report, 1960) were made widely available to 'statutory and voluntary bodies involved with sport' (Wolfenden Report, 1960: iii), proposing a plan for the modernisation of sport delivery would inform the basis of sport policy making for future generations (Houlihan and White, 2002:18). Coalter *et al*. (1986: 46) considered that the report offered 'efficiency-based reforms over major structural change'. On the question of regional sports councils within the Home Nations in addition to a National Sports Council, the Committee felt that 'it should do more than call attention to these issues. (Wolfenden Report, 1960: 104).

 'The Wolfenden Report' (1960) identified the so called 'Wolfenden Gap'; an end to sports participation for many young people at the age that they leave school due to poor links between education and local clubs. The Report (1960:4) highlighted the need for and potential positive benefits of a 'positive play element' within young people's lives, which if neglected would be to the detriment of individuals and society. These concerns presented within the 'Wolfenden Gap' thesis eventually became part of future sport policy making and sport development work (Mcintosh and Charlton, 1985; Bloyce and Smith, 2010:31).

 'Sport and the Community,' highlighted underfunding within the sector but fell short of promoting excessive state involvement to address the issues raised. The report

'mirrored the classic Beveridge tradition of the time, where state activity was only relevant as an act of voluntarism.' (Coalter *et al*.,1986: 46). Instead, Wolfenden's Committee favoured establishing a Sports Development Council to promote sport and distribute funding amongst sporting organisations and governing bodies (e.g., the CCPR and the British Olympic Association).

Funding sources were designed to encourage self-reliance within communities, to protect the 'rich and varied resources' within the voluntary infrastructure of sport (Wolfenden Report, 1960: 53; Houlihan, 2015:88) and to reduce state control (Coalter *et al,* 1986:47; Houlihan, 2015:88). However, the initiation of the Sport Council as the distributor of funding was to prove a move towards encroaching on the autonomy of local authority sport which was beginning to become popular at this time (Houlihan and White, 2002:18).

Following reluctance by MacMillan's Conservative government to support the findings of the Wolfenden Report, the election of a Labour led government by Harold Wilson (1964-1970; 1974-1976) saw further modernisation of the organisation of sport and sport policy making (Henry and Bramham, 1993; Houlihan, 1997 and Green and Houlihan, 2005). For Hargreaves (1985: 221) there was a realisation by the British government of the potential external benefits in adopting a centrally funded sport policy and a traditional pluralist approach to the organisation of sport (Henry, 2001:18): to address youth unrest at home and to improve its athletes sporting performance internationally.

Additionally, a third pressure was coming from effective lobbying from national governing bodies for increased opportunities for sport and recreation (Houlihan, 1991: 27). Initially, government employed a pluralist approach to the organisation of sport

which would see individuals having their sport/recreational needs met through the market/voluntary organisations and only state intervention in extreme circumstances (Henry, 2001:18). The Wilson Government sought to extend state intervention in sport and leisure service provision for all who may be disadvantaged by the pluralist approach. Wilson's welfare reformist approach in the modernisation of sport, whilst demonstrating 'the right of citizenship' for all, sought to support the pluralist approach, rather than supersede it (Bramham and Henry, 1991).

In 1965, the formation of the Advisory Sport Councils (ASC) was developed to co-ordinate regional and local sport providers (including local authority representatives) in England, Scotland, and Wales but not the independent body recommended by Wolfenden (Coghlan with Webb, 1990). In the beginning, ASCs were concerned with developing facilities and later were involved in the delivery of programmes.

The Wilson Government was committed to public sector reform and a strong ethos of centralisation; the ASC was tasked with advising government on spending priorities and developing amateur sport (Houlihan, 1991:89). Green and Houlihan (2006b:55) consider the establishment of the ASC to be the first serious indication of government involvement in English and Welsh sport, as grants were now awarded upon achieving objectives laid out by the Council. By the time Wilson's Labour lost power in 1970, the Welsh (and Scottish) Advisory Councils had both become integral parts of the sport policy community.

The Conservative Prime Minister and yachtsman, Ted Heath (1970-1974) continued to modernise sport during his tenure. In 1972, the Great British Sport Council replaced the ASC, followed by home nations Sport Councils with (semi-autonomous) Royal Charter status (McDonald, 2005:594). For Sports Council for Wales, this meant a

permanent home at the National Sport Centre for Wales in Cardiff and the opportunity to act as the local and national funding agency for sport in Wales (Hill, 2010).

Despite this distinctive opportunity to organise sport, Roche (1993:78) described the developing sport environment as 'one of the most divided, confused, and conflictive policy communities in British politics. Phillpots (2011: 132) highlights the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) who represented interests of National Governing Bodies and the British Olympic Association's (BOA) resistance to any external interference from the new GB Sports Council (and Sport Councils for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) who were supported by exchequer funding. Coghlan and Webb (1990:154) describe the move towards individual home nation sports councils as a 'fundamental mistake' for the future, by each organisation as fears were in place that these various Councils could result in the dissolution of the CCPR and losing control over national sport centres (Bloyce and Smith, 2010: 34). Coghlan who was a senior figure at GB Sports Council during this period talked of 'overlapping and costly duplication' (Coghlan and Webb, 1990:154). In later work, this partnership framework, particularly between the CCPR and the Sports Councils had resulted in further instability and a perception by Green and Houlihan (2005:54) that sport 'bedevilled by a lack of coherent voice'. Bloyce and Smith (2010: 35) note that despite the Sport Council's Royal Charter status granting it arm's length impartiality from the government, it was difficult to retain independence from external political influence and policy direction.

During the 1970's and 1980's, the Chair of the Sports Council for Wales was Lieutenant Colonel Harry Llewelyn who was also a member of the GB Sports Council to ensure consistency of delivery between the two countries (Keech, 2003). During this time, Wales followed the English model for sport development, albeit with limited

resources. Whilst Houlihan and Lindsey (2012:88) note that the Welsh Office (SCW funders) generally retained an arm's length relationship with sporting activities in Wales, this, however, left sport to become an area of neglect.

Across England and Wales, the rising cost of extending the welfare state provision under Labour, meant a restructuring of local authority services and cap on capital spending (Henry, 2001). But the now larger authorities had the financial might of Sports Council grants to develop extra sport facilities. The 1970s appeared to be a 'boom time' for sport and leisure as 'Sport for All' offered career opportunities and resources for sport and leisure professionals to develop elite and mass participation sport (Department of Environment 1975; McIntosh and Charlton, 1985; Coghlan with Webb, 1990; Houlihan, 1997; Houlihan and White, 2002: 28) However, Coalter (1998:28) warned that the development of the 'leisure profession' created through the social welfare approach risked removing the autonomy of the individual in policy making. As a raft of professionals and bureaucrats could 'define, measure, and cater for people's needs,' thereby undermining the participatory objective of leisure itself.

Sport for All policy or 'recreation as welfare' (Robinson, 2004:9) objectives set by local councils were generally targeted to include widening participation in specific underrepresented groups (young people, the elderly, women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, and lower socio-economic groups) in addition with raising participation for all (McIntosh and Charlton, 1985 Henry, 2001; King, 2013). The White Paper 'Sport and Recreation' (DOE, 1975) gave specific instruction to Sport/Regional Councils for resources to be directed to community projects in priority areas (Houlihan, 2014:99).

Consequently, the role of local authorities as sole providers (primarily) of community-based sport and leisure facilities was established. However, funding for Sport for All programmes were often competing against demands for the development of elite sport (Green, 2004; 2006 and King, 2013) and Houlihan (2014:99) questions whether it became anything more than just a slogan.

During the late 1970s, Robinson (2004) describes how the Welfare State was facing criticism for alleged financial and performance mismanagement which was resulting in increasing public taxes. An era of 'retrenchment' in local authority followed the economic crises of the 1970s which impacted upon the development of sport and leisure policy goals at community level (Henry and Bramham, 1993; King, 2009:168).

The Yates Committee, in 1976 appointed by a Labour Government, reported on the standards within sport and leisure management in England and Wales, identifying that professional employed within local government lacked the business skills to deliver efficient public services. Despite the recommendation (DOE,1984:84) and establishment of a professional body the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM), Yates' findings were delivered to a largely unsympathetic Conservative audience, following a change in government (Houlihan, 2014:61).

A radical change to the management of local government services came in 1979 with the election of Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party into government. Henry (2001:116) describes the several shifts in local government sport and leisure policy that saw a steer away from the welfare state model of providing subsidised facilities. Firstly, expenditure was reduced and secondly, evidence presented by the Audit Commission (1989) questioned whether the public service 'model' of subsidised facilities was working to attract the most disadvantaged groups. In general, the

Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher demonstrated little interest in sport, calling on neo liberal or market-based solutions for social problems (Chaney, 2015; Houlihan and White, 2002: 28).

2.1.2 1979 -1990

Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative government (1979 – 1990) were keen to continue the modernisation of local government by reducing its size and reinvigorating the remainder by integrating private sector management practices (Burton, 2013). Given her stance on the welfare state, it was not surprising that sport was not given a priority status in terms of funding or ministerial clout. The Thatcher years (1979–90) saw a change in fortune for sport, resulting in a shift from the traditional support afforded to it from the welfare state to more market-based initiatives which were designed to reduce the role of the state and dependency (Oakley and Green, 2001) or as a politicised policy tool to address wider social problems (Coghlan, 1990).

During the Conservative's tenure in government, the sport policy sector was described as 'one of the most conflictive policy communities in British politics' which lacked any lead in sport development strategy (Roche, 1993:78). Despite appointing a like-minded (neoliberal) succession of Ministers for Sport and Chairs of Sports Council, the government involvement within Sport Councils' worked counter to their oft quoted rhetoric of 'rolling back the state.' The four home nations Sports Councils policy documents suggested focusing on participation target groups and developing elite sport - thereby presenting a different vision for sport than that of the government's market or political agenda.

Green (2004:369;2006) notes that a key sport policy event came with the publication of 'Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years' (Sports Council, 1982). Under the Conservative government, the rhetoric of a welfare-based approach to the

organisation of sport continued but with a targeted focus. Attention shifted from facility provision to attempting to attract wider participation 'on people passing from school to the 13-24 age group and 45-59 years of age' (Houlihan and White, 2002: 35; Sports Council, 1982:6).

Local government re-organisation saw its centralised funding replaced with a block grant and excessive spending punished. At the local level, sport and leisure spending was shaped around community development as a form of 'benign policing' as the 'shock waves' of inner-city riots were felt in England (Green, 2006: 225) This increasing government role for sport was enacted by attempts to redefine the role of the Sports Councils and reduce the funding available to public sport and leisure provision (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2002: 30; Coalter, 2007). Yet, elite sport still received the lion's share of funding from the Sports Council.

Despite the governmental dislike of quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations (Quango), in 1982, the Action Sport programme was 'grudgingly supported by the Sports Council' and coincided with the publication of 'Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years' (Houlihan and White, 2002:36). Action Sport was delivered in partnership between the Manpower Services Commission and local authorities across 15 pilot sites in England as a sporting intervention to address broad welfare issues relating to unemployment and deprivation (Houlihan and White 2002, Coalter 2007, Bloyce and Smith, 2010). In 1984, the national demonstration programme was launched to build upon Action Sport, as 15 social welfare related projects were launched to continue to develop targeted mass participation (Houlihan and White, 2002: 39). The Sport Council (1991:31) concluded that there had been a definite shift in the perception of local authorities and the role of sport development

'many see sports development, partnership initiatives and target group promotions as part of their role.'

Beyond the policy rhetoric, the 1980s represented a challenging time for local government departments to develop and sustain strategic plans (Henry, 2001; Robinson, 2004; Houlihan, 2014: 79). Following the reorganisation of local authorities and their funding arrangements, the future of non-mandatory services such as sport and leisure were questioned (Taylor and Page, 1994; King, 2013). In 1994, the neo-liberal beliefs of Thatcher's government were enacted upon the management of sport and leisure facilities across England (in 1993) and Wales (in 1994) with the 'Competition in Sport and Leisure Facilities' Order. As part of a series of directives designed to change the relationship of the local authority from provider to facilitator or enabler of service (Aitchison, 1997: 86).

Bolton and Fleming (2007) recall how the Order granted tendering opportunities via CCT (Compulsory Competitive Tendering) for private sector business and practices to become embedded into the delivery of public sector sport and leisure. Thereby, the state adopted an 'enabling' role; facilitating the delivery of services by other providers and overseeing their performance (Rhodes, 1994:141). Secondly, resource allocation was subject to strategic management and target driven. For example, Houlihan (2014: 76) refers to creating opportunities for the 'dual use' of sport and leisure facilities by other stakeholder groups, which created concern amongst leisure managers that governing bodies would view local authority managed facilities as assets with commercial potential.

Finally, the continuing hostility towards local government was still evident with the publication of 'Performance Review of Local Government' (Audit Commission, 1988)

where it suggested that the continued existence of local government would be based upon its ability 'to be competitive, offer consumer choice and provide professionally managed consumer choices'. Whilst continually having budgets cut and operating in the knowledge that its government funder felt that it should be subject to privately run business practices (Robinson, 2004).

2.1.3 1990 -1997

Under John Major (1990-1997), the political prominence of sport and leisure increased (Houlihan, 1997; Henry, 2001; Green and Houlihan, 2005). Shortly after the leadership election, Major had reshuffled his cabinet, now sport was in Department for Education and Science. A re-organisation of Sports Councils, to English Sport Council and UK Sport Council (for elite sport) placed emphasis upon on elite sport and education and away from other community agendas (Houlihan and White, 2002: 78).

Major's belief in the communal potential of sport (grounded in a sporting youth and a personal love of cricket) stood in stark opposition to Thatcher's individualist stance, as did his promotion of the support of government intervention in sport (Houlihan, 1997; Houlihan and White, 2002; Green, 2009; McDonald, 2011).

During Major's tenure as Prime Minister, several studies were commissioned by Sports Councils across the UK (Henley Centre for Forecasting, 1990; Centre for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, 1995) and Leisure Industries Research Centre 1997a&b) to estimate the impact of sport to the national economy. The research concluded that sport had the potential to externally match fund its existing government funding. Although Coalter *et al.* (2000) and Robinson *et al.* (2012) would argue that this national research was based on approximation rather than evidence, as previous studies have simply estimated the economic impact of sport, with little consideration offered for long term benefits of sporting investments to local areas.

Nevertheless, Major pursued an ideological objective of 'selective re-investment' in key British sports which despite rhetoric to the contrary, increased the government's influence over the sport policy community (Oakley and Green, 2001: 74). Gratton (1998:107) compared the hierarchical nature of the sport market to a 'pyramid,' with both the top (elite) and base (grassroots) being funded somewhat disproportionately.

Subsequent examples of the developmental reach of politics into sport were raised by several key authors. In 1992, the launch of the Department for National Heritage (DNH) saw a shift in the government's approach to sport as part of a joint portfolio with arts, tourism, broadcasting, and museums to combine the best of English culture and heritage and demonstrate the values of One Nation Conservatism (Houlihan, 1997, Torkildsen, 2005, King, 2009:57, Philpotts *et al*, 2011 and King, 2013).

In 1994, the establishment of the National Lottery provided an additional funding source 'with strings' for sport as a worthy cause. Although, the funding pot was closely monitored by accountants (Houlihan, 1997; Henry, 2001) and dependent upon successful bidding rather than welfare need (Henry, 2001). Thus, allowing Major to demonstrate that his government had increased grant funding particularly to schools (youth) and elite sport (Green: 2004).

The subsequent release of the second sport white paper 'Sport: Raising the Game' (DNH, 1995) raised hopes of increased financial backing from Westminster. Several authors (Penney and Harris, 1997; Penny and Evans, 1997:24; Houlihan, 1997; Henry, 2001 and Green, 2004) pointed to the ideological re-enactment of One Nation Conservatism within the pages of 'Sport: Raising the Game' (DNH, 1995) with its leanings towards restoration, nationalism and elitism as elite sport and making

competitive sport a weekly feature in the classroom were promoted as central themes to support the prioritisation of economic outcomes. (Penney and Evans, 1997).

This policy sent a clear message that abandoned any hopes for continued centralised support of the 'sport for all' agenda and work on welfare-based sporting objectives, as the economic responsibility for mass participation work was transferred to local authority leisure/sport services (King, 2009:58). Under Major's sport policy document and continuing CCT, social welfare outcomes were no longer a priority for enabling local authorities, as wording suggested a hasty retreat away from community recreation (Green, 2004:371). Whilst it was possible to bid for new sporting initiatives, existing community programmes struggled for funding, as National Lottery awards were partly offset by cuts to local authority sport and leisure budgets.

Following the publication of 'Raising the Game' (DNH, 1995), Wales (Scotland and Northern Ireland) were asked for their local responses to this document. In his launch speech, William Hague (1995), Secretary of State for Wales, used sport as a populist ideal to re-affirm national identity, promote elite sport, children and youth participation and healthy outcomes in the Welsh text 'Young People and Sport in Wales' which mirrored outcomes from 'Raising the Game' which promoted youth sport and demoted the role of the local authority in its delivery (SCW, 1996:2; Penny and Evans, 1997; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012: 89)

Participating at sport goes much further than competing at national or international level. Although Wales has a wealth of sporting talent, sport is fun, and we can enjoy it whatever level we reach (Welsh Office/Hague, 1995)

In 1972, The Royal Charter granted SCW independent executive status with clearly defined aims and objectives. Despite the policy rhetoric, SCW (like Scotland) had

discretionary funding powers which could continue to fund specialist sport projects delivered by local authorities (Hansard, vol.818, cols.365-7).

Many local authorities in Wales were dominated by Labour councillors with Conservatives unable to make headway (Harrison, 2011), allowing for a continuation of the social welfare agenda particularly in an era of hands-off management by the Welsh Office. Houlihan (2005:163) argued that 'by the mid-1990s sport was an established feature in the machinery of government in most economically developed countries' but in the case of English and Welsh sport policy, the role of the state in assisting sport has meant different solutions for traditionalists of the right- and left-wing agendas (Chaney, 2015).

2.2 Sport Policy Making in the UK (1997 – 2010)

Whilst Tony Blair was elected prime minister and figurehead of this new dawn, it was his Chancellor and later successor Gordon Brown who was attributed as being one of the partners in the development in the New Labour model of governance (Griffiths, 2009). This rebranding of Labour was an attempt to distance itself from mistakes of the past and mistakes of the previous Conservative administrations (Driver and Martell, 2006).

When Tony Blair came into power in 1997, his (centre-left) Labour government was keen to maintain the momentum of managerialism but soften the blow of public service reform as developed by Margaret Thatcher (Byrne et al, 2012). Blair focused on longer term effectiveness through institutional reform; by re-instating 'Big Government,' as a centralised model consisting of Number 10 and the Cabinet Office, whilst developing a networked approach of localised delivery partners (Richards and Smith, 2006).

The aim of Blair's form of modernisation was to adapt the previous administration's neo-liberal tactics (who focussed on short efficiency gains through policy change) to Third Way New Labour ideology based upon the renewal of social democratic policy making (Giddens, 1998;2013). As Cochrane (2004:5) outlined, the language of new Labour, proposed that 'modernisation' was about cultural change and new ways of working, and not – or not simply - about how services can most efficiently and effectively be delivered. Although Houlihan (2002:198) would suggest that the first three years of Labour's office saw a period of 'muddle and retreat' with confusion over the implementation of sport policy agenda.

Key sport policy authors Oakley and Green (2001); King (2009); Houlihan and Green (2009); Philpotts *et al.* (2011) attributes the political influence within New Labour's interpretation of modernisation as being key to driving the future direction of the UK sporting system. In 1997, this 'policy re-branding or organisation tinkering' by Blair's government, (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012: 6) saw the abolition of the DNH and introduced sport (along with tourism, arts, media, and millennium projects) within the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). Therefore, being the first time that sport featured within its own government department.

Bloyce and Smith (2010) noted that the Sport and Recreation division had its own (Junior) Minister for Sport which had been in post long before the formation of DCMS, yet Pickup (1996) recognised that this role carried little influence, resource and power but was still accountable for the Sport Council. Furthermore, Houlihan (1997) reminds that due to sport being linked to so many other policy objectives (such as health, education etc.) then its status in government remained somewhat uncertain (Roche, 1993).

The 1998 Devolution Act created a window of opportunity for sport in the UK to be shaped more effectively following the abolition of UK Sports Councils and transfer of formal sport policy making responsibility to the home nations of England, Wales, and Scotland (Northern Ireland already had sport policy making responsibility) (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012:76). The apparent autonomy hinted at as part of the rhetoric of New Labour's modernising agenda created a paradox within this policy agenda.

Houlihan (2009:681) acknowledged that New Labour presented sport as a paradoxical policy context. It set the agenda for sport policy by promoting freedoms on one hand, whilst micromanaging its implementation on the other which had similarities with the governmentality work of Foucault (Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1999; Raco and Imrie 2000; Dean 2007). In governmentality less focus is placed on how power is distributed (hollowed out/dispersed through actors), but more on the kinds of technologies developed by state regulation of (sporting) social activity and how actors become submissive to state objectives.

Houlihan and Lindsey (2012 :54) describe the autonomy being offered through sport policy as illusionary and more akin to 'regulated freedom'. The regulated freedom offered by the Blair Government, with Gordon Brown as Chancellor believed in micromanaging the centre by imposing targets, controlling funds for creating a culture of 'earned autonomy.' Public service organisations that were successful in demonstrating efficient management and delivery in line with pre-imposed targets were rewarded whilst others were punished (Wright *et al.*, 2013). In practice, earned autonomy seemed to create a slower centralisation of power than it promised to deliver (Davies, 2009: 412).

Although Pickup (1996) and Phillpots, *et al*. (2011) point out that despite talk of the arm's length relationship with sport, political influence in the guise of modernisation continued to dominate sport policymaking across the UK. Following devolution, Oakley and Green (2001) suggest that the sporting quangos, operating across the home countries (Northern Ireland, England, Welsh, and Scottish Sports Councils) were described as delivering fragmented decision making. Houlihan and Lindsay (2013) perceive sport as an apparent success story within Wales for several financial and social reasons.

As a devolved function of the Welsh Government, sport appeared to benefit from increases in public expenditure allowing investment in social welfare projects to promote healthy lifestyles and increased 'Welshness' within communities. Although history suggests that the Welsh government and its sporting quango Sport Wales have appeared to be pulling in different strategic directions (Richards Commission, 2003; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013).

Therefore, the UK Sports Council (rebranded in 1999 as UK Sport) was established by the government (DCMS, 1998) to develop partnerships between home nations sport councils, the British Olympic Association (BOA), the British Paralympic Association (BPA) and national governing bodies (NGB's). Although this attempt at modernisation in sport policy making reflected an attempt to return 'power and authority' to the UK Sports Council, which had been fragmented following the devolution of sport policy making (Houlihan and Green, 2012).

On the surface 'sport' appeared to 'fit' the governance narrative (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006;2008) due to the multiple partners who supported its delivery. Underneath, it is more akin to Skelcher's (2000) description as hierarchical power structures are at play,

due to continued state involvement in policy making and funding that demonstrate the reality of the rhetoric of autonomy for actors involved (Grix, 2009; Grix and Philpotts,2011 and Goodwin and Grix, 2011).

For the purposes of this chapter and thesis, sport policy making (post devolution) in England and Wales will be discussed in more detail below.

2.3 Sport Policy Making in England (1997-2010)

The election of New Labour brought in a raft of recent changes for sport, under the veil of modernisation. King (2009:59) notes that in contrast to the Conservatives, New Labour re-introduced the Sport for All agenda and a role in social inclusion with pre- and post-election statements. The GB Sports Council was reformed under the auspices of the English Sports Council (in line with other home nations) but renamed as Sport England in 1999. The objective was to develop structured sporting opportunities for young people, develop excellence and to distribute money from the National Lottery Fund

The English Sports Council, in consultation with stakeholders across sport produced its first sport policy document setting out the vision for sport in England under the banner of 'England the Sporting Nation,' with a range of 10-year targets, which Robson *et al.* (2013:96) note that 'despite the optimism, failed to become exposed'. Although King (2009) would argue that New Labour continued the type of sporting social policy programmes developed under Major's tenure.

In 2000, Labour published its 'own' sport policy document 'A Sporting Future for All' (Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, 2000) which continued the theme set by 'Raising the Game' of focussing on sport for children, young people and elite

development and a subtext of social inclusion and best value (Houlihan, 2000: 176; Green, 2004: 373).

Sport was recognised by the Blair government as playing a significant role in terms of social inclusion and the potential to address a wide range of community ills. Underneath the social discourse that came to be associated with New Labour's form of 'modernisation,' Green (2004; 2009) describes the promotion of 'a regulated community' and an opportunity to unlock power within civil society by creating partnerships.

New Labour's modernisation agenda was placed in the forefront of 'A Sporting Future for All', in an uncomfortable juxtaposition of social welfare principles such as 'social inclusion' and 'widening accesses with the pro market emphasis on the importance of 'partnerships to deliver efficient, economic and effective policies within the sporting environment' (DCMS, 2000: 39; Oakley and Green, 2001; Green, 2009).

There is a need for a radical rethink of the way we fund and organize sport [and to this end] we offer a modernizing partnership with the governing bodies of sport (DCMS 2000:19)

The Best Value agenda (replacement for Compulsory Competitive Tendering) made, explicit references to the greater use of targets, sanctions, and individual accountability for local authorities. Under Labour, local authorities were considered by Houlihan and White (2002: 111) to be central to managing 'inter-agency partnerships for sport development and regeneration'.

In England, whilst there was limited devolution, increases in public spending continued to be overseen by the UK Government. Hood (2006) recognised this NPM policy reminiscent of the Conservatives and demonstrated an increase of managerial

strength through quantified means. The policy document Game Plan (DCMS, 2002) provided a strategic direction for the delivery of sport in line with the government's modernisation objectives. New Labour was at pains to promote the 'rights with responsibilities' mantra which posted earned autonomy into the delivery of sport by suggesting that funding would be awarded subject to achieving reform and milestone targets (Green, 2009: 128).

In addition to modernisation, grassroots level sport continued to experience the dual paradox of consistent support in rhetoric and inconsistent support in tangible resources to aid sport policy delivery (Houlihan and Green, 2009; Goodwin and Grix, 2011; 550; Harris and Houlihan, 2014: 113). Green (2006) and Bloyce and Smith (2012) attribute the inconsistencies to conflicting national sporting objectives and an ineffective national infrastructure.

Sport policy documents Sport England (2004) and DCMS (2002) outlined the re-organisations of England's sporting infrastructure purported to be an attempt to achieve medal success and active opportunities for young people (Houlihan and Green, 2009:682). Unlike the Conservatives, the Blair Government favoured local authority sport development units (SDU) as the delivery partners to achieve its social inclusion objectives under the Sport England Active Sports programme (King, 2009; Collins, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2010; Bloyce and Smith, 2010, 2012; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012). Yet, as Harris and Houlihan (2014) recall, the failure to achieve targets and the complexity of managing these local relations meant the end for these partnerships.

County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) were developed as a more streamlined approach to increasing grassroots sports and physical activity participation in England (Phillpots

et al 2011:7) (partnership groups included Local Authorities, NGBs, clubs, schools, school sport partnerships, Primary Care Trusts, and local agencies). Although Coalter (2007) and Houlihan (2011) considered that the decision by Sport England to follow the joined-up thinking of New Labour was mainly due to the availability of funding and associated targets/objectives imposed linked to physical activity and health.

CSP rhetoric suggests that equal partnerships work to achieving common objectives (Phillpots et al, 2011) or even can galvanise support in the community from the bottom up (Harris and Houlihan, 2014:114). Conversely, research from Grix and Phillpotts (2010) and Phillpots et al. (2011) suggests that far from working in a co-operative vein, CSPs occupy a hierarchical position, acting on behalf of the state to micromanage the funding and delivery of local sport provision via regulation and the imposition of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets.

In addition, Grix (2009:37) notes that NGBs were subject to managerialist style government recommendations around senior sporting appointments of candidates with primarily business and not necessarily sporting experience (DCMS, 2000:166) who can implement 'the techniques, values and practices of the private sector' (Deem, 2001:10).

Wolfenden Committee (1960) was the first to note the juxtaposition of the controlling force of policy around sport volunteers. However, Grix (2009) highlighted that enforced appointments (in athletics) which focussed on Government funded medal targets resulted in some disengagement from grassroots participants and their experience to solve the relevant development issues. Grix's (2009) point has come to fruition at UK Athletics in 2020, following their new CEO appointment from sport. A recent

announcement suggests that the strategy to 'win at all costs' is now being replaced with a more unified approach which places the athlete first. (BBC, 2020).

The requirement to modernise sport, created a degree of friction in the delivery of sport policy (Grix, 2016). Unlike the Conservatives, who admitted that elite sport needed extra investment, Labour was subtler in their aims for public spending to achieve sporting success following the award of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012). New Labour's modernising agenda and social welfare policy promoted the market economy to encourage active citizenship; regulating the state to help people (children and young people in particular) to help themselves (Green, 2006; Oakley and Green, 2001:87).

Key authors (Green, 2004; King, 2009; Grix and Carmichael, 2012) point to 2005 and the pursuit towards London 2012 as increase in the modernisation with sport policy making. In addition to elite sport goals there was a concentrated focus upon creating an active population and a targeted approach to improve the performance of sport as a publicly funded service (Houlihan and Green, 2009: 683).

As Finlayson (2003:176) reflected on his analysis of New Labour's delivery of the modernisation programme 'the DCMS does not interfere in the running of many cultural institutions (UK Sport, Sport England) yet it behaves in a way that can alter them.' However, Pratchett (2005:369-371) highlights the lack of clarity between New Labour's definition of 'autonomy' and 'democracy' within new localism. New Localism infers a degree of autonomy but the suggestion of a centrally defined concept and imposition of 'top down' control systems limits the amount of democracy at the micro level, which in this case, impacts on the power relationships between state and grassroots policy delivery.

The publication of 'Game Plan,' demonstrated New Labour's socio-political aims to 'making England active' by outlining ambitious targets for improvements in elite sport, mass participation, social 'wicked issues' sporting events and to sporting infrastructure (Sport England, 2004:5; Collins, 2008:69). This policy committed to show 'what worked' by gathering data on the impact of sport on social outcomes; educational results, economic benefits, health, social inclusion, social capital, national pride and achievement, crime and community safety' (Sport England, 2004:20).

When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, he promised to 'let the change of work begin' (BBC, 2007). Brown was perceived left of Blair, but public policy making during his tenure reflected a similar ideology to his predecessor (Griffiths, 2009). In 2008 the Labour government replaced 'Game Plan' and the spin of Project Blair, with promised substance of 'Project Brown' and the comprehensive sport policy document; 'Playing to Win: A New Era for Sport' (DCMS, 2008; Griffiths, 2009: 54).

Playing to Win was heavily influenced by the run up to London 2012 (Houlihan, 2011), and offered a change in strategic direction that promised to 'build a world class community sport infrastructure and allow everyone the chance to develop their sporting talents' (DCMS, 2008: 19). Collins (2010) reflects on this period of change; the first policy shift saw physical activity become the remit of the Department for Health rather than Sport England. Sport's focus had changed from being the instrument to address social problems to being an instrument of 'sport for sports sake,' emphasising its role on improving sporting performance and excellence (Kennett, 2013).

A subsequent attempt to intervene in the administration of sport appeared when DCMS asked Sport England to review its community sport within England (Bloyce and Smith, 2010). The Sport England Strategy 2008-2011 (Sport England, 2008: 1) was

purported to contain 'a significant shift in focus and direction' but focussed on developing a 'world class' community sport system as the foundation for sporting success.

Over time, the role of local authorities as favoured provider became ambiguous despite being acknowledged as community sports biggest financial supporter (Sport England, 2013; Harris and Houlihan, 2014). Sport England (2008) referred to NGB's (not local authorities) to become 'the primary driver to deliver this new strategy for community sport' (Sport England, 2008:13). NPM techniques were utilised in policy making (Collins, 2010:379) as NGB's (and funded delivery partners) were required to prepare 'whole sport plans' to describe how their sport would contribute to the delivery of Sport England's objectives (including to increase participation). This strategy proposed a reduction in organisational autonomy and an increase in hierarchical dependency through state funding (Goodwin and Grix, 2011). Ironically, concerns were highlighted about overruns on the cost of the games which were subsidised by reductions in community sport funding. Community sport being an area of sport which could benefit significantly from the legacy of 2012 (Coaffee, 2014).

2.3.1 Sport Policy Making in England (2010-2015)

Following the 2010 Election, the timeline of modernisation in sport policy making took a further shift. The campaign was conducted in 'the worst recession in Britain for 60 years' (Smith, 2010: 823). Despite a global banking crash and its subsequent economic impact some critics blaming the UK economic climate on Labour's welfare overspend, thereby increasing the cost public services (Heffernan, 2011). An alternative perspective proposed that Labour inherited and pursued a Conservative economic policy which was more prescriptive and centralist resulting in reforming UK politics (Flinders, 2010; Heffernan, 2011:168).

This dire economic climate contributed to a change in leadership at Number 10 and although there was no outright winner, Labour made way for a Conservative led coalition between themselves and the Liberal Democrats to take up residence (Dorey and Garnett, 2016). David Cameron (Prime-Minister) and Nick Clegg (Deputy PM) were presented with an opportunity to promote the hierarchical state to improve economic and social outcomes (Smith, 2010:819). The face of Coalition modernisation (under the guise of The Comprehensive Spending Review and The Big Society) began to alter New Labour legacy plans for London 2012 and the shape of sport policy making in England (Devine, 2012 and King, 2014). These two factors will be discussed in more depth in the following subsections below.

Although, local government sport and leisure services were historically and socially important, it was as a discretionary service. Under current budget constraints, it was inevitable that modernisation would influence its future survival and direction (APSE, 2012b). Clues were offered about the future of sport policy within the pages of the (pre-election) Conservative and Liberal Democratic Sport Manifestos.

The Conservatives outlined its vision for sport under a Big Society which sounded strikingly familiar to Major's Raising the Game sport policy. If elected, Cameron and his party promised; to encourage 'competitive' school sport through an Olympic style event, promote other mega events and reform the National Lottery so that more money went to sport. In comparison, the Liberal Democrats policy briefing 'Sport and the Olympics' offered similar choices with an emphasis upon the health and social benefits of sport (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013,71).

The future funding of public services, including local government became 'the' thorny issue of the Coalition Government. Reductions in local government financial

settlements followed from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) (HM Treasury, 2010a) and Emergency Budget (HM Treasury, 2010b; Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010; Berman and Keep, 2011:1) resulting in diversions from pre-election promises on sport (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013:71). In England, the free-swimming programme was withdrawn (DCMS, 2010) and APSE (2012) predicted a reduction in sport services that eventually resulted in reduced budgets, provision, and loss of staff (Widdop et al, 2017).

Cameron sought to promote more private sector investment and light touch regulation of sport (Conservative Party, 2009 and King, 2014; 351). At the national level, reductions in public funding reductions resulted in 25 % fall in the departmental budget of DMCS and UK Sport. At Sport England, there was a 33% budget reduction with a requirement to reduce administration costs by 50% (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2011:71). The severity of departmental and local government budget reductions meant that sport was no longer a local spending priority (King, 2014).

Despite wider public spending constraints, the Coalition's programme for government (HM Government, 2010) outlined its political backing for elite sport in run up to London 2012. Targeted government funding equated to an increase in the National Lottery budget (16% to 20% equivalent to £50million per year) and continued the original Labour instigated ring fencing of funding for elite athletes up to the Games and a programme of competitive sports and Olympic style events in schools (King, 2014).

2.3.2 Big Society

Big Society was a social policy area agreement within the Coalition. This policy utilised a social approach to reducing levels of public expenditure, resulting in practical implications for the delivery of community level sport (Houlihan and Green, 2011: 71;

Morgan, 2013:2) This left local authorities in the precarious position of further justifying the continuation of sport and leisure service funding (King, 2014: 353).

In England, public funding would only be released upon the successful achievement of targets set by the government, as part of the modernisation of public services (Lee, 2016:147). Under the New Labour governments, the centralised control of the Treasury had been secured by Blair's 'earned autonomy' and Brown's 'constrained discretion' to form the basis of their statecraft (Lee, 2009). During the Coalition, despite the Big Society narrative of decentralisation of power in England (as outlined below), the tenure of George Osborne as Chancellor of the Exchequer further promoted the centralised role of the Treasury and continuing top-down, centrally prescribed reforms (Lee, 2016:148).

In sport, this resulted in an 'asymmetrical relationship' between the government and the sporting community where the threat of withdrawal of funding was made evident. Despite the rhetoric and use of partnership networks to deliver sport there was little autonomy within the modernised governance structure (Goodwin and Grix, 2011:550). Modernisation under the Coalition was more than driving efficiencies, they set about challenging the social norms that had underpinned public service delivery (including sport) under New Labour.

The Localism Act was the Coalition's interpretation of modernisation that created a new model governance encouraging democratic governance through active participation in the co-creation and co-production of public services (Ostrom, 1974; Pestoff, 2009). Fotaki (2015) points out that community involvement in the public services on which people rely on can be quite empowering for some individuals.

Although Bognador (2009) upholds those participatory mechanisms are a form of political rhetoric that serve to disguise the transfer power from the elite to the elite.

The Big Society policy talked the game of participatory democracy (Pateman, 1974) of bottom-up planning, community empowerment and reforming public service delivery. The Coalition utilised the power of emotional rhetoric over substance in pursuit of modernisation of public sector services (Rose, 2001:37).

> creating and developing neighbourhood groups 'in every area' and encouraging 'mass engagement in neighbourhood groups and social projects' (Conservative Party, 2010:35).

Critics would argue that many community groups were being targeted for grant cuts and therefore not in a position to take on the responsibility of local authority services (Walker and Hayton, 2017). Therefore, a reliance on the third sector will only benefit those with the most resources to offer and could result in community groups competing for dwindling funding and reduced service delivery (Coote, 2011). This interesting change in policy, creates the potential for an asymmetrical relationship to form between the third sector and future deliverers of former local authority sport and leisure services. (Goodwin and Grix, 2011).

Big Society equated to handing the economic responsibility for local sport provision to community organisations and volunteers (Morgan, 2013). However, participation is not just a question of financial resources, as participatory initiatives from public policies usually resonate with those individuals equipped with the soft skills (time, education etc.) and demographics to engage successfully with democratic processes (Young, 2000 and Agger *et al.,* 2012) which may result in these policies becoming more exclusive than inclusive across all sectors of the community.

'Big Society' demonstrated the Coalition's interpretation of modernisation, with a goal to create a more efficient government by social means and, the promotion of less bureaucracy with greater responsibility (Cameron, 2010; Bulley and Sokhi-Bulley, 2014; Grix and Harris, 2016:6). It is an aspirational policy in which 'everyone' can be involved and there is illusion of democratic control (Grix and Harris, 2016:6). But the reality of this policy is an authoritative structure that prevents individuals from 'having a say' or even being involved due to fiscal or social restraints, thus further inhibiting the development of the individual (Pateman, 1970; Archer, 1995).

In England, the sport policy sector continued to experience hierarchical managerialism and was centrally controlled using performance related funding (Phillpots *et al.,* 2011). Although critics would question the effect of the modernisation vision on public services and its impact upon sport policy making across the whole of the UK (Deem and Brehony, 2005;2018 and Grix, 2009). Currently, little is known about the impact of modernisation following devolution on sport in Wales (Bolton and Fleming, 2007; Bolton and Martin, 2013). However, this thesis seeks to take a contemporary view on this subject by exploring the current impact of modernisation on sport policy making in local authorities.

Before bringing this chapter to close, the following sections will provide an overview of the Welsh sport policy landscape following devolution – 2015.

2.4 Sport Policy Making in Wales (1999 – 2015)

During the Conservative years at Westminster, the party fared less well in elections for Welsh local authorities. Since 1945, the Welsh Labour Party has been a strong political force in Wales, thereby creating a consistent rhetorical emphasis on a policy discourse of 'traditional' socialism (in contrast to more centrist interpretations of social democracy held by the UK Labour Party at Westminster). Despite the Conservatives

being virtually silent with minimal representation at the local level in Wales (Chaney, 2016), Pilkington (2002) and Cole (2006) argued that the Welsh Office sought to reduce the influence of this elected Welsh voice in the heartlands 'not by the ballot box but through the unaccountable process of quango appointments '(Morgan and Roberts, 1993:5). These Conservative approved appointments all lead several quangos that, promoted a distinctive Welsh policy agenda in Quango-land Wales, as this side of Offa's Dyke became known (Birrell, 2012: 169). Eventually, this lack of transparency and external regulation became subject to criticism as devolution within Wales and later policy making sought to redress any impact on local accountability and democracy.

As previously discussed, New Labour devolved the sport policy making responsibility to the home nations, including Wales. In the modernisation literature, Hood (2006) talks of 'English exceptionalism' and the notoriously unique way that Westminster delivers its policies. A similar comparison could be drawn by Mc Allister (2015 :33) who observed that as result of the English emphasis in the literature on the history of sport, less is known about the history and impact of sport policy making in Wales following devolution (McAllister, 2015:33). A governmentality framework is particularly useful in this analysis because sport policy making is concerned with the values and behaviours of the wider population (Piggin et al, 2011)

However, this research intends to establish just how much weight there are within these cultural claims and whilst it is important to acknowledge the devolved policy differences between England and Wales that influence sport, there may be other resultant factors at play. Foucault would posit that the real focus should not be on geographical location, per se but the extent to which insight could be obtained from

analysing state formation and its preservation through struggles between social groups (Foucault, 1976; Villadsen, 2017).

Piggin et al, (2011: 89) recommend that investigating power relations from the governmentality perspective will highlight coherence, contradictions and inconsistencies in the context which might otherwise remain hidden. Therefore, this thesis will investigate the sources of knowledge around modernisation policy making that discipline Leisure Trusts into proving that their product of sport is worthy of ongoing investment.

Much has been written about the contemporary phenomena of modernisation reforms and their impact on the UK/English sport narrative. Whilst conversely, far less is known about modernisation impact on sport policy making in Wales (Bolton and Fleming, 2007). Several authors with Welsh connections (Chaney *et al*. 2000; Jones *et al.,* 2005; Goodwin *et al.*, 2005; Andrews and Martin, 2010) consider that devolution represents a political experiment in reform and therefore provides a timely opportunity for researchers to explore changes in the regulation and political control of public agencies, such as the Sports Council for Wales.

Earlier in the chapter, Bevir and Rhodes (2016) reflection on public policy making for the benefit of future generations, what proof could Wales draw from if this does not exist in an evidence-based form. This thesis chapter represents the one of the first attempts to document the changes in sport policy making in Wales during the post devolution period to 2015.

As previously discussed, prior to devolution, the generic direction for sport was set within the UK Sports Council. So, sport in Wales was a treated as a remote area for political exploitation. Devolution was a narrow victory with significant numbers voting

against the formulation of national law-making body (McAllister, 1998; Wyn Jones and Lewis, 1999). In May 1999, following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales, as part of the Government of Wales Act (1998) the Partnership Council was formed to address differences across the Welsh political landscape between the Assembly and local government (Laffin et al, 2002). On the surface, devolved policy making created an opportunity for all Wales viewpoint to be heard across the UK but underneath offered Westminster the chance to gain a tighter economic grip on the country through targeted funding (Morgan, 1999: 212). At the Assembly, interest was growing in sport as a future area for policy making.

During the 1980s, decision making around the economy of Wales was the preserve of the Conservatives. During their leadership, despite Wales having no formal sport policy, the Conservatives commissioned several research papers (continued by the Blair government) to investigate the potential contribution of sport to the Welsh economy. This research contributed to further governmental sport policy and investing in staging major events in Wales (Sport Council for Wales, 2000; Segal Quince Wick). Houlihan and Lindsey (2012: 89) suggest that policy aims for Wales seemed to centre focus upon developing a collective Welsh identity through sport to unify the pre-existing social, geographic, linguistic, and ethnic fractures across the country (Balsom, 1985;1997; Johnes, 2000:93).

Other aims included improving the health of the nation and finally, increasing opportunities for young people to participate in sport. In 1999, the Sports Council for Wales was appointed to advise the new Welsh Assembly on sport related issues and distribute lottery funding. The SCW produced its first sporting strategy 'A Strategy for Welsh Sport-Young People First' (SCW, 2000). The plan identified the role of sport

within this developing Welsh economic/political context, focussing on programmes to increase participation, particularly in children and young people.

In 2003, the Welsh Assembly published its key strategic document on sport and physical activity, 'an active, healthy and inclusive Wales, where sport, physical activity and active recreation provide a common platform for participation, fun and achievement' (WAG, 2003). Houlihan and Lindsey (2012:89) noted that as in England, there was an ambition across sport in Wales to work with key partners such as health, education, and national governing bodies to create a strong policy network community. Climbing Higher (WAG, 2003) remains the key governmental strategic document for sport and physical activity in Wales to date, however, there was little reference with or to the key sporting partner SCW within the document itself. Not surprisingly, on publication there was little support from its desired target partners (Wharton Consulting, 2009:19).

Despite policy rhetoric, the consistent lack of integrating sport and physical activity into the agendas of education and health reaches back into the 1990s. Houlihan and Lindsey (2012:90) explain that since 1995, the primary sport policy focus in Wales has been on children and young people with a secondary focus on the relationship between sport/physical activity and health.

Health was a primary public policy focus for the Assembly Members (AM) and another area of responsibility transferred from Westminster under devolution. Bolton and Martin (2013: 447) consider that health created an opportunity for AMs to develop uniquely Welsh policy solutions (Tewdwr-Jones 2001, McClelland 2002, Bradbury 2005, Andrews, and Martin 2010). Drakeford (2006) and Graham (2009) identified

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disability, worklessness, economic and social inequalities as root causes of ill health in Wales (Drakeford 2006, Graham 2009).

A Welsh approach to public policy making focussed on long term preventative measures to improve health outcomes (WAG, 2007) such as incorporating physical activity into our daily routine and developing community-based initiatives to increase sports participation (Wales Audit Office, 2007; Welsh Assembly Government, 2007; Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). McAllister and Kay (2010;2011) would highlight that a focus on political rhetoric centred on producing 'Welsh solutions to Welsh problems' (McAllister, 2015: 33) with talk of producing policies that appeared to be different from UK counterparts, were attempts to legitimise devolution within an immature government that struggles with issues around poor communications and collaboration at its centre.

In 2004, the reality of the rhetoric around sport policy making in Wales was exposed in evidence given to the Richard Commission (a review of the Assembly performance). The report suggested that, despite devolution of sport policy making, Sport Council for Wales still had its hands tied by Westminster, in terms of strategic direction and lottery priorities. The direction of elite sport too remained complex, although it has become more salient because of devolution and changes at Westminster; UK Sport still controls the bulk of funding due to NGB's and athletes operating within and competing on behalf of the British context.

The Sports Council for Wales was largely unable to influence the DCMS and the UK Government's strategic direction to take account of specific Welsh need (Richard Commission, 2004:94). The independence of Sport Council for Wales, as an organisation with Royal Charter status was brought into question as modernisation of

the context made it increasingly accountable to the UK Government and the Welsh Assembly for performance related funding and policy advice. The way that modernisation of sport in Wales was enacted at the strategic level was beginning to show green shoots of impacting upon autonomy and democracy (Wilson, 2003; Pratchett, 2004).

Between 2004 and 2006 the Assembly increased its powers over arms-length organisations, such as Sports Council for Wales, by abolishing or absorbing them into the main government functions. In 2006, 'Climbing Higher: Next Steps' published announcements on the future relationship between Sport Council for Wales (the arms-length organisation for sport) and the Assembly Government which would see future sport strategy and policy functions subsumed by the Assembly to ensure 'effective policy development and effective delivery' (Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, 2006:43). Burrell (2008) described the modernisation of SCW at this time as an attempt to increase the Assembly power within regional decision making where sport commonly operated at the community level.

Rhodri Morgan discussing the future of Sports Council for Wales in October 2006 (CWLS Committee, 2006:45) suggested that it was important part of 'our national culture' and 'part of wider Government objectives, such as better health and building stronger and safer communities'. He added that, 'whilst there was a case for a merger (with government functions), the Sports Council for Wales distributes not just lottery money but public money and therefore it has to be kept at arm's length from politicians. However, Conservative colleagues were not convinced as they saw the transfer of sport policy functions as 'the Assembly's government just wanting SCW to deliver the strategy in the way they wanted it' (Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, 2006 :45).

Houlihan and Lindsey (2012:89) noted that previously that the relationship between SCW and the Welsh Assembly seemed to pull in different directions. Morgan and Upton (2005) would counter that the move to absorb key strategic functions away from SCW was reflective of an Assembly wanting to exercise more political control over key public bodies and implementing new public management techniques to improve efficiency and responsiveness.

The future policy direction within 'Climbing Higher: Next Steps' assured Sport Council for Wales position as the main delivery agent to administer the raft of community initiatives based upon social and welfare outcomes (free swimming, exercise referral scheme, Dragon Sport, 5 x 60 sessions) and coaching infrastructure programme (Wales Audit Office, 2007).

Despite, SCW's remit, the Chief Medical Officer for Wales became responsible for 'Climbing Higher', whilst the now rebranded Sport Wales produced its 'Vision for Sport in Wales' (Sport Wales, 2011) which emphasised the social and health related benefits for a nation that participates of sport and physical activity, particularly for young people and in areas of social deprivation, as well as outlining its contribution into UK elite sport. This shift in roles and policy priorities within Wales, demonstrates the contested nature of sport development (Bramham and Hylton 2008, Collins, 2010) which has resulted in different policy communities, policy brokers and policy actors increasingly loaded onto sport (Houlihan 2005, Houlihan and Green 2009).

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of Chapter 2 was to provide some historical insight into the development of sport policy across the UK; England and Wales from 1960-2015. Despite significant changes in administration during this period and a turbulent sporting policy context the

pursuit of modernisation of sport has remained a constant theme across both home nations. Although modernisation increased the number of networks and partners within the sector, each remained accountable to the state through targeted funding and other private sector monitoring processes.

Chapter 3, which follows introduces key theorists and outline the theoretical concepts behind modernisation in policy making. Chapter 3 will discuss the work of Foucault in more depth and introduce wider theoretical debates around New Public Management (NPM) as a technology of self, designed to empower and discipline its users simultaneously. Foucault (2007:108) refers to 'the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses on the one hand, and on the other a development of a series of knowledges.' Finally, it will present the application of NPM in sport policy making within the UK to demonstrate its impact on the modernisation of local authority sport and leisure delivery.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Chapter

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will begin by developing theoretical context from a number of writers who have focussed on the modernisation of neo-liberal governments of countries with wealthy democracies, therefore offering applicability within a wider analysis of sport policy across the United Kingdom (Parsons, 1937;1964; Foucault (1961;1963;1969;1975; 1977 and Green and Houlihan, 2006: 2).

The focus of this chapter is broadly Foucauldian; therefore, time is taken to explore the frameworks associated with this work and its applicability across the thesis. As a 'technology of the self,' New Public Management techniques are used as part of the central – local relationships and practices in the modernised delivery of sport and leisure services within England and Wales. This NPM process is a large feature of the thesis, therefore, exploration of the theoretical basis for these tools from other areas of the literature are included.

Whilst it is widely recognised that Foucault remains a dominant social theorist with his own understanding of the operation of power, in particular, this chapter will recognise his input around the technological influences on power (Mathewman, 2013). Namely, discussion of Foucault will cover technology as objects (in policy documents), activities (disciplinary techniques and other exercise of power), knowledge (strategic) and modes of organisation (within sport and leisure delivery).

The focus of this thesis will reflect upon the transfer of local authority sport services to employee-owned co-operatives in two case study sites in England and Wales. The success of these of exercises has to date been measured through state led data, hearsay support from state run partners and some localised criticism from the

community who fear change in 'their service.' The lack of wider exploration of the transfer of public sport and leisure services to employee-owned models within the literature presents an opportunity to explore this area using Foucault's work. Foucault was interested in how power was used to manage social relations and individual subjectivities and using Foucault's work as the organising structure for this thesis demonstrates a similar paradox worthy of further investigation as part of this work. In this case, an argument for transfer of service away to alternative delivery models within policy reflecting 'empowerment and autonomy' on one hand is promoted, whilst the desire the to retain influence within these organisations remains constant.

According to Foucault, this form of government involvement has a resounding familiarity to work on the 'art of government' designed to retain control on the economic relations and things across a wider community. The manner through which subjects are transformed into objects of surveillance by issuing instructions, monitoring for specific behaviours/actions, and regulating or governing behaviour (Dandeker, 1994: 37; Gilliom and Monahan, 2013).

Reflection on Foucault's work will place emphasis upon technology as activities which influence sport and leisure's operational delivery and the techniques through which the strategic shape of the service is influenced by wider government policy. Foucault always rejected attempts to develop a general theory as part of writing which reflected changing directions and arguments cognisant with the wider political context. Therefore, an 'essential Foucault' (Jessop, 2007:40) remains elusive, nevertheless, the work offers an interesting lens with which to observe the pursuit of political economy and statecraft within this thesis.

3.1 Michel Foucault

Whilst Foucault remains the theorist of choice within this work, at this point it is worth recognising the existence of modernisation theorists within the literature. Talcott Parsons focussed on the functional structure of a social system by analysing the conditions necessary for its survival, development and transformation. Influenced by Durkheim, Parsons (1937; 2010) believed that individuals could be understood best in terms of the shared social structures and cultural values that influence all social action within society. In his interpretation of structural functionalism. Parson's work was not deemed appropriate for this thesis as Parsons (1942:556) rejects the historical basis for modernity and by presenting their work as a 'shiny and new approach' delivered by professional leaders within 'control functions' across the aiming towards a positive transformation known as 'modernity' which eventually led to wider condemnation across the academic community

Whereas the work of Michel Foucault decades later, used an archaeological approach to highlight a 'progress of discovery' and illuminate the gradual progress towards the modernised society developed through 'epistemes' that focus on a 'modernity that we have not yet left behind.' His work catalogues changes in society which attempt to correlate change in economic and politic system in society and their influence on wider development.

Unlike Parsons' work which promoted the premise of galvanising the power created by modernisation for economic development of communities in a linear fashion, later work by Foucault (1961;1963;1969;1975 and 1977) highlighted the 'practices' within institutional setting and identifying how knowledge production works. Foucault recognised that discourse promoting 'empowerment and autonomy' within state reform could potentially be doing more harm than good

Foucault believed that promoting a propaganda of 'freedom' enabled state sponsored organisations and individuals to have more influence and control within our lives. Rose (1996: 165), considers that the use of rhetoric by the state promotes autonomy through subtle policy making 'a plethora of indirect control mechanisms that can translate the goals of political, social and economic authorities into the choices and commitments of individuals.

3.2 Michel Foucault: perception of power

In his key work Discipline and Punish, Foucault identified three forms of power: absolutist, juridical, and disciplinary. Michel Foucault observed within his work that over the past few centuries, Europe had experienced a decrease in visible forms of control through military and monarchist rule which had previously been the dominant system of social control within an absolutist form of power.

Foucault was keen to assert that he did not develop 'a general method of definitive value,' explaining that 'what I write does not prescribe anything, neither to myself nor to others' (Foucault, 1991: 29). His conception of modern power was novel in that it contrasted with existing models that conceptualized power as "domination", that is, as a centralized and repressive force exerted by one group over another--a "possession" which could be acquired and imposed on others through physical coercion. Rather, he described power as dispersed throughout society, inherent in social relationships, embedded in a network of practices, institutions, and technologies--operating on all of the "micro- levels" of everyday life (Foucault, 1979: 92; 102; 2003: 27; 34).

Foucault was inspired in his writing by the philosophical historian Nietzsche and his seminal (1874) work 'Uses and Abuses of History for Life'. In this text, Nietzsche spoke about monumental history by drawing comparisons between the demise of a 16th Century feudal system and rise of a secular state. Foucault observed that the state exercises more subtle forms of 'discipline' without such visible displays of judicial torture and force than in the 16th Century. In the changing face of governing, the individual was no longer seen as a location for public torture, instead laws and policies were introduced that could manipulate individuals as a form of legal discipline 'in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property' the body had to be 'caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions' (Foucault,1979: 11).

In order to explain disciplinary power, Foucault drew parallels with Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison design as a technological ideal which was self-disciplining and invisible unlike previous monarchist rule. In the Panopticon design guards maintained constant surveillance over inmates from a central tower position thus offering a constant, albeit unverifiable form of power.

> surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action [thus] the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary (Foucault, 1977: 201).

In the Panopticon, the prisoner knows they could be watched so Foucault observed that the goal of its design was to turn this gaze inwards, so inmates disciplined themselves and modified their behaviour accordingly. Thus, making it unnecessary for repressive forms of power and promoting the idea of productive power the development of knowledge/truth instead (Purdy, 2012).

3.3. Michel Foucault: Governmentality

In short, Foucault outlined how modernisation was developing ways for knowing and regulating populations through softer state related measures (surveys, medicine, surveillance) in conjunction with self-discipline through individual regulation, thus resulting in what Foucault referred to as 'Governmentality' (*Governmentalité*) or 'the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self' (1988: 18). In his lectures on Governmentality, Foucault (1991:102) explored the changing face of government which differed from sovereignty. In this new governance model, the state's power base was maintained as a co-ordinator of networks, techniques and programmes that are located within social and cultural contexts.

In a Foucauldian analysis of professional power, social practices and subsequent behaviour changes are observed in response to external demands (Foucault, 1994). In this case, the modernisation of sport and leisure and transferring the service to an employee-owned business may appear to empower and boost the professional's jurisdiction as they are no longer 'owned' by the council and have enhanced agency to make more choices within their working role, but this change in delivery highlights the emergence of new technologies of control. From a Foucauldian perspective, (organisational/national) policy discourses reimagine the direction of power relations by transforming professional and customer subjectivities in line with subsequent objectives.

Governmentality offered a lens with which to examine the behaviour of 'governed individuals. The premise of a state government is to safeguard its population so that it lives a long and happy life, but to minimise push back against modernisation. Foucault

(1991:102) would argue that the enactment of governmentality 'has its target population' that require turning into governable subjects.

Within Foucault's (2004:111; 2009:296) work, he deduced that there was an 'art of government' which could be re-enacted within an evolving network. Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its relays. In other words, power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them. (Foucault, 1980:26) in an examination and definition of state power, Foucault (1986: 229; 2002). emphasises the importance of knowledge and its imposition as pacification and discipline.

Foucault's (1977) 'disciplines' comprise (I) hierarchical observation, (ii) normalising judgement and (iii) examinations. First, the notion of 'hierarchical observation' describes the effect that observation has on humans (Foucault, 1977: 170): if humans think that they might be watched, they are more likely to be compliant.

For Foucault, 'knowledge' acted a form of power through its ability to define individuals and subsequently influence regulate other's behaviour or their own. (Foucault, 1980, 2008). In his earlier work, Foucault referred to disciplinary power of experts, their 'clinical gaze' being used alongside other scientific rationalities to define, survey and discipline their subjects (Foucault, 2012).

Disciplinary discourses used by national and organisational policymakers to promote a modernised public sport and leisure services discipline subjects in two interlinked ways. Firstly, they expose the subject to the 'gaze,' e.g., the ill, funder to organisation or manager to employee rendering them amenable to surveillance. Second, the policymakers make up the 'medium' of the gaze, e.g., the doctor diagnosing and

treating the patient, funder imposing contractual standards as part of the funding agreement with the Leisure Trust partner. In other words, the practices of both are the product of, and disciplined by, particular forms of knowledge (Waring et al., 2015).

Moving on, normalising judgement describes the power of normalisation on the subject: people are judged 'by where their actions place them on a ranked scale that compares them to everyone else' (Gutting, 2006, p. 84). Finally, Foucault (1977:146-7) suggests that the 'examination' combines both hierarchical observation, normalising judgement in time and space. Concluding that discipline creates docile bodies (i.e., compliant subjects which are nevertheless productive in achieving a certain task).

Barry et al. (1986) and Rose (1996) have developed Foucault's work on governmentality in line with a shift towards neoliberal policymaking within Western democracies which has resulted in transfers of previously state led service such as sport and leisure to non-state providers and 'quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organizations' (Rose 1996:56). Rose (1996:334; 1999) proposed that 'government through community' has become familiar parlance in modernisation policy and an attempt at recreating a space for regulation or reform. New modes of neighbourhood participation, local empowerment, and engagement of residents in decisions over their own lives will, it is thought encourage reactivate self-motivation, self-responsibility, and self-reliance. (Rose, 1996: 335). In this neoliberal context, Foucault (2008) recasts subjects under the concept of homo œconomicus; possessing an entrepreneurial self-seeking to maximise their own 'human capital'. In neoliberal policymaking, subjects become 'empowered' but self- disciplined and shouldered with the responsibility of contributing to personal and community wellbeing (Burchell et al. 1991; Rose and Miller 1992; Barry et al. 1996; Burchell 1996; Rose 1996; O'Malley 1998; Lemke, 2002: 52;59). Such community led entrepreneurial behaviour is not only consonant with the

provision of goods and services, but also activities where, suggests Gordon (1991: 43), the self becomes a project of development 'to make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction and reconstruction of one's own human capital'.

Foucault's framework will be explored through the empirical case studies of former two local authority sport and leisure service sites in England and Wales which have been re-imagined in alternative delivery models. These employee-owned co-operative businesses have been tasked with the delivery of local sport and leisure services in sites in Flintshire and Salford. This transfer of services is promoted by government as a time to empower communities in the delivery of their local services, however, particularly in Wales, the degree to which 'empowerment' or existence of the type of homo-economicus is felt in practice remains unknown due to the recent occurrence of the change in mode of delivery.

This thesis will begin to research the presence of the paradox that exists in Foucault's writing between 'empowerment' of homo economicus or entrepreneur of the individual and 'discipline' of the body, subjectivity of the individual or wider collective as part of modernisation. In agreement, McDonald (2004) suggests, rather than a time of liberation for all, that modernisation policymaking associated with neo liberal governmentality may be a process to reduce insubordination and individuation within the masses by attempting to influence the identity of the individual to make them more subdued citizens.

In later work, Foucault (2003:249) argued that disciplinary power was supplemented by new forms of power biopower and security. Biopower is a government tactic to regulate life and manage complex economic related relationships across the

population. Biopower appears at two main points: regulation of the individual through *anatomo-politics of the human body focussing on maximising the performance and docility of the individual. Finally, bio-politics of population* aims to regulate the wider community and all of its aggregated biological processes across the life course.

Whilst it is promoted that biopolitics is promoted as system to encourage population and individual development, it remains a system of control through discipline. In both of these poles scientific rationality is employed via political and economic data (surveillance) collection is employed on behalf of the state through its complex network of institutions, regulations, texts, policies and practices. Foucault's research developed concepts around what he described as 'techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour – government of children, government of souls and consciences, government of a household, of a state, or of oneself.' Foucault suggested that governments were not simply interested in ruling population by law but seeking change with policy and amending the conduct of others to suit policy agendas

Governmentality within publicly funded sport and leisure services has been in existence around the different providers in England for some time. In Wales, this transfer of this service to alternative delivery models is a recent phenomenon (Sport Wales, 2015). Governmentality is achieved through 'pastoral power' (Foucault, 1982; 2008). Foucault made references to religious leaders tending their 'flock' through religious order, despite this secular grounding, 'pastoral power' remains central to contemporary examples of governmentality, subjectification and influencing the morals of others. (Foucault, 1982; Waring et al., 2015). Developing this idea of 'pastoral power,' the Home Nations Sports Councils recast local authorities as

shepherds to herd former sports employees as owners and professionals who adapt their own performance behaviours in these new organisational settings the Trusts serve to meet wider strategic objectives which may not always have the wellbeing outcomes of sport and leisure as a priority.

Foucault argued that bio-power can be used to regulate a population through market-based interventions, whether is it in the interests of a specific government or various corporate enterprises. The presence of biopower is evident in modernisation discourse in Home Nations Sports Council policies which promote the use of capitalism to improve people's lives through entrepreneurial endeavour whether on the self or in their community.

A commitment to the modernisation of state-run services has been a familiar theme echoed by Western governments since the late 1970s and whilst modernisation promotes approaches that offer a balance between business/political principles and practices, the recipe for delivery can be somewhat vague even between contexts and sectors. (Stoker, 1999; Lowndes and Wilson, 2003; Christensen and Lægreid, 2012; Sakwa, 2012).

Bevir and Rhodes (2006, 2008) consider that modernisation has resulted in a weakening of centralised power and policy making and increase in autonomous collaborative involvement of localised networks and partners. Modernisation suggests a restructuring of the relationship between citizen and local government (in this case) whilst recognising the state as an evolving political institution developing and managing through networks (Lowndes, 1999).

The modernisation agenda, according to Cochrane (2004), combines the rhetoric of empowering discourse through cultural change (via New Public Management) and an emphasis upon entrepreneurial community leadership to produce 'modern' services with citizens undertaking a number of complex roles within that space. Yet, Stoker (1999) and Dunleavy (2015) would all support the thesis that 'cost-cutting' rhetoric employed to accompany the local government reform programme lacks consistency, coherence and has been subject to failure.

Neo liberal governmentality has not seen a reduction or less government involvement, merely a change in modality. The rolling back of the state was implemented in line with business techniques from the private sector, known as New Public Management. New Public Management a tool of disciplinary power which has enabled the governing of the population through the creation of a competitive marketplace within public sector service such as sport and leisure (Thiel, 2019).

Many of the key characteristics within Foucault 's work can be identified within the application of New Public Management in the sport policy context. The subjectivation of sport is a process enacted through policy, in which the application of 'technologies of domination' and 'technologies of the self' are used to monitor and regulate the direction of the context to suit wider current state agendas. One is only allowed the freedoms of the state, if one surrenders itself subject to the power of subjection; suggesting a level of dependency (Butler, 1997:83) This kind of state power not only acts upon a subject but forms it through monitoring using practices from the private sector. New Public Management and its impact upon policy making will be discussed in more depth in the next section

Public sport and leisure services as funded by local government, as the largest provider of sport programmes, has been subject to reform under the modernisation programme of public services. Grix and Phillpots (2011:3) highlight the sport policy sector as a 'deviant case' under the reform programme as unlike the narrative promoted by Bevir and Rhodes (2006,2008) it still remains subject to meticulous governmental organisation due to its reliance on state funding and targeted performance management. Despite an outward appearance of partnership working, Grix and Phillpots (2011:6) claim that, following reforms, the sport policy arena is more centrally controlled due to Government set funding and mandatory targets in place.

The purpose of this chapter is to facilitate a deeper exploration of themes around modernisation/ NPM policies that were first introduced in Chapter 1. The remainder of Chapter 3 will explore wider theoretical debate around New Public Management as a tool of government used within modernisation policy making. The work will be divided into three sections to firstly, explore the evolution of modernisation and NPM style policy making. Second, examine the impact of New Public Management (NPM), the organising principle of modernisation, to explore its impact upon wider public policy making. Finally, evaluate the impact of modernisation on sport policy making across the UK.

3.4 Modernisation in policy making.

Vries and Nemec, (2012:7) observed that modernisation policy making in the public sector across the globe has been evidenced by ongoing ideologically based fad towards 'promoting efficiency and minimizing government'. This particular policy has gained traction since the 2007 economic collapse, however, in a governmentality 'who can govern what governing is; what or who is governed?' (Gordon,1991:3) Whilst

distinct parts of the world sought their own solutions to this agenda and subsequent financial downturn, common features in policy making included: emphasizing the rule of law, reliability, openness and transparency; accountability and responsibility; participation and effectiveness. Each term bearing the hallmarks of statecraft designed to govern…to control the possible field of action of others (Foucault 2002:341).

3.4.1 Political-Institutional Change

Hood (2000:4) believed that modernisation was promoted by those with a personal stake in the capitalist system, such as management consultants, central agencies and international organisations; the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) to encourage underdeveloped countries and their organisations to emulate gold standard practices within their Western neighbours.

For Hood (2000:11) the art of governing is not something that can be replicated as it is rooted within the cultural and historical development of an organisation. Hood (2000:18) proposes reflection beyond the current fads within reform, offers the scope to see that there are other ways to do modernity.

In this case, the opportunity for communities to 'be involved in the delivery of their public services' represents a sugar-coated form of liberalism in the double sense that Foucault identified: as an economy led government, but also 'a government which economises on its own costs: a greater effort of technique aimed at accomplishing more through a lesser exertion of force and authority' (Gordon 1991, 24). The transfer of sport and leisure service to alternative service providers offers an opportunity to allow more government, greater social control, under a guise of empowerment, freedom and less government (Bulley and Sokhi Bulley, 2014: 266).

3.5 New Public Management (NPM) in policy making

The recent modernisation of English and Welsh local authority (sport) policy making has been enacted as part of the wider global trend of change and reform within public services, more commonly referred to as NPM (New Public Management). The reach of the global NPM project, its aims and implications cannot be overstated. Therefore, Christensen *et al.* (2007) and Lapsley (2008) propose that any exploration of NPM should take a combined or multi-paradigm approach. Thus, in order to explore and evaluate the modernisation of local authority sport within the UK, it is important to consider the NPM movement in more depth within this section. Namely, what it is, what are its objectives, the reality of NPM rhetoric and how is it enacted in practice within (sport) policy making?

3.5.1 Introducing NPM – what it is?

During the 1980s and beyond, ongoing debate has centred on maintaining efficient public service delivery. Mounting pressure has been placed upon managers by governments to move away from the 'old style' of top-heavy administrative bureaucracy to a liberalised 'new' dynamic approach public services administration. The New Public Management (NPM) doctrine remains a widely contested topic between academics and practitioners alike due to the existence of overlap within the features of its many theoretical influences (Hood 1995:95) and key 'megatrends' which have occurred against influences from a globalised backdrop resulting in reductions in public sector funding, the amount of service delivery and increases in the reliance upon technology (Hood, 1991).

Seminal work on this topic suggests that NPM behaves likes a 'chameleon-like and paradoxical creature' (Pollitt, 2003:26) which remains far too 'slippery' (Savoie, 1995; Manning, 2001) to pin down. Although Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004:8) more broadly

describe NPM as a 'shift in public management styles, or public management reform, consisting of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better.' Whilst this thesis, will do little to 'capture' the 'slippery creature' (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2015) that is NPM; it will offer some conceptual clarity by providing further insight and understanding in the application and delivery of NPM within home nations sport policy within the empirical section.

The first wave of NPM introduced by Hood (1991) emphasised managerial factors which focussed on improving efficiency through a more 'hands on approach to management' by integrating standards of service to attain value for money. Whilst the second wave focused on neo-liberal factors by introducing marketization, incentives and agentification within the delivery of public services (Pollitt, 1995; Christensen and Laegreid, 2007). Finally, the third wave of NPM paid attention to maintaining quality standards and customer focus in service delivery (Pollitt 2003a). This third wave has no dominant model but key themes around governance; networks, partnerships, transparency, 'joining up' and trust are prevalent (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011).

The first wave offering from Hood (1991) focused on NPM as a managerial and structural method, influenced by institutional economics, which was akin to a portable scientific managerial approach. It reputably intended to offer managers choice in approaches that focused on improving the quality and efficiency of services, reduce overall expenditure and improve policy making. Hood (1991) famously introduced seven components summarised in Table 3 1 (see below) that may/may not be present within the internal regulation of the state; through a broad range of hierarchical monitoring practices which matched a mood of wanting to create a more 'business-like' public service.

Table 3 1: Doctrinal components of New Public Management (Hood, 1991: 4/5)

DOCTRINAL COMPONENTS OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
'Hands on professional management'
'Explicit standards and measures of performance'
'Emphasis on output controls'
'Shift to disaggregation of units'
'Shift to greater competition'
'Stress on private sector style management practices'
'Shift to greater discipline and parsimony in resource use'

Not surprisingly Rhodes (1994: 144) called for 'more precision' within the NPM doctrine offered by Hood (1991) as the implementation of management systems and political control suggested a reconfiguration of relationships with a broad-brush approach to public accountability. As NPM played a key role in global modernisation trends, many authors (cf. Rhodes, 1997; Skelcher,2004; Boivard, 2007 and Cornforth, 2014) consider that the public sector has become more fragmented, creating management difficulties often resulting in disagreements and instability. As discussed in Chapter 1, Hood (1991) suggests that some of these disparities may be caused by assumptions linked to the two main (albeit conflicting) influences within NPM.

NPM was a double-edged theoretical sword, with one set of influences linked to modern management theory, which promoted the premise that individuals can be won over with vision statements together with appropriate leadership and organisational

culture. If people are offered the trust and 'freedom to manage' then there is potential for innovation and creativity to follow. However, NPM, is also influenced by economics, which assumes that we all like to maximise our potential for the least effort possible. So, NPM in practice creates a 'low trust' environment where contracts are tight and monitoring is in place in case individuals divert from the organisational purpose (Pollitt, 2003: 32)

The second wave NPM approach summarised by Pollitt (1995:13) refers to a 'shopping basket' of eight elements offering a series of managerial approaches that contrary to Hood (1991) demonstrate moves to incorporate neo-liberalism into the delivery of public services (Pollitt, 2001 and Christensen and Laegreid, 2001). Pollitt, (1994:1) preferred to focus on a managerial approach which emphasised the definition of NPM 'as a vision, an ideology or a bundle of management approaches and techniques (many of them borrowed from the private, for-profit sector)'. Pollitt (2003: 28) confessed that the overlap between elements within NPM makes it difficult to summarise within one phrase what it is, yet a synthesis of the key elements is outlined in Table 3.2 below

:

Table 3.2 Key Elements of NPM (synthesised by Pollitt, 2003: 28-9).

KEY ELEMENTS OF NPM
'Shift from input/process to output/outcomes'
'Shift from trust in bureaucrats to measurement/quantification'
'Shift from large hierarchical ministries to 'lean'/flat and autonomous organisations'
'Shift from hierarchical relationships to formal contracting'
'Integration of market type mechanisms (MTMs)'
'Emphasis on consumer orientation and service quality'
'Blurring/broadening boundaries between public/private and voluntary sector'
'Ethos shift from equity/universalism/security to efficiency/individualism'

The third wave of NPM, sought to progress a relational approach to NPM or involvement of the community in process of governing themselves, also known as governance. Governance is based upon 'networking,' 'joining up' and 'partnering' which Pollitt (2003:52) suggests was lubricated by the wheels of the digital age. The ideas around governance are purported to be ground-breaking, but as earlier reading attests such theories were introduced by early work by Foucault and Parsons.

Overall, the work that signalled the introduction of New Public Management (Hood, 1990; 1991; Hood & Jackson, 1991; Pollitt, 1993) inferred a paradigm shift from public administration to public the 'freedom, creativity and efficiency' offered by NPM (Pollitt, 2003: 32). This work will continue to focus upon New Public Management due to its recognised application within previous sport literature (Green,2009; McCree, 2009).

In the UK, The Blair administration developed its own model of modernisation (Finlayson, 2003) to 're-imagine and re-shape' (Cochrane, 2004:2) the welfare state which had an impact on the delivery of local government services. Cochrane (2004:2) points out that the impact of Blair's modernisation has transformed local government from a once hierarchical entity with relationships between the centre and community to part of a complex network of horizontal and vertical relationships. Whilst the Coalition which reflected a nature of ambiguity in a two-party partnership (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012) promoted the idea of more autonomy in community decision making for community groups and individuals, whilst the reality sought to make these networks more accountable to the state for their actions (King, 2013;2014). Therefore, for questions around the centralisation/localisation of power, authority and resources in English and Welsh local government services remain unanswered, (Cochrane, 2004; Entwistle et al, 2014).

3.5.2 Where did NPM come from?

Hood (1994;1998), like Foucault before him, proposes that the development of public administration in the UK had its own history signalling mixed fortunes in terms of bureaucratic regulation for public administration in the UK (Hood, 1995; Hood and Scott, 1996).

These developments were reflected in two waves: the 'Progressive-Era' Public Administration (PPA) and later New Public Management. PPA, the first wave, sought to introduce democratic accountability and reduce inefficiency through loss, waste and corruption (Hood, 1995). The emphasis was based upon control through compliance to regulations which may reduce threats to integrity of the service, but overall, it lacked flexibility which could discourage initiative to attempt other approaches to reduce inefficiencies within the process of public administration (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994;

Hood, 1995; Gendron et al, 2001). The speed of PPA reform in the 19th century reflected modernisation within the economic transformation of wider society.

During the 1970s, the second wave of public administration reform introduced NPM in Western countries such as the USA, UK, (Pollitt, 2003) New Zealand (Scott et al.,1990) and Australia (Yeatman, 1987). NPM was fuelled by neo liberalism which promoted a shift towards a minimalist state, de-regulation and privatisation. Modernisation in the form of NPM, re-addressed two fundamental principles within PPA that protected public administration from external interference around personnel, structure and business methods from the private sector; and removed the exclusive rights of the public officials in relation to handling money, staff or contracts (Dunleavy and Hood, 2004; Christensen and Legraeid, 2011:3). The reform agenda sought to place public and private sector on an equal footing and move the shift from process accountability to accountability for results by enlisting citizens as sources of demand for change (Brinkerhoff, 2008: 988).

The co-ordination and fragmentation of central government brought about by public sector reform encouraged the development of localised power led organisational relationships by what Rhodes (1995;1998) considers as policy networks. Klijn *et al.* (1995) proposes that organisations operating within this policy framework are forced to relinquish their resources in exchange for opportunities to reach their own goals. Although Hay (1989) and Hood (2000:208) would argue that despite NPM being promoted by larger public organisations such as the EU or OECD, internally, these two institutions demonstrated little to eliminate the progressive bureaucratic elements

of lifelong career service and legalistic operating procedures that aided their top-down stance on the global stage.

NPM itself can be perceived as a tool of governmentality due to its role in disciplining society through surveillance by IT as the adopted mode of choice by governments and creating the ability to regulate individual behaviours in tune with an assumed visibility to others (Lapsley and Segato, 2019).

Whether NPM practices can be attributed to successful reform within a sport policy context remains to be explored. Therefore, it will be prudent within this section to build on Chapter 1 by looking closely at the debates around the use of rhetoric within NPM versus the reality of its implication in practice, to critically evaluate its position as a global movement.

3.6. The Global Narrative: Convergence v Divergence

The infamous global narrative of convergence of NPM was introduced by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in 'Reinventing Government' suggesting that 'the rise of entrepreneurial government' was 'inevitable' (p.325), 'underway throughout the developed world' (p.328). Pollitt (2003) suggested that NPM was a high priority to encourage the re-development of 'industrial-age' bureaucracy for an 'information age' promoted via globalisation and technology (Hood, 2000:4).

Moe (1994:113) notes the use of value laden vocabulary and active verbs by an entrepreneurial management culture could maximise emotive content, in a usually bland subject area, and dissuade deeper exploration to accompany this version of public service reform. This, it was thought, may identify a lack of rationale of the

introduction of NPM or wider choice around public service reform approaches in this 'unstoppable force' (Pollitt, 2003:35), or a lack of universally agreed aims and objectives (Hood, 2000:19). Both Hood (2000), Bevir *et al.* (2003a;2003b) posit that NPM is interpreted based upon the distinctive nature of an individual country's historical response to state reform. Therefore, there may be individual responses to NPM in policy in both England and Wales.

In the UK, ministerial ambition and the toeing of party lines was reflected in the use of the Thatcher favoured neo-liberal themes as emphasis was placed on public service managers to become more 'business-like' in policy stemming from Westminster (Hood, 2000:1). The introduction of the 1997 Labour government saw a change in the rhetoric narrative away from notions of competition and market testing towards themes of modernization, innovation and partnerships (Clarke et al. 2000). The Coalition devolved more power away from local government but increased their expectations and demands of their ever-evolving networks and partnerships with third sector organisations (Flinders and Dommett, 2013). For Wales, public service reform and its impact upon localised sport and leisure delivery could mean something else entirely which will be explored within the empirical section.

Yet, Hood (2000:176) would argue that despite the changes within the 'mood music' from Westminster, the basics of 'what works' in public management is a constant with its own historical roots. Therefore, rhetoric tools could be employed as the politician's ally to provide a 'workable logic' and persuasive discourse to any potential dispute. By sorting through different elements of persuasion and modes of individual argument, a picture of cultural bias within NPM can be formed which demonstrates a picture of counter position to the one proposed by Osborne and Gaebler (1992).

Nevertheless, a global convergence narrative emanated from Anglophone governments and transnational organisations across the UK, Canada and USA inferring that NPM was the 'only show in town' (Pollitt, 2003: 37), as its basic ideas represented simple concepts which could be easily marketed to politicians and civil servants who may be unfamiliar with business management (Powell and Di Maggio, 1991; Pollitt, 2001). However, the obvious but crucial point is that any attempt to draw lessons from the experience of others must take full account of the historical, cultural, social, economic and political environment pertaining to both the country seeking lessons and the countries whose experience is being examined (Hood, 2001). Foucault (1980:85) encourages historical reflection and examination of the hidden relationships of power within the social world explaining it as: 'a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from subjugation, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse.'

3.6.1 The Global Reality: Convergence v Divergence

Hood (1990: 205) proposed that despite differences and commonalities present within NPM, it offered:

> a shared view that thrift was the queen of virtues of public management;' an ascendency built on proofs from hard data than on maxims followed by reasons and persuasive examples (Hood, 1990:205).

This 'shared' view of NPM remained open to interpretation which will be covered in more depth in this section. Initially, the acknowledgement of global diversity gave birth to the term NPM as it was intended to cut across language barriers within individual

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countries or projects. However, despite its Anglo-American heritage, the term itself may be susceptible to rhetorical reconstruction, therefore, shifts in meaning may occur through translation (Hood, 1996: Hood; 2000; Pollitt, 2001; 2007) in countries where English may not be the first choice of language. Hood (1996;1998) like Foucault and Parsons before him warns us to look beyond the catchphrases and narratives that suggest inevitable reform, as history defines that convergence may be more problematic than first considered.

One important set of reform measures are based upon structural devolution of functions, processes and services (Bovaird, 2005). Vertical specialisation emphasised a trend to more competition of service delivery through autonomous market or quasi market organisations (Christensen and Laegreid, 2001; Pollitt, 2004). Di Maggio and Powell (1983) and Pollitt (2001) encourage looking beyond internal demands for efficiency with their work which examines structural devolution as part of NPM.

NPM was increasingly recognised as a 'game changer' in public management as began a process of redrawing the boundaries between state and civil society which have resulted in conflict and instability rather than delivering a delegated management structure. Along with a reduction in state-led services, Bevir and Rhodes (2003:59) raised questions about the rationale for the direction of decision making around public sector reform.

Bevir and Rhodes (2003:59) argue that there is no necessary logical or structural process determining the form governance takes, neither a process based on the intrinsic rationality of markets nor one on the path dependency of institutions. Patterns of governance arise by the beliefs of agents as they arise in traditions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003: 59). Goodwin and Grix (2011) put forward the idea of 'asymmetrical

network governance' to demonstrate that all may not be equal within the world of public sector (sport) due to a proliferation of partnerships and reliance on funding. Therefore, sport may not conform to the ideals presented by Bevir and Rhodes (2003).

Literature suggests that frameworks from 1980s and 1990s focus on the changes from older forms of public administration to New Public Management. From the millennium onwards there was a move towards developing a 'new public service,' 'new public governance' or 'post-New Public Management' (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000; Osborne, 2006).

Despite politicians and civil servants around the globe continuing to promote the convergence narrative around NPM in the face of evidence to the contrary, Pollitt (2001) asks for subtler conceptualisations of convergence to be made to highlight the differences, practices and structures that are all aligned to NPM. As Pollitt's (2001:945) perception is that:

'real' convergence may be more story than fact, but, if so, it is a myth that will support careers, enhance images and boost the incomes of those who purvey its signs and symbols (Pollitt, 2001:945).

Hood (1995:99), for example, distinguishes between 'high' and 'low' NPM-adopter groups of countries, demonstrating that there were marked differences even between these family groups. Similarly, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011: 34) assert that 'conceptually identical reforms develop differently in one national context as compared with another'. Such a conflicting evidence base within NPM literature suggests that divergence could be more common within practices than the promoted convergence rhetoric from the larger global institutions.

The empirical section of this thesis places emphasis on modernisation of sport and leisure services delivered by employee-owned co-operatives located within Wales and England. To understand some of the regional dimensions that may act as potential contributing and contextual factors, examination of small states research is necessary to understand why divergence may occur. Katzenstein, 2003:11 explained that:

Small size was a code for something more important …What really mattered politically was the perception of vulnerability, economic and otherwise. Perceived vulnerability generated an ideology of social partnership that had acted like glue for the corporatist politics of the small European states (Katzenstein, 2003:11).

As Sam and Jackson (2015) clarify what distinguishes smaller states from their larger counterparts is the ability to develop more trusting relationships due to repeated interactions at the national level. Although in smaller states, it is often the case that the responsibility for the design of public sector reform will be decentralised to the regional and local level (Paris et al., 2010; Rodríguez-Pose and Sandall, 2008). Thus, creating the potential for path dependant variations within reform processes which could be influenced by relative autonomy within the region, response to local need and the political ideology of the ruling elite (Sarto et al., 2016).

Although variations in path dependency are, say Christensen and Per Laegreid (2016) and Hood (2000), primarily a product of the national-historical-institutional-cultural context. The institutional/cultural roots determine the path taken within NPM to adapt to internal and external pressure. The shape of these roots creates a degree of autonomy, internal dynamics but also hybridity for the actors involved (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011).

Finally, it is important to remember that NPM is an optional approach to the modernisation of the public sector where the outcome could be based upon assumption, to quote Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004: 8), NPM demonstrates 'deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better'.

The next section builds on the general theoretical concepts and debates that underpin the wider NPM movement, to critically evaluate how present an overview of how tools of governmentality are enacted in practice within the context of sport policy making.

3.7 New Public Management and Sport Policy making

Houlihan and Lindsey (2013:128) acknowledge that the major financial and social contribution of local government to sport policy is difficult to ignore. In the 1970s, the state sponsored programme of leisure centres and swimming pools firmly established its role on the social conscious. However, local authorities were also tasked with distributing funding, employing staff and increasing the amount of participation in sport. Sport has always been a discretionary entity and consistently operated under scant resources, despite having this level of responsibility within the community (Taylor and Page, 1994).

In 1997, New Labour's programme for modernisation of public sector services saw the introduction of what authors (Henry, 2001; Bolton and Fleming, 2007; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013) recognise as a number of significant contradictory changes that would promise a lot for the future of sport but impact on its delivery by local government. It is these ambiguities in sport policy that will provide a framework for this part of Chapter 3. Initially, this section will explore the effect of the modernisation programme demonstrate a theoretical application of technologies of government NPM within the

broader contextual background. Whilst concluding with analysing the impact of NPM on the delivery sport and leisure by local authorities to provide a more focused examination on the impact of modernisation at the site of the empirical research.

3.7.1 NPM and Sport policy making: The UK Context

A wide range of public services have experienced modernisation, including local government (Pratchett, 2002; Wilson, 2003 and Cochrane 2004); education (Clarke, 2007; Goodwin and Grix, 2011) and health and social care (Fotaki *et al*., 2006; Clarke *et al*., 2007, Newman and Lawler, 2009). Modernisation under Labour itself was viewed as a new way brand of patriotism, but Finlayson (1999:12) would counter that it was guise to 'motivate and encourage' a perceived latent citizenship. Therefore, it came as no surprise that sport was next in line for reform. In the foreword to Game Plan, Tony Blair writes,

Sport is a powerful and often under-used tool that can help Government to achieve a number of ambitious goals (DCMS, 2002: 5) with previous UK governments have seen the value of sport as having an ability to deliver on wider social welfare policy outcomes (Houlihan and White, 2002) by offering a symbolic resource to develop community and national identification (Holden, 2011); promote health improvements (Bolton and Martin, 2013) which in turn benefits the economy through the benefits of regular participation (Bloom *et. al*, 2005; Vail, 2007).

Conversely, Hoberman (1984:1) and Henry (2001) encourage deeper academic debate beyond the seemingly 'hypnotic powers of sport' to explore its relationship as an instrument of political control and vehicle for the demonstration of political ideology. In agreement, Rail and Harvey (1995: 173) recognise that the use of sport as an instrument of social control demonstrates an example of biopower in action where technologies of the self as individual and wider community are a source of subjectivity

through policymaking. A reconceptualization of sport through policy can leave individuals and wider communities subject to a wider surveillance and classification through an ensemble of normalising and disciplinary practices from science, governing institutions, medicine, media. But whilst there is an inextricable link between sport/leisure and politics, leaving it politically useful it is very rarely supported by evidence and as such is peripheral to significant policy development (Henry, 2001:30and Coalter, 2007:11).

For Foucault institution led discipline over the body represented an attempt to dissipate power, encourage docility through the introduction of forms of capitalism (Foucault, 1979: 138). Finlayson (2003: 94) also observes, 'accompanying the decentralization of modernization is the centralization of control through the introduction of ever more rigorous targets and more complicated systems of performance measurement'. The modernisation of sport through the public delivery space has taken place, as demonstrated by an ongoing rationalisation of services and top-down target driven culture.

From a Foucauldian perspective, part of how power is exercised is through the unseen, creating subjects with an internalised perception of always being visible and observed by a more powerful being "the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary" (Foucault, 1979: 205). Thereby suggesting that New Public Management techniques applied within sport has the potential to influence the power across a wider range of agendas in a bid to develop docile bodies within its communities as sites of entrepreneurial activity and 'development.'

Hyndman and Lapsley (2016) attest that NPM remains embedded within the heart of government, and despite the rhetorical nature of modernisation, familiar hallmarks of

NPM's existence include results, quantification, target setting and performance measurement within public services, including sport. Such language is demonstrated within Labour's first strategy for sport, A *Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000), where the principle of 'earned autonomy' within the context of sport is outlined:

The principle is simple, sports which can demonstrate that they are delivering these targets - and have a good strategy for the development of their sport from its very foundations to the highest level - will gain more responsibility. But if they fail to perform against agreed targets, then funding arrangements will be reviewed. (DCMS, 2000:20).

The modernisation of the organisational infrastructure of sport continued within National Governing Bodies in Game Plan (DCMS, 2002). Grix (2009) and Houlihan (2005) describe how the lens of modernisation in sport focussed its gaze upon the structure and funding of the British sport system. Attention was placed upon the administration and management of the so called 'big four sports;' cycling, rowing, swimming and athletics, as those sports were most heavily subsidised by public funding. Green and Houlihan (2006:50) concluded that modernisation programmes incorporated into interventions within sport policy were one of the ways in which the government sought to shape the direction of sport, namely through business strategy development, annual audits and reviews by governmental funding bodies and target setting, whilst failing organisations were penalised.

However, sport policy created a conflicting situation by encouraging 'agency,' claiming to offer NGB's 'autonomy' and improved service quality for stakeholders. Whilst simultaneously increasing centralised control by promoting a culture of punishment through individualisation, public shaming and funding withdrawal for those

organisations deemed inadequate by missing targets. Thereby moving away from the collective community of sport

The policy narrative suggested that cooperative governing bodies 'will gain more responsibility, but if they fail to perform against agreed targets then funding arrangements will be reviewed' (DCMS, 2000:20) which Houlihan and Lindsey, (2013: 66) say demonstrated the conflicting discourse contained within the velvet glove of modernisation of sport to ensure that it became 'more strategic' and public funds were 'properly spent' (DCMS, 2000:20).

The modernisation process in sport, which has been referred to as an 'asymmetrical model' of power relations (Grix and Phillpots, 2010; Marsh, 2008) describes how despite the outward appearance of partnerships and networks, the reality suggests an entirely different picture. In the sport policy context, enforced collaboration between unequal colleagues are held together to attain pre-set targets to achieve further funding.

According to Grix and Phillpots (2010: 8) this top-down resource dependent model of governance enables the state to not only shape the direction of sport policy, but also wider sport development including grassroots sport policy delivery. Highlighting the case of modernisation of UK Athletics, Grix (2009:35), provides direct and indirect evidence of modernisation and hierarchical state power impacting upon subsequent sport policy delivery. The work suggests that power structures are not always observable, so policy partners may struggle to question the 'evidence based' (Parsons, 2002: 46) rationale provided for the integration of modernisation through the increase of strategic business practices.

Hierarchical state power could be demonstrated by the practice of government which sets the ideological tone of NPM through its sports councils by dictating what, when how and who is involved in policy delivery to attain an essentially pre-determined end result (Rose 1999: 4).

For this thesis, the focus will be on grassroots policy delivery enacted through the local authority level in England and Wales. Houlihan and Lindsey (2013:129) recommend that when considering local government sport, it is useful to examine it through the themes identifiable with local authority policy. Therefore, the following sections will explore the impact of NPM on local authority context; examining the link between political ideology and sport policy making which has resulted in changes to the mode of localised sport and leisure service provision delivery (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013:129).

3.7.2: NPM and Sport Policy delivery: Local Authority Context

Robinson (2001), Torkildsen (2005), Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) all infer that the local authority (public sector) was once viewed as the major provider of sport and leisure opportunities in the UK. However, a raft of modernisation policies both directly affecting the re-organisation of local authorities and sport itself, saw the overall profile of sport increase whilst the multi-dimensional role of local government starts to fade into the background (DNH, 1995; Green, 2006). Increasing fragmentation and externalisation of public sport services to alternative delivery models suggests a reduction in democratic control and may result in the potential for a 'skeleton service' delivered by local authorities across England and Wales (Raine, 2011; Houlihan and Lindsey; 2012:155).

Since devolution, policy makers have been keen to develop a 'Welsh model' of public sector reform based on collaborative working which is better suited to Wales than the

English model which relies on a combination of targets, inspection, choice and contestability (Andrews and Martin, 2007:149; 2010) and to increase efficiency by sharing resources via performance related funding. Direct evaluations between the two models of public sector reform and their potential impact upon public sport and leisure services have yet to be explored within academic text. Although observers of divergences in English and Welsh public policy (Chaney *et al.*, 2001; Drakeford and Chaney, 2004 and Chaney, 2013) recognise the contingent process involved in analysing (sport) policy within different part of a polity, as policy can be shaped by me) devolved party politics ii) differing institutional arrangements ii) and iii) differing local socio-economic conditions.

It should be noted that the recent global economic climate has impacted upon sport (as a non-mandatory service) in particular (King, 2014). Therefore, the reason to continue, change or even end publicly funded sport services could be influenced by financial decisions (King, 2014: 351) but based upon the behest of elected members ideological or political persuasion (Houlihan 1991; 1997; Henry, 2001, Houlihan and Lindsey, 2012).

Foucault (1980) observed that 'biopolitics of a population' through regulation of the wider (sporting) community is one of the essentials objectives of power. This constant scrutiny through the lens of discursive reformation will enable further state involvement and analysis in the direction of sport and its contribution to economic and wider political goals.

3.8 Research Rationale

The rationale for this thesis is built on an exploration of the theoretical and contextual literature to understand the development of sport policy making context across England, Wales and the UK over the past sixty years. An understanding of the policy

making context within this thesis was particularly relevant due to its saliency and impact upon modernising the delivery of sport and leisure within the differing national case study settings.

In addition, an exploration of the tools of modernisation policy making (namely, NPM) gave a grounding to understand the influence of power and knowledge within this sporting context. However, it should be recognised that Foucault argued the state is not omnipotent, for two reasons. First, the state cannot occupy the entire field of power relations, and second, it can only operate based on other, already existing power relations (Foucault, 1980). Foucault observed that it is through the population itself on which government will act either directly, through large scale campaigns, or indirectly, 'through techniques that will make possible . . . the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities . . .' (Foucault, 1994: 217).

Therefore, Foucault placed emphasis in how the use of power and knowledge can be used to discipline and subjectify individuals to reduce their power. In particular, the governmentality framework acknowledges that the government focuses on how a population should 'be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, [and] by what methods' (Foucault, 1994: 202).

Utilising Foucault's concepts related to governmentality within this thesis will create an understanding of differing home countries approaches to modernisation policymaking within community sport. In particular, the approaches used to deliver (the former) public sport and leisure service through alternative delivery models and the effect on the relationships therein. In addition, the governmentality framework is particularly

useful in this analysis as sport policy is concerned with the values and behaviours of the wider relevant population. By investigating power relations from a Foucauldian perspective, this thesis will highlight convergences and divergences around power relationships that may occur within this context (Piggin, 2013).

The work of Foucault in this sport policy context will build upon previous author's contributions through this theoretical lens (Adams and Harris, 2014; Piggin, 2013; Piggin et al., 2009). At present there has been no research investigating the use of alternative delivery models for sport and leisure involving a Foucauldian analysis. This thesis will offer a contribution to the literature using Foucault's work on the hitherto unexplored nexus of the modernisation of community sport policy making and its impact on individuals within these employee-owned leisure trusts.

3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to provide a theoretical background to this thesis which is exploring modernisation within public sport policy making across England and Wales. Initially, the chapter explored the evolution of modernisation by examining and providing overview and justification around the governmentality work of Michel Foucault as the organisational framework for this thesis. Foucault's work highlighted the role of government in creating self-disciplining citizens utilising neoliberal tools of domination and adding opportunities for competition in service delivery for supposed future social wellbeing.

Secondly, New Public Management as a chosen tool by government to monitor public service performance was explored for its impact upon policy making. New Public Management (NPM) was defined, discussed and proposed as an organising principle to examine modernisation in wider policy making. Despite lacking a standard format,

NPM practices had several dominant traits such as integrating standards into service delivery, marketization of public services and a customer focus and retaining quality standards (Pollitt, 2003). Debate was offered between the rhetoric and reality of convergence and divergence of NPM. Despite politicians promoting a global convergence narrative

Finally, a theoretical rationale was offered for this thesis based upon an understanding on the literature involved.

Chapter 4 presents the research methods and methodology associated with the development of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Research Methods

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the research strategy and specific methods applied in this sport policy study. Grix (2002) promotes the idea of a directional relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources which will act as a guiding principle throughout this chapter.

The chapter itself is split in two main sections: firstly, the 'methodology' section will begin by briefly re-introducing the work and the reason for choosing the topic. It will discuss the main ontological and epistemological positions within research and debate their suitability for this thesis. The first section will culminate with presenting a rationale for the chosen philosophical position for the work. The second section, 'methods will centre around a suitable research strategy to collect data sources steered by the research question, complete with individual rationale based upon debate from within the literature.

Two, mostly qualitative, case studies will be developed: (I) Salford (England) ii) Flintshire (Wales), with a discussion chapter that draws out similarities and differences in practices across these sites. Overall, the thesis seeks to examine the responses by policy makers accountable for the reform of local authority sport and leisure delivery. The following sub-chapters will explain the logical process undertaken before research commenced.

4.1 Philosophical Assumptions

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and evaluate the research strategy employed within this work based upon the researcher's own philosophical assumptions. Grix (2010b:57) presents the idea that to initially clarify the researcher's ontological (what is known?) and epistemological (how is this known?) assumptions will provide a clear and focussed basis from which to justify the choice of research questions, methodology, methods and source materials within the work.

The directional relationship of the building blocks as discussed by both Hay (2002) and Grix (2002; 2010b; 2019) is represented in figure 4.1 below.

```
Ontology → Epistemology → Methodology → Methods → Sources
```

What's out
there to know?

What and how can
we know about it?

How can we go about
acquiring that knowledge?

Which precise procedures can we
use to acquire it?

Which data
can we
collect?
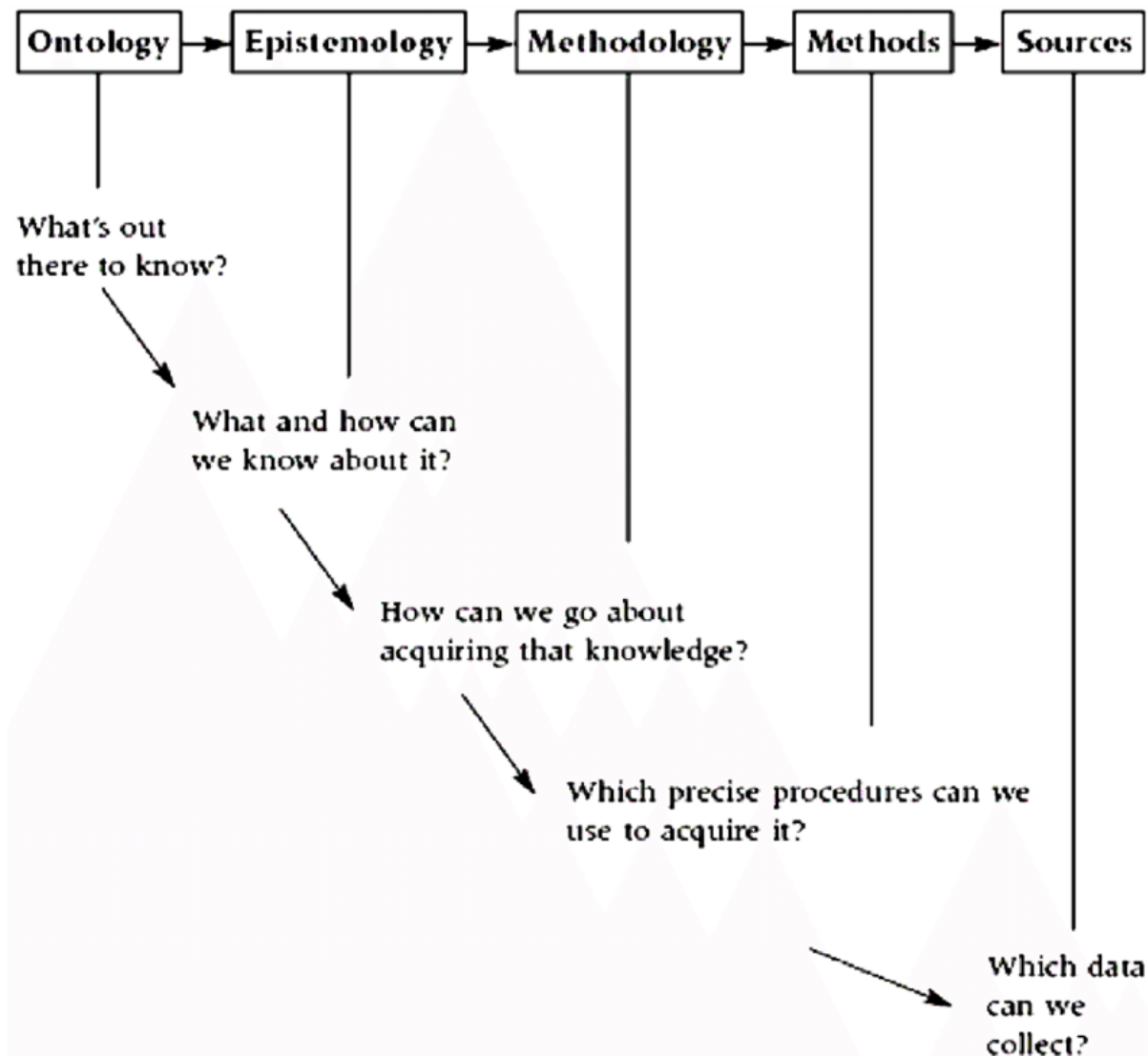
Figure 4.1 'The Building Blocks of Research' (Grix, 2010b:68).

Key authors within research (Crotty, 1998; Hay, 2002 and Grix, 2019) would consider

that there is a directional relationship between the building blocks of research which

aids the shift from research question to final thesis. Hay, (2002:63) explains 'ontology,

logically precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology'.

Grix (2020:67) proposes that whilst we need to consider both ontology and

epistemology are intricately linked, they should be kept separate as the researcher's

own experience can influence the research process.

The research topic of modernisation of sport policy making at local authority level was chosen due to my own experiences as a sport coach and civil servant. As a former civil servant, I became accustomed to working in a target driven environment within in a government agency. In recent years, I worked as a sports coach for a local authority sports department. Several significant 'private sector' initiatives were introduced that impacted upon my working role; funding became targeted, discourse became more 'entrepreneurial' and finally, the local government lost control of delivering community sport and leisure services. I was aware that these changes had taken place across the border in England but in my country, this has been a new phenomenon. Therefore, as part of my PhD research, I wanted to understand the reasons for these changes happening to sport and its delivery in our community and contribute to the (somewhat small) body of literature about sport policy in Wales.

Hay (2002:69) may posit that this initial experience and curiosity created an issue of 'political analysis,' concerned with the analysis and processes of politics. The pursuit of such knowledge would entail a foray into ontology and epistemology to explore how to study it. Furlong et al (2010 :178) suggests that whilst there is much agreement around definition, the application and interrelationship between these two philosophical positions remains contested Yet, Hay (2002:61) encourages familiarisation beyond the 'veil of impenetrability' that accompanies the language within the literature and debates on the philosophy of the social sciences in order to become a participant within political analytical debate. Conflicting issues within ontology and epistemology are explored in more depth in the following section, to present a final philosophical route through which this particular thesis will be conducted.

4.1.1 Ontological Issues

In his seminal work, Blaikie (2007) described ontology as an assumptive process whereby social (read political) approaches to reality are deconstructed. Ontological questions focus on the existence of social phenomena and what there is to be known about them. Blaikie (2007:6) places emphasis upon claims about 'what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with one another.' Hay (2002:61) summarises ontology as 'the science or philosophy of being."

Grix (2020:61) identifies two broad ontological positions: objectivism and constructionism to support our understanding of the world around us. Burrell and Morgan (1979) propose that objectivism is an ontological position that offers a strong commitment to the natural sciences. In scientific research, as Crotty (1998) explains, there is said to be objective truth and meaning identified which exists independently of consciousness and experience. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) a key element of empiricist knowledge through an objectivist approach is the belief in a universal truth which can be measured, confirmed or disproved by means of a hypothesis.

The alternate position, constructionism, rejects the idea of an objective truth, preferring to identify with truth and meaning being recreated via social phenomena, social actors and the world around them. Guba and Lincoln (1994:12) rejected the idea that knowledge was 'out there,' but instead is co-constructed by people influenced by shared social and cultural factors.

Therefore, a researcher's ontological choice is indicative of the route they are likely to take in research, including the questions they seek to answer and how they set about answering them via their epistemological approach.

4.1.2 Epistemological Issues

In a similar vein to ontology there are a few epistemological positions to consider when undertaking research. The ontological and epistemological positions together inform the methodology and the research design and methods; therefore, some consideration is needed to ensure consistency in approach throughout the work.

Blaikie (2007:6) identifies epistemology as 'a theory of knowledge; it presents a view and a justification for what can be regarded as knowledge.' In line with ontological exploration, whilst ontology is the enquiry into 'what exists to be known?' epistemology establishes how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated.

The epistemological position for this work is hard interpretivism and is informed by previous governance and sport policy work conducted in border areas in political science and public administration like the context for this thesis (Goodwin and Grix, 2011; Grix, 2010a). Grix (2010: 64) considers that epistemological positions are often based around a dichotomy between traditional foundationalism (positivism) and anti-foundationalism (interpretivism) which may only serve to restrict research in what is described as the 'messy world of social sciences' (Grix, 2010b: 12). That is, he posits that binary dichotomies are useful for clarification, but may lead to us missing some of the more interesting work in the spaces between the traditional epistemological positions (Grix, 2019). These counter philosophical positions are explored to some degree below.

4.2 (Traditional) Foundationalism

Traditional foundationalist knowledge claims rest on the ability of the mind to accurately interpret the realities of the external world, such as Descartes' rationalist approach 'I think therefore I am.' Foundationalists (within the doctrine of empiricism) may hold on to basic beliefs that are considered impossible to be mistaken, as they

are underpinned by awareness/access within their conscious experience (I feel/I see) the thing that makes the belief true. Therefore, the interpretation of these basic beliefs within truth statements are individually dependant.

Bonjour (1978; 1980:63) favoured a more rationalist approach to the pursuit of truth arguing that there can be no such things as a self-justifying belief:

As part of one's epistemic duty is to reflect critically upon one's beliefs, and such critical reflection precludes believing things to which one has, to one's knowledge, no reliable A means of epistemic access. (Bonjour, 1980:63)

A purely rational approach to this work was not appropriate due to the relevance of capturing actors' beliefs on the effect of reforms within this work, which are evident within the interviews conducted as part of the case studies.

4.2.3 Anti-Foundationalism

One such revision was the so-called anti-foundationalist movement, with authors producing a more interpretative or 'decentred' representation of policy literature (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, 2006 and Bevir and Richards, 2009a and 2009b). Anti-foundationalism, as an epistemological doctrine, suggests a holistic approach to socially constructing the world, through the interpretation of 'meanings' linked to networks of established beliefs, discourses and cultural traditions. Goodwin and Grix (2011) described how the anti-foundationalist movement was used to positive effect within the 'decentred work' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, 2006) which sought to bring a voice to those formerly affected individuals and included silent agents who were not previously credited within the broader foundationalist (read positivist) governance narrative policy literature.

Bevir and Rhodes recognised that meanings and beliefs could not be captured within the 'objective' reality of positivist work, as concepts, meanings and beliefs do not have a one–to-one correspondence with objects in the world; but rather form webs. These webs represent 'social truths' (p.44) with decentred theory acting as a tool to explore the representations of prior beliefs, discourses and cultural practices (Bevir and Richards, 2009a:8)

Unlike their foundationalist colleagues, anti-foundationalists will not readily accept the causation due to the individualised nature of interpreting the meaning behind these multiple networks. Grix (2010) and Goodwin and Grix (2011:3) note that attempts by the decentred authors to differentiate their work from the governance narrative failed to account for the influence of structures and institutions, in addition to the voice of the individual, within their explanations of the governance of the UK. Both authors suggest that sport is a 'deviant policy community' due to the real-world influence of multiple levels of structures, institutions and individuals that all play a part in maintaining its existence and so would not conform to the anti-foundationalist approach used by Bevir and Rhodes (2003, 2006) and Bevir and Richards (2009a and 2009b). Therefore, the interpretivist approach alone will not be useful within this work to draw out the effect of modernisation on sport policy making in England and Wales, as interview data needs supporting with additional evidence to reduce bias and strengthen validity of the work.

4.2.4 'On the border'

Reflecting on the literature, Grix (2010:163) points out that it would have been difficult to place the work of an author of Max Weber's standing at either end of a dichotomous epistemological continuum. As his explanations relating to 'understanding' in sociology could be considered as either 'foundational' due to its references to objective

interpretation (*aktuelles Verstehen*), or even 'anti-foundational' following the definition relating to subjective understanding (*erklärendes Vertstehen*). For the purposes of sport policy research, a purist positivist and an interpretivist counterpart may differ in their approaches on how to study and what data to collect to illustrate changes to community sport during a given time frame.

Yet, Grix (2010) and Goodwin and Grix (2011) would promote the idea for sport (and education) policy research to explore the border areas at which foundationalism becomes anti-foundationalism between research paradigms of positivism, critical realism and interpretivism. The figure below will demonstrate how shaded areas between each paradigm offer an opportunity to explore epistemology in a gradational approach in what Grix (2010:164) describes as 'hard proponents' of one paradigm meeting 'soft proponents' of another. This therefore provides the practical benefit of creating empirical work that has a more exacting foundation based upon a sound gradational epistemology (Grix, 2010a: 460; Grix, 2019). Figure 4.2 below provides a graphical representation of research paradigms with shaded areas which reflect the 'on the border' areas between paradigms where a great deal of 'real-world' research takes place (Grix 2010c). As the research, takes place within a real-world context of the relationship between partners involved in the delivery of publicly funded sport and leisure services, 'on the border' offers a practical approach to explore without the restrictions of either approach.

Ontology:
Objectivism — Critical realism — Constructivism

Epistemology:
Positivism — Post-positivism — Interpretivism

Research Paradigm:

Positivism — Post-positivism (critical realism) — Critical theory etc. — Constructivism

Explanation — *Understanding*
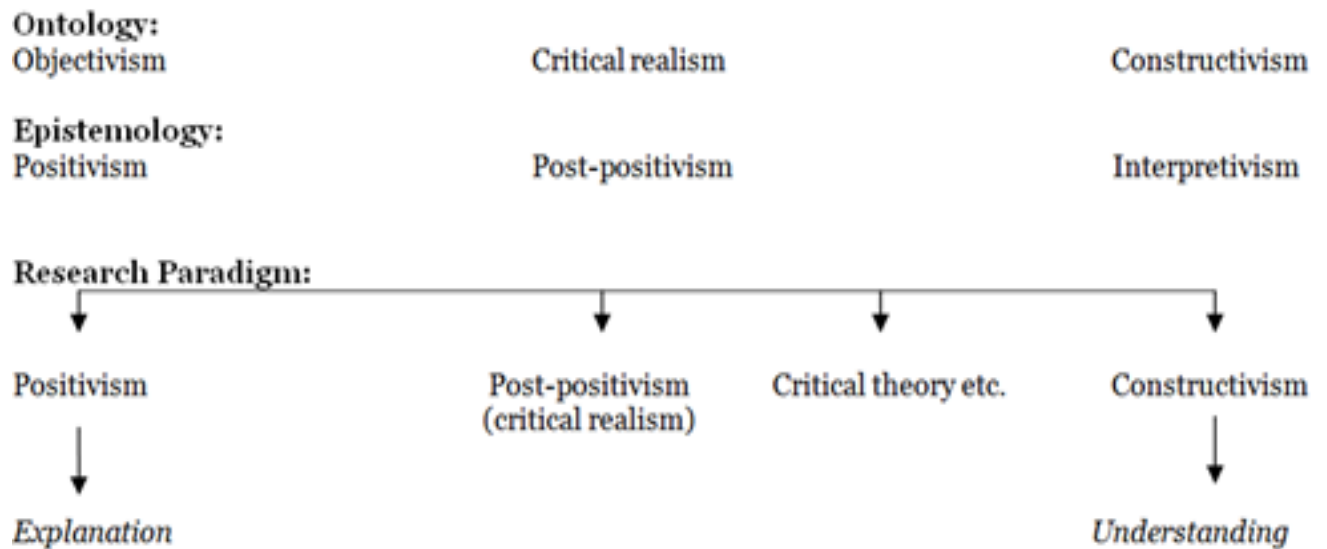
Figure 4.2. A Continuum of Research Paradigms (adapted from Harris, 2014; Grix, 2010c; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The section below will explore the research paradigms within this continuum; positivism, post-positivism (critical realism) and interpretivism before presenting a rationale for this thesis.

4.3 Research Paradigms

Research paradigms attempt to provide some order within this so-called 'messy world' of 'what' to study (relevance) and 'how' to study (methods applied) and why to study (formulating explanatory hypothesis) (Kuhn, 1962 and Grix, 2010b:77). The use of a paradigm creates an epistemological stance (Morgan,2007), offers direction within research to the exclusion of other paradigms and presents a lens to examine theory (Kuhn, 1962:24).

The community of sport research is designed to increase relevant knowledge for academics and practitioners alike. Whilst positivistic/quantitative approaches have been used in sport policy research (Widdop *et al.,* 2017), a counter position by Shaw and Hober (2016) proposes that there is a lack of variety in the design of most

qualitative/interpretivism work, due to the favoured case study approach. Yet due to the complex and changing nature of the global sporting world, current work by Skinner and Engleberg (2018) and Hoeber and Shaw (2017) acknowledge that there is no one pure method that can be applied within the discipline, therefore a need for more innovative research methods and approaches are required to research the field.

In other work, Grix (2009); Grix (2010:169) and Goodwin and Grix (2011) introduce a third post-positivist position, 'hard interpretivism', that provides an opportunity to work 'on the border' between these epistemological positions during 'practical, on-the-ground research' as this type of work 'rarely falls within these neat categories' (p.163). For this work, the major paradigms of positivism, interpretivism and post-positivism (critical realism) will be discussed in more depth below. The section will conclude with a rationale for the chosen philosophical position within this thesis.

4.3.1 Positivism

The extreme positions that Burrell and Morgan (2007) proposed are underpinned by whether knowledge can be established/not by utilising the laws associated with its practice; also known as positivism. Positivism is an umbrella term used to denote the ontological, epistemological and methodological contexts of a given approach. This is the way the term is used here.

Blaikie (1993:14) recognised that positivism had become a dominant force within the natural sciences, which Grix (2010a: 65), describes as offering 'the study of the natural sciences to understand social reality and beyond'. Blaikie (1993:13) upheld that the belief that positivism offered a natural scientific study of people and society, which upon application, regardless of subject matter, resulted in the same explanation.

A recent work by Widdop et al. (2017) demonstrated how positivism could be used in the study of sport policy to establish the impact of austerity measures on participation in sport in lower-income 'hard-to-reach' groups who tend to use and depend on local authority provision. The paper concedes that utilising this approach is one of many that could have created understanding about sports participation in this group.

The positivist tradition applies the assumption that science quantitatively measures facts about a single reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Positivism remained subject to criticism from qualitative purists due to the self-proclaimed 'objective nature' of enquiry which Guba and Lincoln (1994 :110) likened to 'inquiry taking place through a one-way mirror' with the role of human subjects limited to independent, non-reflective variables (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Positivism would not appear to be an appropriate research paradigm to apply within this thesis due to the fragmented nature of local government sport services (King, 2014), and the fact that it is seeking to analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals have responded to developments linked to modernisation. Thus, whilst Widdop et al's (2017) paper was able to demonstrate the impact on participation of the Active People Survey from Sport England by capturing a large sample during this period, it was unable to truly 'understand' the personal meaning of the 'the impact of austerity measures for sport participation in lower-income "hard-to-reach" groups.

A paradigm that captures alternative realities will be more suitable for this work as it facilitates examination of the truth behind the multiple potential actors involved within the discourse and allows for an analysis of the impact of change. A broader qualitative or mixed paradigm can go beyond quantitative measures and, in this case, analyse

the emotive discourse used by politicians and identify the impact of policy experienced by individuals during a period of reform within public sector sport services.

4.3.2 Interpretivism

Contrary to the positivist approach, interpretivism suggests that 'reality' is constructed by actors and the perception of values and meanings of individuals within society. Max Weber (1864-1920), as a founding father of interpretivism, offered this research paradigm which promoted the idea of the social scientist whose objective was to understand the motives (cultural values and ideas) behind actions. Grix (2010:62) identifies 'interpretivism' as a collective term, which like its quantitative counterpart, offers a broad heading to cover a wide range of differing research approaches which all share an anti- or post-positivist position.

However, the central thrust of interpretivism suggests that there is a fundamental difference between natural and social science, with the former requiring the application of concepts and theories to describe and explain natural phenomena from an external perspective (Blaikie, 2007). The latter, on the other hand, requires the study of social phenomena 'as it already is' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 28) therefore reflecting a subjective interpretation of events. However, this level of subjective analysis has led to criticism from theorists. Hennink *et al* (2011) point out that social experience can have multiple perspectives and be open to change, therefore potentially impacting upon the validity of social reality.

Interpretivism has been used in sport policy in work by Houlihan and White (2002) to explore the impact of changing local authority policy priorities on community sport development. Whilst interpretivism does have its benefits as an underpinning to research, such as to deliver depth of feeling in a time of change, for example, during public sector reform, on its own, it would not be appropriate for this thesis. This is

because sport policy making at local government level has witnessed a change whereby its power has been disseminated through a number of networks and partnerships which each have their impact on the individual, organisation and service provision (Phillpots et al. 2011).

Due to the diverse nature of these emerging sport partnerships, Houlihan *et al.* (2009:4) recommend an exploration of the 'established, emerging or implicit propositions' within current sport policy. Therefore, Grix's (2010a:164) 'hard' interpretivist epistemological approach would allow this work to incorporate actor's beliefs and ideas whilst acknowledging the structures and institutions which influences their train of thought and resultant actions.

Both Grix (2010a) and Burrell and Morgan (1979:2) infer that the extreme positions of positivism and interpretivism suggest a dichotomy of assumptions of knowledge which on one hand can be assimilated, or on the other, are personally experienced. However, an alternative stance to this duality, put forward by philosopher Karl Popper (Blaikie, 2007:13), believed that despite differences between the two schools of thought all scientific explanations have fundamentally the same logical structure which may be subject to alteration to suit individual scientific disciplines.

4.3.3 Post positivism: Critical Realism

There are many versions of realism, which like the work of Weber, could be seen to straddle both a foundational and the antifoundational approach. Grix (2010c:85) notes how some textbooks use the term 'realism', which is confusing as this is also a key research perspective in disciplines such as International Relations.

For the purposes of this account, the critical realist approach will be considered. In a nod to its positivist counterparts, the post positivist approach of critical realism 'aims

to provide scientific principles that are capable of capturing the nature of reality' (Blaikie, 2007:59). Bhaskar (1979:26-7) believed that 'social objects cannot be studied in the same way as natural objects, but they can be studied scientifically as social objects' Hence, Bhaskar promoted the principle of sharing common social science approaches across the paradigms, albeit through differing procedures due to the subject matters involved.

Critical realism (CR) is a naturalistic perspective which offers a stratified ontology (world view) sitting between positivism and interpretivism, it reflects the seen and unseen power relationships in society over time. Bhaskar (1978) poses that society traps us within patterns of narratives which have been developed over time to create a local social order. Therefore, agency can be limited dependent upon our position in society as societal order can be repeated throughout history. Bhaskar (1978); Pearce and Woodiwiss (2001) agree with Archer (1995) supporting the view that social structures have causal powers whose effect (may/may not be seen) and can restrict or enable the power attributed to human agents.

Harre (2005) counters that causal power comes from powerful groups or interrelationships of powerful groups not social structures. In agreement, Archer (1995) extends this thesis by proposing that causal powers are 'in potentia', only emerging unless put into action by us as humans. However, Archer (1995: 202) suggests that we are subject to limitations to the degree of life chances to our in voluntaristic placement in society which can limit our opportunities by virtue of history. Therefore, power is dependent upon a (right time, right place) constellation formed of by the interface of culture, structure and people that will be unique within an individual set of circumstances over time. Critical realism demonstrates an assumption that

structures may not determine outcomes, they serve to constrain or facilitate them (Marsh and Furlong, 2002; Sibeon, 1999).

Critical realism has been used in sport, specifically by Houlihan and Green (2009) to focus broadly on modernisation in sport at the elite level in the UK and the wider agenda in England. Whilst there is no clear reference to the use of critical realism within the work, the critical level of analysis within the case studies demonstrates an attempt to outline the structure of the organisations involved plus an attempt to uncover their role and influence held during the modernisation of sport at these levels.

Critical realism provides a useful prism to explore a multi-layered evidence base. The focus for CR research being to illuminate the underlying processes and understand the data (Ackroyd and Karlsson, 2014). Critical realism takes elements from positivism and interpretivism, suggesting that whilst reality is absolute (albeit not objective) because of the infallibility of human nature, the perfect truth may not be attainable. Therefore, critical realism may not be suitable for this thesis as its focus on structures and institutions to explain social narratives and has the potential to limit the beliefs and practices of individuals within its paradigm.

The following section will explore the chosen research methodology, which will steer the methods and sources within this work.

4.4 Research Methodology

This thesis will explore sport policy using the epistemological underpinning of 'hard' interpretivism (Goodwin and Grix, 2011:541). Grix (2010c:459) advises that 'hard' interpretivism suggests a term for border area research that is conducted in a real-world context, in a position close to the harder elements of one paradigm (interpretivism) and the softer elements of another (post positivism/critical realism).

Phillpots *et al.* (2011:3) explain that 'hard' interpretivism is epistemologically close to both critical realism and the soft interpretivism used by Bevir and Rhodes (2003; 2006) in the decentred approach. For critical realists, the effects of structures and institution on the individual is key. Whilst for Bevir and Rhodes (2003; 2006) soft interpretivist work would indicate that the beliefs, values and ideas of actors are paramount. 'Hard' interpretivism suggests that an alternative philosophical lens is possible in the pursuit of sport policy research which would consider both elements in a more holistic approach to the analysis of sport policy.

The research for this thesis will be conducted within real world settings of two local authority sites located in England and Wales that have undergone radical changes to its sports service provision. As a researcher working in the sport policy realm, preference is given to the interpretive paradigm. However, interpretivism on its own may not be appropriate in this research as the nature of the research questions, require an ontological position that considered the influence of BOTH the individual perspective, the structural influence within and around the research context, in order that it captures the knowledge of the actors involved in local authority sport policy modernisation reforms in England and Wales. Phillpots *et al* (2011:3) consider that the ontological difference demonstrated within 'hard' interpretivist accepts the use of both actors, beliefs, values, ideas and the effect of structures and institutions in developing them.

Grix and colleagues (Phillpots et al. 2011; Goodwin and Grix, 2011) have previously explored the use of 'hard' interpretivism in the work of governance but more precisely in the application of sport policy, particularly in real world contexts. 'Hard' interpretivism builds upon work by Bevir and Rhodes (2003; 2006) and offers a 'modified decentred approach' (Grix, 2010:163) which will be demonstrated within this thesis as a multiple

case study to reflect the impact of modernisation in sport policy on the institutions and individuals involved at local authority level in England and Wales.

4.5 Research Methods: Introduction

The purpose of the following sections is to briefly re-introduce the work, the rationale for selection and characteristics of this case study as a method for data collection based on the philosophical traditions and literature surrounding the (sub) disciplines of sport policy.

Following the modernisation of local authority sport services (Houlihan and Green, 2009; King, 2012; Widdop *et al* 2018; Parnell *et al*., 2018, 2019) many non-essential services, including sport, found themselves in a situation where they became surplus to requirements across most of English and Welsh communities. Following the 2008 economic recession, King (2009; 2012; 2013;2014a/b) undertook comprehensive work on researching the shape of local authority sport services. King (2009) chose to focus on primarily on the area of local authority spend categorised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability in England, described as 'sport development and community recreation'. However, he notes (2009:5) that despite the wider focus, policy primarily relates to sport. Both Widdop et al (2017) and King (2009) recognise that funding to these services has the purpose of increasing participation for those disadvantaged sectors of the community who might not otherwise be able to engage with such opportunities.

A cumulative body of work (Keating; 2005; Andrews and Martin, 2010; Chaney and Wincott, 2014) recognised that the combination of devolution of the sporting sector and the impact of subnational policymaking increased the potential for divergences within the responses to community sport delivery, particularly in the context of financial constraint. As a result, colleagues within the literature have highlighted the need to

pursue further research on the impact of financial cuts and the devolution of the sport sector across the UK (Thomson, 2008; Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013; King, 2014: 48; McAllister, 2015).

Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to compare English and Welsh local authority responses to the modernisation of sport and leisure services. To recap, each case study has its own broad research question, namely:

How has Salford (English local authority) responded to modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How has Flintshire (Welsh unitary authority) responded to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How do these English and Welsh councils compare in their respective responses to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

Whilst the study has following objectives:

Table 4.1: Research Objectives for this Thesis

• To identify the key characteristics and key actors within (community) sport policy making to examine whether there is any converging or diverging factors as part of modernisation programmes implemented across English/Welsh local authority sites
• To identify and analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals have responded to modernisation within (community) sport policy following recent public sector reforms across English/Welsh local authority site
• To compare and contrast differing home countries perspectives on sport policy making in local government in England and Wales, by examining how modernisation has impacted upon decisions relating to community sport policy.
• To critically evaluate differing home countries perspectives and identify how any highlighted factors could impact upon future sport policy making.

In this thesis, cross-national comparative case studies compare differences across England and Wales in funding, governance and operating models (King, 2014) and their impact upon actors involved in the delivery of grassroots sport policy making

(Phillpots et al., 2011). The impact of modernisation of (community) sport policy is highlighted in organisational documentation together with sport specific policy: *Towards an Active Nation* (Sport England, 2016) and Wales; *Community Sport Strategy 2012-2020* (Sport Wales, 2012). Finally, the case studies include primary data collected in semi structured interviews from relevant actors from sport social enterprises, local authority and Home Nations Sports Councils across England and Wales.

4.5.1 Case Study Rationale

Eisenhardt (1989) advocated the use of case study research to develop theory in contextual environments where 'how' and 'why' questions needed answering. This thesis utilises a comparative case study which contains data from mostly qualitative sources. Due to its content, these case studies provide what Yin (2008) and Miles and Huberman (1994:29) describe as, a more robust design than a particular case because of the deeper levels of analysis involved. Whilst there are other qualitative approaches, the comparative case study seemed the most suitable as the main aim is to develop knowledge of the similarities and differences between sport policy delivery offered by local authorities across sites within England and Wales. Thereby creating an opportunity to gather multiple cases to understand New Public Management in sport policy making further by focussing in on how staff involved in decision making respond to the modernisation of delivery at local authority level.

Yin's work (1994) demonstrates a real effort to increase the validity and reliability of case study after proclaiming that it lacked legitimacy as a social science research strategy, due to an absence of well-defined and well-structured protocol. Yin's validity criteria (1994:19) is as follows: a) construct validity b) internal validity c) external

validity. These are principal approaches to improve the quality and standardise the delivery of academic case study research.

However, Crotty (1998:41) casts a shadow over Yin's work which mirrors a requirement to measure and establish 'facts' within case study research. Whilst Yin does not declare his epistemological leaning within his work, the way that he approaches case study work reflected within his four 'yardstick' approaches to validity may suggest from Crotty's understanding that Yin has a leaning towards positivism (Yazan, 2015:137).

This work will be conducted within a sport policy context, which Bloyce and Smith (2010 :13) reminds us of is a 'dynamic social process' which does not follow a strict pathway to formulation. Research conducted within a real-world setting is often recreated within 'the border area' of both positivist and interpretivist enquiry (Grix, 2010:459) leaving space for further exploration to capture the multiple realities that exist therein in what remains a contested topic area full of evolution.

Contrary to Yin, Merriam is more explicit in her constructivist philosophical leanings, stating the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that 'reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds' (Merriam, 1998: 6). Though, not as structured as Yin in her work, Merriam (1998:7) promotes the idea that a case study is 'an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system'. The bounded system (case) is understood as 'some phenomenon; program; group…or policy.' Contrary to Yin's creation of knowledge as a single reality, Merriam suggests, 'that reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality' (Merriam, 1998:22). This reflects the multiple realities evident within the author's own personal beliefs and that of the

epistemological position of this work, 'hard' interpretivism (Grix, 2010, Goodwin and Grix, 2011).

After discussing the epistemological positions of both Yin and Merriam, this section should consider the researcher's personal stance and how it has impacted upon the choice of case study methodology. The researcher has experience of working within the sport policy realm and has been intrigued by the cumulative processes that lead to the final outcomes, so was inherently drawn to critical pragmatism. The researcher's belief is that whilst reality is socially constructed, it is in a constant state of flux that is influenced by power structures within society.

Initially, the researcher felt drawn away from Yin due to the positivist nature of the work and pushed more towards the socially constructivist work of Merriam. However, consideration was given to Yin's case study approach within this thesis due to its consideration of appropriateness in 'contemporary events' (Yin, 2003: 7). This thesis presents an exploration of the contemporary sport policy issue of examining Home Nations local authority responses to delivering sport and leisure services under current financial constraints and ongoing reform.

Therefore, consideration and reference will be made to both authors case study methods, due to the multi-faceted approach contained within 'hard' interpretivism as part of the work. 'Hard 'interpretivism recreates knowledge that occurs in the border area between (soft) interpretivism and (post) positivism/critical realism and so this piece has acknowledged methodology grounded in those border areas of the ontological spectrum.

Myers (2013 :79) asserts that a case study is philosophically impartial and data collection is driven by the need to collate good research. Even good research requires

authenticity and Merriam (2009:216) advises that the perception of validity and reality should align with the philosophical assumption within the chosen research paradigm.

The aim is to present work that adheres to Guba's (1981) quality criteria: *credibility, transferability, dependability,* and *confirmability,* as this thesis represents a mainly qualitative case study*.* These terms are intended to replace Yin's (positivist) criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity which promotes an emphasis upon measurement and replicability which go against the ethos of a 'hard interpretivist' approach.

To maintain the qualitative approach to case study, methods of data collection have been chosen that promote Denzin and Lincoln's (2000:21) approach such as primary data collection through interview and secondary data collection through publicly available material. Further detail is outlined within the method sections below.

4.5.2 Case Study Design

The following sections below are designed to offer a detailed explanation of the method and sources approach within this study. As explained previously, this thesis adopts a multiple case study design utilising thematic analysis of primary sources and secondary sources, respectively. A detailed outline or 'prototype model' allows the reader to make a judgement on the dependability of the work and the extent to which research practices have been completed (Shenton, 2004:71).

Yin (2009:18) offers up a two-fold definition of case study which describes case study as an empirical method which 'investigates contemporary phenomenon in a real-world context when boundaries aren't evident' and technical approach to clarifying context

'copes with technically distinctive situations…relying on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion' (Yin, 2003:2).

The case study design has incorporated both an empirical and technical approach within its construction, the case studies in this thesis consisted of semi structured interviews with decision makers and operational staff within local authorities and their related partner organisation (Home Nation sport council, social enterprises and local government). Interviews were considered to be an appropriate choice as they offer insight into the day-to-day management of new leisure trusts, particularly in Wales, where literature is limited. Yin's (2017) definition promotes case study as a unique methodology to explore real world settings. However, there is still the reliance on a 'scientific' approach, to measuring one level of reality.

Conversely, Merriam (1998), presents a more descriptive list of the constituent elements of case study than Yin (2017). She suggests that 'A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988: 21). Merriam's work, inspired by Miles and Huberman (1984:9), encouraged the idea of considering the case study research within a *bounded context* (specific context of the local authority) and *integrated system* (to understand how the organisation has responded to sport policy making in an era of public service reform).

The case study approach is a popular choice in research reflecting societal issues in sport policy delivery. As previously established, case studies have been used in literature around leisure trusts (Reid, 2003; Simmons, 2004; 2008 and King, 2014).

Reid (2003) and King, (2014) both chose case study as a research strategy to explore the impact of modernisation in leisure services following the transfer of delivery from local authority to other service providers.

Case study delivers a social commentary on contemporary events such as the transfer of local authority services into the public domain. In particular, the choice of 'hard' interpretivism within this work provides us with an opportunity to explain and understand the impact of modernisation of sport policy at the grassroots level. 'Hard' interpretivism offers a dual focus upon the structures and beliefs of agents within a particular context to provide a voice for the belief of actors within the organisational setting, but also deeper exploration for the forces that may impact upon the individual.

The relationship between the researcher and the research

Guba and Lincoln (1981:378) warns of the 'unusual problem of ethics and the responsibility as a case study writer to remain objective when constructing the case study and be mindful of minimising bias. As the researcher is an employee in one of the case study locations, this opportunity was maximised to collect data from relevant participants within the setting. However, this required the researcher to be mindful of objectivity in the role of researcher and of the values that could be clouding judgement during this work (Patton, 2001). To counteract the potential for researcher bias, a gatekeeper was employed at both sites and primary data was collected from colleagues in separate sides of the business. In addition, relevant supplementary quotes from secondary sources that were publicly available were included within case studies.

This work sought to develop what was a subject of personal and academic interest to shed light on the changes that have taken place in the delivery of the local authority

sport and leisure service. As an employee of one of the alternative delivery models involved within the research, it could be suggested that my presence may have influenced the answers from colleagues' interviews. However, this work sought to be objective and work within clear boundaries within the thesis. Data collection was designed to position the organisational issues raised within the wider national context of community sport and relevant local authority policy.

As research is conducted within a social environment, it would be impossible to not influence the data collected within this work, however, the researcher has sought to be objective about data collection and transparent in the execution. In a process of reflexivity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001) the thesis has outlined the researcher's influence on the work as part of the setting in an ongoing conversation both with themselves and the reader.

Each case consists of interviews and relevant publicly available organisational documentation from a range of stakeholders affected by the modernisation of sport policy. In recent work, Rule and John (2015) advocate the use of case study as an opportunity to develop theory and research that is influenced and informed by practice. As the researcher can offer fine detail within the work as they have a greater understanding of application of the theory from the perspective of the context.

4.6 Theoretical Framework

Yin (2009:20) proposed that development of basic theory knowledge was the first essential step prior to data collection in a case study. In order that researchers could go into the field with a 'blueprint' for the research design of the study. Whereas Merriam (2001:7), promotes the development of the theoretical framework, suggesting that 'theory is the stance that you bring to your study. It's the structure of your study'

Yin (2009:15) notes that a common cited drawback of case study results is its limited generalisability beyond theory to larger populations. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that the burden to judge transferability in a qualitative method, extends to the reader than remaining with the original researcher. Therefore, the final thesis contributes knowledge of governmentality as a method governing within the context of sport policy.

https://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/12/02/governmentality-notes-thought-michel-foucault/

It may not be transferable to all local authorities whose sport and recreation services have been outsourced to other delivery providers because of modernisation policy. However, the thesis may uncover patterns and concepts that the reader could take forward to their environment.

Figure 4.3 below illustrates the theoretical framework which will allow me to observe and understand (governmentality) over several units of analysis related to the same phenomena as previously discussed in Chapter 1 and 3

Governmentality

(Foucauldian lens on modernisation of sport
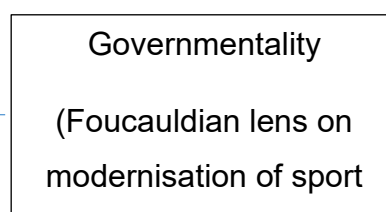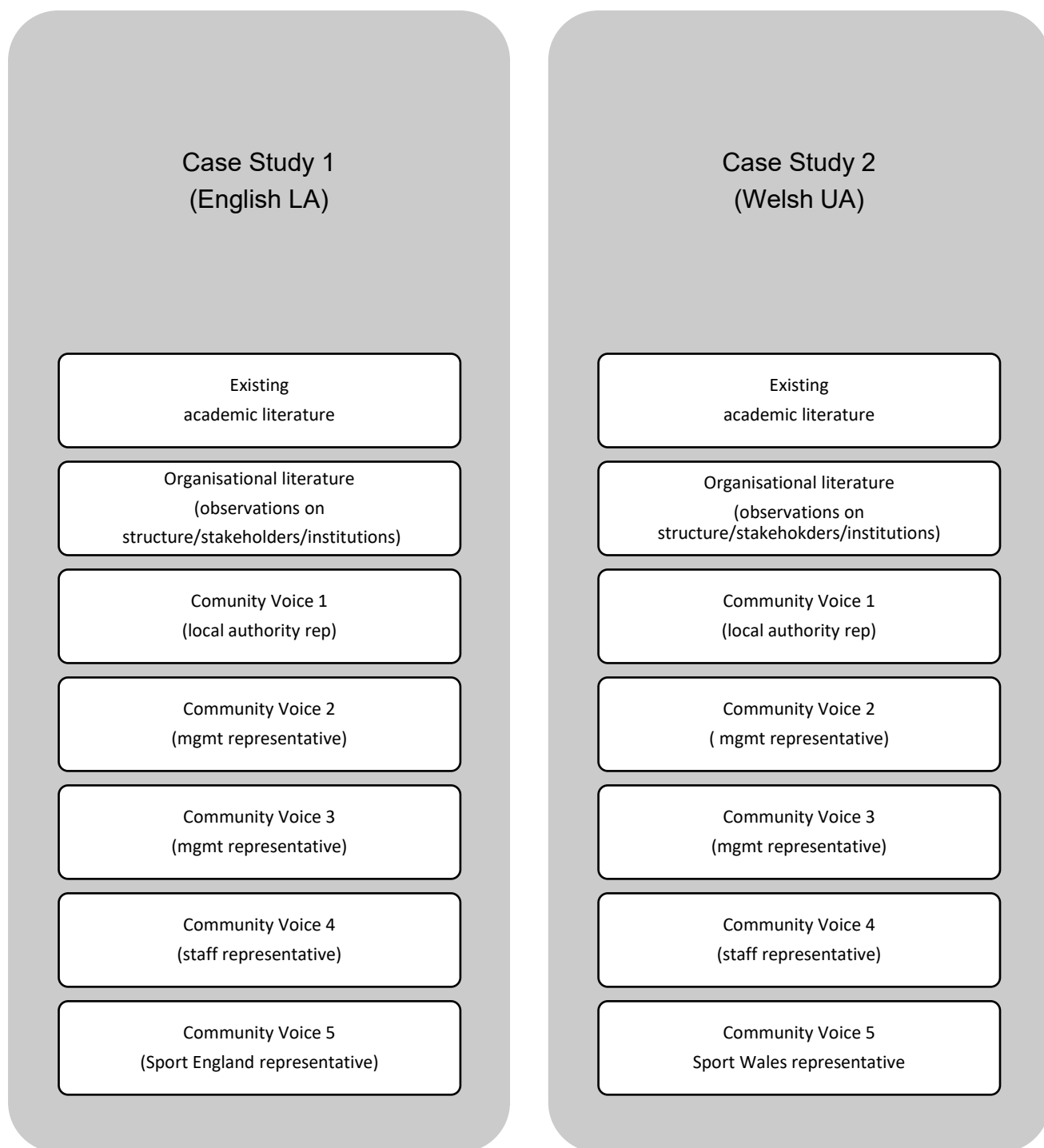
Figure 4.3: Comparative Case Study (n=2), determined by the response to policy in differing Home Nations contexts.

4.7 Units of Analysis

Several authors including Miles and Huberman (1984); Merriam (1995); Cresswell (1995) and Yin (2003) have recommended placing boundaries within a case to retain

focus and manageability of data collection. Bryman (2008) encourages the use of comparative data collection and suggests the use of similar variables within a unit of analysis. The case study approach allows in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings, in this case two sites involved in the delivery of sport and leisure service on behalf of parent authorities and supported by funding from Home Nations Sports Councils.

The parameters for selecting the multiple sources that are included as primary and subunits of analysis are detailed below, with further information offered in Table 4.2 and later in the work. Selection of the content within the parameters reflects the recommendation by Crowe et al.2011 to develop sources for this comparative case study design that demonstrate a detailed description of each individual case, that where possible are broadly comparable even though they may vary in nature and depth. For the purposes of this thesis, there are four primary and four subunits of analysis using the following rationale:

Chapter 5 reflects findings from a case study set in the North-West England local government borough of Salford (population: 254,408), whereas Chapter 6 reflects findings from a case study set in the North East Wales unitary authority of Flintshire (population: 155,593). These sites were chosen as they both demonstrated examples of councils that had chosen similar employee-owned alternative delivery models which both operated under the same operating structure (Industrial and Provident Society) to take on the provision of sport and leisure within their respective communities.

Each site provided access, through a gatekeeper, to a range of 'expert participants' and local authority/home nations sports partners who could articulate their perception of the impact of recent sport policy making designed to modernise the service delivery.

'Policy here is taken to be any course of action (or inaction) relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources. Fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process' (Codd 1988: 235).

Primary data collection was conducted through semi structured interviews chosen to explore the theoretical basis of governmentality which seeks to influence power relationships through management techniques. Therefore, interviews included questions around the impact of policy decisions and perceived autonomy because of the change in ownership.

Post 2010 was chosen as a date for investigation due to its relevance to the Comprehensive Spending Review and budget cuts to existing sport and leisure provision. Secondary data was selected via literature and desk top research of relevant publicly accessible policy information from the organisational and national community /sport policy which refers to the transfer and management of sport and leisure service.

Table 4.2: 'The primary and subunits of analysis for this Thesis'

Unit of Analysis	Type	Parameters	Rationale
PRIMARY	Theory	Foucauldian perspectives relating to governmentality as a mode of governing demonstrated in the modernisation policy of sport and leisure service through inclusion of governing technologies aligned to New Public Management.	Referred to Foucault's work around power/knowledge concepts relating to governmentality and supported any references management practices that could be considered indicative of NPM. by referring to NPM Hood (1991) seven-point check list.
PRIMARY	Policy document	Sport Wales (2012) 'Community Sport Strategy 2012-2020' Sport England (2016) 'Towards an Active Nation' (Table 4.4 offers full list)	Offer government steer for community sport following Simpson Review (WAG, 2011) and Westminster Government CSR (HM Treasury, 2010;2016).
PRIMARY	Interview Data	10 x semi structured interviews with staff from the strategic and operational level – 5 x England and 5 x Wales	Staff involved during the changes, therefore regardless of status, they offer 'expert-knowledge' to the work (Meuser and Nagel, 2009).
PRIMARY	Definition	Local authority sport and leisure service 'sport development and community recreation' (APSE, 2012; King, 2013a, 2013b).	Perceived as the most vulnerable area of funding within sport (Widdop et al., 2017)
SUB	Time Period	Post 2010 financial and release of policy docs to date (last 10 years)	To create a broad space to capture the impact of changes to sport during a time of significant reform within the broader sector (Baxter and Jack, 2008:545).
SUB	Context	A comparison between local council's/community sport deliverer sites; Wales (1 x UA site) and England (1 x LA site)	To offer a multilevel analysis to explain any similarities or differences within the delivery of the policies (Yin, 1994)
SUB	Participants	10 staff from the strategic and operational level – 5 x England and 5 x Wales	I have chosen staff involved during the changes, therefore regardless of status, they offer 'expert- knowledge' to the work (Meuser and Nagel, 2009).
SUB	Social structures	Identification lines of disciplinary power and perceived autonomy via policies, regulations, targets, decision making, community engagement	To uncover power relations (Foucault, 1977)

The use of 'hard' interpretivism within this research takes account of both actor's beliefs/perspectives and the potential influence from the structural context (Phillpots et al., 2011: 3). Whilst the development of case studies reflects the voice of those diverse community actors affected by centralised sport policy making. In addition, this work will demonstrate a comparative analysis that will seek to understand and explain any potential commonalities or differences that exist within sport policy delivery practices that between English and Welsh local authorities.

Adopting a 'hard' interpretivism approach in tandem with a comparative case study offers up an opportunity to research the sport policy environment to explore concepts relating to governmentality over several units of analysis related to the same phenomena. This research will reflect and create a voice for the diverse a) community actors b) interrelationships between the agents involved in decision making. Finally, c) the structures through which power is exercised or acted upon (Grix, 2009). Therefore, as Table 4.2 indicates the comparative case study will allow me to answer the research questions within the thesis using multiple sources to reflect the varied viewpoints that are present within a community setting (Mika, 2007) and increase the rigour and validity of the work (Yin; 1984, Easterby Smith et al, 2012).

The choice of using concepts relating power/knowledge development in Foucault governmentality within this work is based upon the extant academic literature (see Chapter 1 and 3). Governmentality demonstrates a management approach to ensure preference maximisation in the delivery of service and in this case are enforced through disciplinary power from NPM regimes which evaluate and quantify the quality of services and performance of individual practitioners.

In national sport policy, references are made by Sport England (2009) and Sport Wales (2012; 2016) to 'modernisation and empowerment' of community actors as a discourse for the future direction of community sport delivery. This thesis posits that creating an opportunity for freedom and autonomy, these policies are promoting the traditional sport and leisure service as a site where individuals are encouraged to become self -regulating subjects transformed by an externally constructed 'truth' or moral code (Rose, 1999).

This thesis creates the voice for employee-owned models of sport and leisure in England and Wales into debates around the development of comparative sport policy research (Dowling et al., 2018, Harris and Houlihan, 2014, Houlihan and Green, 2008, Green and Houlihan, 2005) by observing issues through a Foucauldian lens.

This research observes modernisation in sport policy in the UK by comparing and contrasting outcomes and policy divergence between two of its constituent sub nations which itself will add to sport policy research, and in line with Eisenhardt (1989) generalise to Foucault's work on 'governmentality'. This work will highlight the impact from the shift towards the centralising 'discipline' (Rose, 1999:22) for English and Welsh local authorities responsible for sport/leisure delivery. Whilst further investigation will explore the rhetoric contained within sport policies Towards an Active Nation (Sport England, 2016) and Community Sport Strategy 2012-2020 (Sport Wales, 2012) to evidence the resultant effect of modernisation in practice on community sport services.

4.7.1 Sampling

Whatever unit of analysis is chosen they serve as a guide in the selection or 'sampling' of cases. In quantitative research, the goal is to obtain a small enough size sample that can be representative of a larger population. Due to the multiple nature of this

case study, Yin (2009:54) recommends the use of 'replication logic' which will either confirm (literal replication) or contrast (theoretical replication) with findings from the original case. Bryman (2008) criticised the narrow focus involved within replication and recommended a comparative design to ensure that data is collected from similar variables. To compare and contrast local authority sites within England and Wales, two sites were sought that presented with a similar set of variables.

A purposive sampling technique was utilised to select contexts to conduct the work with the selection criteria of answering the research question (Merriam, 1998) and offering interest within the research (Denscombe, 2007). Interviewees were selected based upon their experience and involvement as a practitioner (strategic or operational) within policy related changes and delivery of current sport and leisure services.

Due to researcher ease of accessibility to data collection at the Flintshire organisation 'Aura,' along with local authority and Sport Wales, contacts in Wales were recruited by telephone to answer the research aim. This organisation is an employee-owned co-operative model delivering sport and leisure services and an alternative site in England was identified following desktop research using the following selection criteria (Denscombe, 2007) to ensure Bryman (2008) comparative design was maintained:

- 1 x English employee owned industrial and provident society model
- Access to 3 x strategic staff all involved with delivery of sport/leisure at the site
- Access to 1 x local authority staff with responsibility for handling the relationship between the ADM and the local authority.

- Access to 1 x Sport England staff with responsibility / knowledge of the impact of its community sport policy on local authority delivery

Salford Community Leisure was identified as a local site which met these criteria, and a contact was identified in leisure and contacted by telephone and email. The contact volunteered to act in a gatekeeper capacity to recruit further in house interview contacts and provide external contact details within the local authority and Sport England. These externals matched the criteria of externals in Wales in terms of professional experience and were recruited via telephone and email requests. Appendix 1 outlines the roles of each of the interviewees, with all requests for involvement in the research from these organisations being accepted. Additional organisations were contacted in North West England but these had different operating models and /or access to local government was limited.

Whilst the respective geographic case study can refer to its respective relevant national policy making, due to the small size of the population in the case study, it cannot generalise the data findings to the whole of the country. As indeed it is evident that there are several distinct types of alternative delivery models in the delivery of sport and leisure. Therefore, such strategic sampling of participants within this case study design was selected to increase the generalisability to modernisation theory (Fryberg, 2006).

For the purposes of this work English and Welsh national policy documents were included following literature review and that were relevant to the reform of local authority sport services. These documents came from the local authority, health board, and sports councils. In addition, organisational policy documents were identified by desktop research from the employee-owned leisure trusts around the current delivery

of sport and leisure services. Further details relating to selection and analysis of secondary documents are included below in section 4.8.1.

4.8 Data Collection

Both Yin and Merriam uphold data collection from multiple sources to fully interpret the real-life situation within the case study. However, Yin (2017) recommends utilising collection from both quantitative and qualitative sources in case study. Whereas Merriam (1998) favours multiple types of qualitative data, offering a detailed approach involving the formation of theoretical framework, identifying a research problem/question and developing a (purposive) sample. For both authors, selection of data sources is driven by the research question and overall design.

This research is a multiple case study design with data collection from mostly qualitative sources, to capture the layered realities and meanings that exist and can be co-created by the researcher (Yin, 2017).

As suggested previously in Table 4.2, a number of qualitative approaches are used to capture, compare and contrast data through the case study design. Primary sources are collected by semi structured interviews. Patton (2002:341) supports interviewing as a data collection method to 'clarify the meaning behind people's behaviours. It allows us to enter another person's perspective.'

This primary data came from credible sources, people who were experienced in their roles and knowledgeable of the experience of the modernisation within their organisational setting. Some answers were context specific, as in relationships between local authorities and Sport Wales/England, so there was an assumption that the power always lay within the hands of the state due to issues of funding. Therefore, it could be said that the data demonstrated transferability to other local authorities within the national context.

Secondary sources were combined with the literature review and data analysis from semi structured face to face interviews with senior council officers, managers and staff responsible for the delivery of community sport across England and Wales. Semi structured interviews were chosen as means to collect data due to their ability to combine structure with open ended questioning, in this case from a number of sources which created an opportunity for the data to offer confirmability in its origin. Multiple data sources offered robustness (Yin, 2003:26) and provided the contextual background to enable a cross border comparison to highlight the basis for and impact of decision making around modernisation of public sport and leisure services.

Grix (2010a) described the notion of triangulation as meaning that the researcher could combine different methods of investigation. The benefits of combining more than one method of data collection include being able to secure more reliable data and reduce bias (Grix, 2010a).

The initial stage of literature review contained work that covered sport policy/public service reform across the UK (Coalter, 1995, Henry, 2001), England (King, 2013, 2014) and Wales (Chaney, 2015; Bolton and Martin, 2013) and work outlined within Chapter 2 and 3. The literature review informed the English and Welsh picture of public service reform and sport policy. However, King (2012; 2013:217) identified the following themes below which captures many of the refrains from within the literature review and were used as a guide to inform the latter stages of multiple methods data collection; semi structured interviews and relevant additional secondary data collection (especially government/company reports, statistics or further research. King's (2012) themes were used as a priori codes for later content analysis (Kripendorff, 2004). Namely:

- the policy priorities and the wider political and administrative status of sport services

- the financial context and the impact of funding reductions in local government

- the organisational models and changes in modes of service delivery.

- the historical and existing infrastructure for sport and the relationships between sport services and other internal and external bodies, including national government.

However, these codes remain organic as more data is collected and any changes are reflected in the development of the theoretical framework throughout the empirical work. A small pilot study was conducted to ensure that the data collection tools were adequate and that the respondents could understand the interview questions and that data collected would be relevant for the task (Bryman and Bell, 2015)

The research strategy of wider reading within literature review, informed development of the primary interview schedule and identified secondary data sources (mainly policy documents relating to recent changes in local government services and national/organisational sport policy documents). Whilst there are a wide range of policy documents available both issued at the national and local level, these can also be issued within organisation to steer the direction of their work. There is also the question of what the policy document is about that needs considering in the selection of documents for further analysis (Tight, 2019)

4.8.1 Data Analysis

As with collecting data there are several approaches to analysing data but Yin (2014) propose that this area remain the least developed despite it creating an avenue to raise issues around subjectivity and validity of the work. Therefore, researchers need to be clear about what they are doing, why they are doing it, and include a clear description of analysis methods (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Malterud, 2001; Thorne, 2000) used to create clarity around the trustworthiness of the work.

4.8.2 Primary data: Interviews

Operating under Institutional Ethical Guidelines, after gaining informed consent, semi structured interview data was recorded from participants using a digital tape recorder. This source of primary data was collated for later interpretation by thematic analysis and member checking by participants, with a guiding principle that everything should be questioned (Silverman, 2006). All ten interviews were transcribed, and notes developed accordingly to prepare for analysis and later qualitative description. The use of verbatim transcripts and field notes allowed for the development of an audit trail which would be vital in enhancing dependability within the work (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Halcomb and Davidson, 2006).

Member checking was offered, and confirmation obtained from interviewees after transcription and before data was included in the final thesis. Miles and Huberman (1984) and Patton (2002) consider member checking to be the benchmark test for establishing credibility within research and another source of methodological triangulation (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Thematic analysis was employed within thesis as a method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set which can offer a

rigorous qualitative research method to answer a variety of research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis within this work presented an opportunity to inductively explore the primary data in an 'ongoing reflexive dialogue' as part of a six-stage process detailed in Table 4.3 below which was applied to the interviews with staff described in Appendix 1. The thematic analysis approach presented by Braun and Clarke (2014,2020,2022) offered a pragmatic solution to the issues around time and resources to analyse ten interviews which were audio taped, transcribed together with initial notes

Table 4.4 Phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87)

Table 1 Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

 Following a familiarisation process by reading and listening to the audio tapes again, this iterative approach generated initial codes (n=320) from the interviews and some initial answers to the questions of 'what is happening in the data?' (Glaser, 1992: 52) in both cases. The second level of analysis created a series of themes. Following, a review of these themes and further exploration, the themes were reduced to more defined and specific titles. The use of codes summarizes the different meanings in the respondents' grids by categorizing these meanings and by counting similarities and differences within each category. Following recommendations from Miles and

Huberman (1984) data collection and analysis continued in an iterative process by breaking codes down to answer the research question (or not) to retain the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and allow for theory development until saturation point was reached.

Whilst the data analysis itself was an inductive process, the starting point for category naming was directed by a priori codes from King (2012; 2013), however these codes needed developing again following the reflecting upon the totality of the data collected and trying to establish 'what is actually happening in the data?' (Glaser,1992:52). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommends that 'categories can come from sources in the literature until further data analysis dictates a refinement of the initial selection

The final stages of reviewing the data, developed a thematic analysis map for each case study and the map for the Welsh case study is offered below
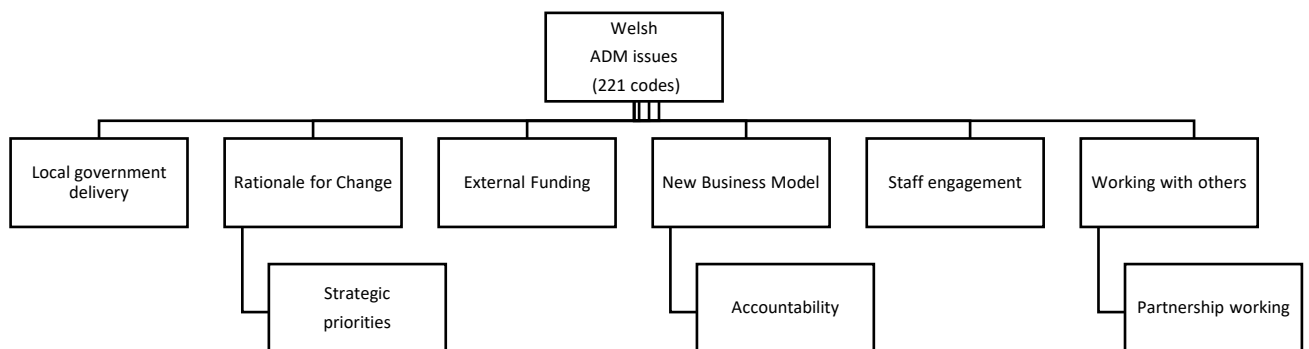
Figure4.4 A Thematic Analysis Map of the Welsh Case Study

Miles and Huberman (1984) identified that a goal of qualitative research was to understand local, contextualised causality by linking isolated variables rather than general laws. Field researchers are often interested in knowing what goes on in the settings they study, not only to advance their theoretical understanding of these settings but also because, they want to contribute to their improvement

4.8.3 Secondary Data: Policy Documents.

Documents are defined as "any written material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to some requests from the investigator" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981: 228). Scott (1990) distinguished two broad categories of documentation, personal and official (state and private documents). Secondary data collection for this thesis consisted of official documentary sources (Scott, 1990) for the two sites which included company reports and publicly accessible data regarding public service reform, health service and from home nations sporting councils.

In addition, Scott (1990) identified quality control standards for documentary sources, namely authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. These standards were applied within this thesis accordingly. The documents included were checked to ensure that they were from an implacable source. Credibility to whether the evidence is typical of its kind and whether the author is sincere in his perspective and accuracy of recording data (ibid, 1990). Whilst this sincerity can only be assumed, it is assumed that there is no intent to fraudulent deceive the public in what is official documentary evidence.

The literature search was informed from guidance by Bryman and Bell (2013:117) generating and noting relevant key words as part of an iterative reflective process. Desktop research identified publicly accessible policy documents relevant to the transfer and management of the employee-owned businesses by primarily accessing

the relevant organisational/local authority and home nations sports council websites and searching for 'alternative delivery model,' 'business plan,' 'modernisation of sport and leisure,' 'employee-owned model.' As the research was conducted over an extended period, I kept up to date to with changes in policy where possible.

The documents included within Table 4.4 are considered representative of their kind, such is the case of government policy documents. The final reason for including policy documents is to gain understanding whether that is from the author, from the reader or within the document itself (Scott, 1990) or indeed which inferences to make about the truth of its factual assertions (Platt, 1981).

Table 4.5 A table of main documents used within this thesis

Name	Author	Type of Document	Year
Local Sport Strategies x 6	Local Authorities ENG/WAL	Local Strategy	Various
Business Reports x 2	Aura	Organisational Strategy	Various
Business Reports x 2	SCL	Organisational Strategy	Various
Vision for Sport in Wales.	Sport Wales	Policy Document	2019
Facilities for Future Generations	Sport Wales	Policy Document	2018
Community Sport Strategy	Sport Wales	Policy Document	2012
A Vision for Sport in Wales	Sport Wales	Policy Document	2011
Towards an Active Nation Strategy 2016-2021	Sport England	Policy Document	2016
Assessing needs and opportunities guide for indoor and outdoor sports facilities	Sport England	Policy Document	2014
Sport England Strategy 2012–2017	Sport England	Policy Document	2012
Sport England Strategy 2008–2011	Sport England	Policy Document	2008
Is the feeling mutual: New Ways of Designing and Delivering Public Services in Wales	Welsh Government	Policy document	2015
Public Sports and Recreation Services: Making them fit for the future. London	Audit Commission	Policy document	2006
Agenda for clinical commissioning	Salford Clinical Commissioning	Minutes	2020
Local authority sport and recreation services in England: where next?	Association for Public Service Excellence	Report	2012

The analysis of these secondary documents involved using supplementary quotes add richness to the data in accordance with (Yin, 1991) who recommended the use of interpretations and explanations and sound application of research ethics to avoid anecdotal use (Silverman, 2014).

Any numerical information from these policy documents was considered to be statistically insignificant to be recorded within a quantitative approach, so where appropriate, information was included in descriptive format. Field notes recorded the observational data and thoughts relating to the strategic documentation. These notes were revisited using 'analytical reflections' to provide on the spot clarity and focus on the research question (Tracy *et al.*, 2013). The field notes, raw data and any other interview related work formed part of an available audit trail which demonstrated the evolution process of the research and helped to demonstrate confirmability and dependability within the work (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The conceptual framework developed in Figure 4.5 provides a breakdown of comparative analysis across the cases within work, including the concepts highlighted by Hood (1991).
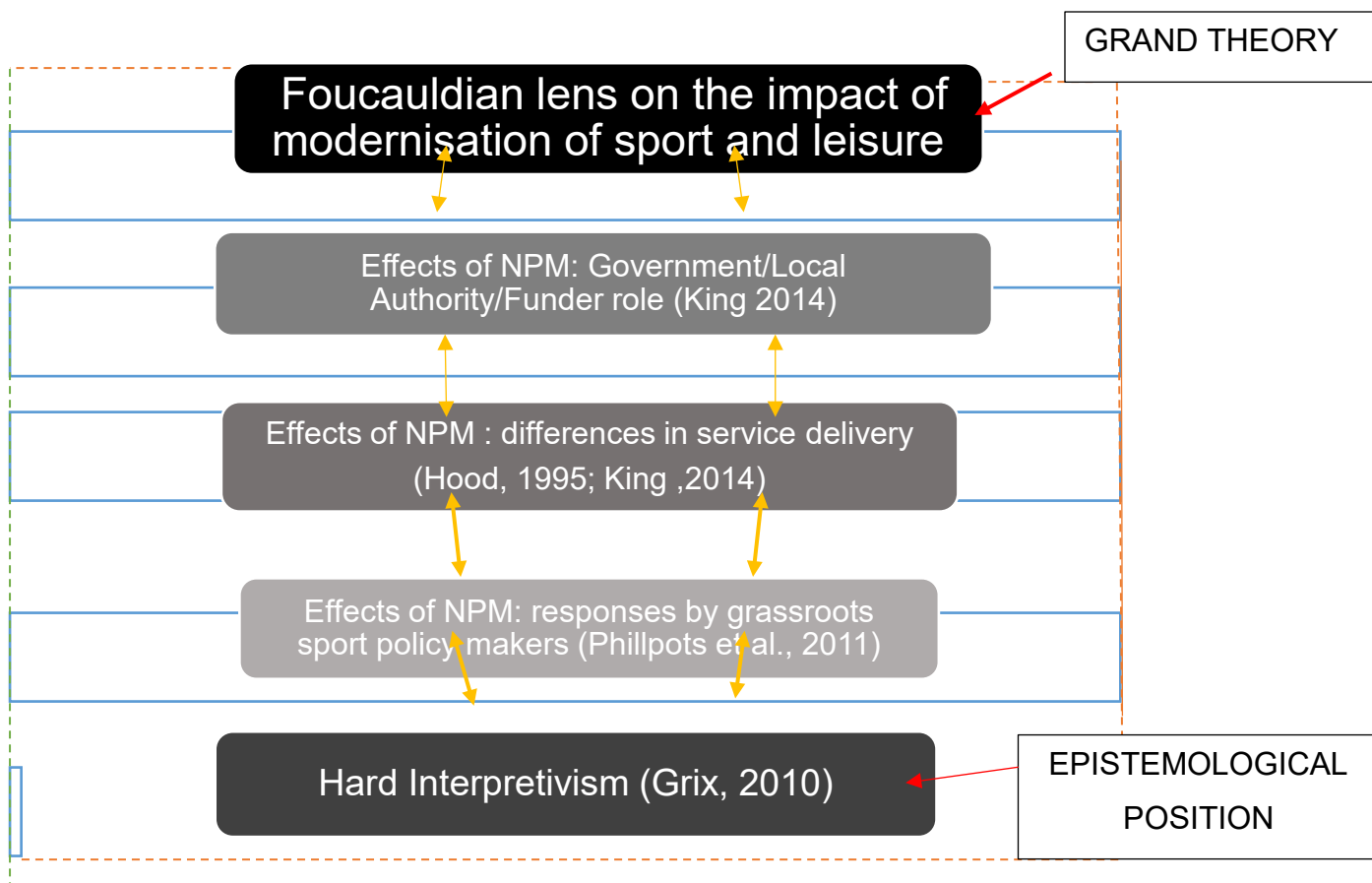
Figure4 5: A theoretical model of comparative case study analysis for this thesis

As suggested previously in Table 4.2, a number of qualitative approaches are used to capture, compare and contrast data through the case study design. Primary sources are collected by semi structured interviews. Patton (2002:341) supports interviewing as a data collection method to 'clarify the meaning behind people's behaviours. It allows us to enter another person's perspective.' This primary data came from credible sources, people who were experienced in their roles and knowledgeable of the experience of the modernisation within their organisational setting. Some answers were context specific, as in relationships between local authorities and Sport Wales/England, so there was an assumption that the power always lay within the hands of the state due to issues of funding. Therefore, it could be said that the data demonstrated transferability to other local authorities within the national context.

Secondary sources were combined with the literature review and data analysis from semi structured face to face interviews with senior council officers, managers and staff responsible for the delivery of community sport across England and Wales. Semi structured interviews were chosen as means to collect data due to their ability to combine structure with open ended questioning, in this case from a number of sources which created an opportunity for the data to offer confirmability in its origin. Multiple data sources offered robustness (Yin, 2003:26) and provided the contextual background to enable a cross border comparison to highlight the basis for and impact of decision making around modernisation of public sport and leisure services.

4.8.4 Expected contribution to knowledge

The research concentrates on the impact of wider macro level policy making on micro level settings, creating focus of attention upon the "community level" in this work. This study has an overall aim to compare the impact of sport policy making decisions across two countries with their own differences in culture, language and governance (Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Andrews and Martin, 2007). Hanrais (1996) proposes that cross national/cultural research allows for the investigation of a particular issue in two or more countries, using the same research instruments, with the intention of comparing its outcome within that particular socio-cultural context. This research observes the UK sport system within its constituent Home Nations elements by creating greater understanding of the impact of modernisation within differing cross border contexts and the people that are affected. Table 4.6 below demonstrates the expected contribution to knowledge within this work

Table 4.6 Expected contribution to knowledge in this thesis

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:	EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH
To critically analyse modernisation and propose a theoretical framework for analysing its impact on (community) sport policy making following public sector reform across local authority sites in England and Wales.	*Introduce new insight into the governance of individual local authorities that manage public sport/leisure facilities in England and Wales*
To identify the key characteristics and key actors within (community) sport policy making to examine whether there is any converging or diverging factors as part of modernisation programmes implemented across English/Welsh local authority sites	*Evidence how actors are included in the changing face of public sport/leisure delivery in England and Wales*
To identify and analyse the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and explore how individuals have responded to modernisation within (community) sport policy following recent public sector reforms across English/Welsh local authority sites	*Evidence when actors are included in the changing face of public sport/leisure delivery in England and Wales.*
To compare and contrast differing home countries perspectives on sport policy making in local government in England and Wales, by examining how modernisation has impacted upon decisions relating to community sport policy.	*Highlight the impact of modernisation to produce sustainable public sport/leisure delivery in England and Wales.*
To critically evaluate differing home countries perspectives to evaluate any highlighted factors could impact upon sport policy making.	*Deliver collaborative work with practitioners and identify opportunities for community involvement in decision making in delivery of public sport and leisure service*

4.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the research design for this thesis. The work itself was focused on two sections: I) philosophical approach and ii) research design.

Initially, consideration was given to previous philosophical traditions and relevant literature at the intersection of the sub disciplines of politics, sport governance and local authorities as they underpin the boundaries the work. Philosophical discussion centred around the use of the directional and dichotomous nature of traditions within research. Ontological, epistemological and research paradigms were considered for their applicability within the sport policy context. Sport policy does not fit the notion of

devolved power amongst actors due to the underlying financial dependence created within the context (Grix, 2010:160) so an alternative epistemological lens 'hard' interpretivism (Grix, 2010:164; Goodwin and Grix,2011:552) was debated. 'Hard' interpretivism has been applied within the sport policy context previously with its raison d'être to build upon previous governance work by Bevir and Rhodes (2003;2006). This approach sought to unite diverse epistemologies and the reality of conducting research within the practical environment by suggesting that work is mainly conducted on the border between previously accepted philosophical positions.

Secondly, the chosen epistemological lens, 'hard' interpretivism, using a modified decentred approach, was presented within the confines of the research design. Initially, debate was centred upon the choice of case study and the influence of philosophy upon the chosen approach. A comparative case study (n=3) was outlined, complete with units of analysis, theoretical framework and sampling, informed by work from Yin (2017) and Merriam (1998). To understand and explain the impact of modernisation in local authority sport in both Wales and England, data was collected from primary and secondary sources relating to the community context. A final third case study demonstrates the similarities and divergences between policy within both countries. Several conceptual frameworks were included to demonstrate the interview process and the expected contribution to knowledge.

The following two chapters demonstrate and present the empirical findings within this work. Each case study is intended to demonstrate an understanding and explanation of the impact of modernisation reforms on community sport previously delivered by local authorities in England and Wales. The work is summarised with a conclusion, a subsequent discussion chapter and then conclusion of work in the concluding chapter of the thesis

Chapter 5: A Case Study of Sport England, Salford Community Leisure and Libraries and Salford City Council.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter's case study demonstrates the localised influences that have impacted community sport policymaking from Sport England in a partnership arrangement between Salford Community Leisure and Libraries Limited and Salford City Council in the North West of England.

Initially, this chapter provides an overview of the local infrastructure for community sport within Salford to demonstrate its current priorities in line with Sport England's strategic vision of increasing children young and people's participation.

The final sections within this case study explore the empirical findings around the past, present and future for community sport delivery within Salford whilst contrasting it against the strategic direction laid out within national sport policy of the UK Government and Sport England. Empirical data was collated following document analysis of a range of government and local sport policy documents and interviews conducted with five key actors from across the community partnership.

This English case study example is intended to provide a picture of transformational change within a local authority, including the empirical reality of using an alternative delivery to continue to deliver sport and leisure services across the community.

5.1 Community Sport service in Salford

The community sport service in Salford was established in the late 1960s under the recreational welfare agenda. The modernisation of the English public sector afforded local governments the 'contrived randomness' of grants, plans and strategies secured by a hierarchical relationship with the state. In line with the New Public Management regime, the local government was required to improve service delivery. Thereby,

seeing Westminster dictate the shape of provision due to its reliance on financial support (Stoker, 2006; Glennon et al., 2017).

In more recent times, many funders, including state-based ones, create hierarchical control within the community sport provision in Salford. However, there is a requirement by some to ask for match funding towards sport initiatives. As one senior manager who has worked for the council and Salford Community Leisure reflected:

> Nowadays, we are chasing funding; back in the day, previously, we strategically thought about what we wanted, what we needed and applied for funding around that. Now we are led by the funders and have to adapt to whatever current buzzword of the day (Interview 1, 2020).

The Local Authority Manager described that Salford City Council work in partnership with Sport England and S.C.L. to 'provide capacity at the core of G.M.' (Interview 3, 2020). He described it as a 'funding/bidding mechanism quite frankly' (Interviewee 3, 2020).

A Senior manager within Sport England working as the strategic voice for sport across G.M. noted that whilst there may be unique needs across the patch, 'What we are finding is that there are not huge amounts of money that are required to deliver in the community' (Interviewee 4, 2020). Yet, this reduction in Sport England's contribution could be explained by the requirement for external partners to match fund initiatives. As demonstrated in the Salford context and observed by the Local Authority manager:

> As a council and S.C.L., we may have to put money in to support Sport England's policy requirements under the Active Lifestyles, Health, facilities, etc. (Interviewee 3, 2020).

A long-serving manager within Salford City Council and now Salford Community Leisure and Libraries Trust recalled the service's direction over the years. Salford sport and leisure services have consistently seen reductions to its funding, despite opportunities to improve the service.

Initially, the Recreation Department housed the Sport and Leisure service, but this provision was transferred to Education as part of a direct service organisation (D.S.O.). Eventually, in 2003, the management of the sport and leisure service, together with related assets was transferred to a community-owned business (S.C.L.) Salford Community Leisure Trust.

As part of S.C.L., the Sports Development Team (comprising of Sport Development Officers) key role is to increase sport/physical activity opportunities within the local community, working within organisational and funders guidelines. The main funders focused within this thesis are the local authority, the health board and Sport England. The Sports Development Manager provided some context to the staffing resources within the team at Salford:

> We have several officers out on the ground; they work like the old community sports development officers looking after a particular area. In teacher's planning time, I take care of staff who coach dance, gymnastics, water sports, competitive swimming sides, school sports teams. I have a whole host of teams, and I always miss out on someone. There are club development and that sort of thing (Interviewee 1, 2020).

The following sections will consider the modernisation journey of Salford's sport and leisure services based upon analysis of relevant strategic documentation and accounts from key people, including two senior managers within Salford Community

Leisure, a senior manager from Salford City Council, a Sports Development Officer and finally, a senior manager within Sport England who was responsible for monitoring resources within the Greater Manchester area. To chart Salford's journey within this case study, three critical areas in the sections below outline; firstly, how did we get here? A brief overview to recount the sport and leisure service as part of Salford City Council. Secondly, where are we now? will outline the development of Salford Community Leisure and its impact on community sport delivery in Salford. Finally, what is the future? will consider plans for S.C.L. and the future development of community sport in Salford.

5.2 How did we get here?

This section outlines Salford City Council's rationale for transferring its Sport and Leisure service to an external co-operative organisation, Salford Community Leisure. The tenure of New Labour's administration instigated a 'radical refocusing of the 'traditional role' of bureaucratic control within U.K. local authority services provision U.K. as part of the 'Local Government Modernising Agenda' (Downe and Martin, 2006:465). Despite criticism for lack of direction, the Modernising Agenda sought to introduce choice and competition in the number of providers and develop 'strategic regulation', a form of top-down inspection of service delivery (Downe and Marton, 2006:470).

The Labour Government's commitment to local authority reform was recognised by Houlihan and Green (2009:679) as the driving force that would eventually bring about changes designed to improve localised sport service delivery. In Salford, the local government response to modernisation was to externalise its non-statutory sport and leisure service. Before doing so, the service adopted a series of guises to mirror policy

changes, the journey to the modernisation and reform of sport and leisure services in Salford is discussed below.

5.2.1 Rationale for Change

Labour's modernisation plans focused on reforming political decision-making structures and improving service delivery through the abolishment of Compulsory Competitive Tendering and replacement with its centrepiece to modernisation, the Best Value regime. Under this policy, the Conservative approach to N.P.M. approaches in sport and leisure delivery never really went away (Newman, 2002). Yet Newman (2002) and Green (2009) highlighted an inherent tension within modernisation policy that contrasted, on the one hand; flexibility and entrepreneurialism, whilst on the other, emphasised control and requirement to deliver targets. Such inconsistency within modernisation policymaking creates an opportunity to explore within this thesis the space in which local government interacts with organisations that it relies upon for the delivery of sport and leisure services.

Under C.C.T. and Best Value, Salford City Council's sport and leisure service had experienced many incarnations over recent years. Robinson (2004) observed that Compulsory Competitive Tendering had far-reaching implications for the management of sport and leisure, mandating English local councils to restructure their departments so that existing staff could 'tender' their provision through bidding for a contract. S.C.L.'s leisure manager recollected this time with clarity he had first-hand experience of this process as a former council employee and provided the most comprehensive account of the rationale for changes in the delivery of local sport and leisure in Salford.

After leaving college, he originally started working for Salford City council in a job within its recreation and sports development department. Following ten years' service, he

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was promoted through various management roles within the leisure service. The leisure manager reflected on his career in the local authority and recalled how:

> Salford went through a staged change. Operations were at the core of this, sports development and at a later stage, the libraries. Originally, I worked for the recreation department which then became a D.S.O., which then became 'City Leisure and City Clean'. It was about catering and cleaning the schools. We were an arm's length company in about October 2003 but a D.S.O. from the early nineties as a result of competitive tendering. (Interviewee2,2020).

In 2002, when Salford was about to transfer out its service from in house provision, the Audit Commission (2002) concluded that sport and leisure services across England needed to embrace the partnership approach to working to compete with the developing private market.

> Authorities need to recognise the value of different approaches to service delivery and the benefits that different sectors can bring to sport and recreation provision in their area (Audit Commission, 2002:6).

Despite the financial savings that the local authority would make Ravenscroft (1998:150) observed a changing role for the local government and its long-standing social obligation to deliver sport and leisure services. Direct service organisations were used as a 'trojan horse' to usher in new working practices designed to introduce accountability standards and improve performance. Coalter (2007:12) saw these controls as a way to monitor local government spending on the non-statutory service of sport and leisure.

Ravenscroft (1998:138) and Henry (1993) point was particularly salient in Salford due to the wholesale restructuring of the local government, which along with budget

reductions, had begun to 'commercialise' and introduce competition into a post-bureaucratic (Morris and Farrell, 2007:1575) organisational form to deliver sport and leisure services.

The influence of New Public Management practices within Salford City Council encouraged the need for a flexible service offered in partnership with others whilst simultaneously demonstrating efficiencies. This changing relationship resulted in the local authority's gradual divestment of sport and leisure assets and service. The sport D.S.O. merged with the education department and with it, expertise and funding were slowly subsumed into the wider statutory function, as sporting assets were left to decline. The Leisure Manager reflected upon this role at the time:

> It was very much a shrinking situation and your working life centred on how we can make savings but how can we keep services open. It seemed to be very much working on the skin of your teeth (Interviewee 2, 2020).

Despite many D.S.O.'s being retained by 'in house' providers, some were externalised to private organisations dependent on geographical and political affiliation. In house D.S.O.'s faced a demanding situation as despite 'not fully divorced from public sector service values, they had little power to deal effectively in the commercial domain' (Bramham et al. 1994:128). As the Senior Leisure Manager recalled:

> Everything was about discounts; everything was about offering something for nothing which hamstrung us but that was what the council wanted us to do, and they (as a Labour council) were making the decisions.

> We could have had an opportunity to operate in a way, that if we were more business-like, we could have reinvested back in the business. But we were

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never given that opportunity. So, I recall being in this sort of malaise where we were hamstrung by where we were (Interviewee 2,2020).

Similarly, the imposition of voluntary status upon later D.S.O. incarnations through Compulsory Competitive Tendering and Best Value promoted by Labour created an opportunity for the government to dominate and influence the direction of public sport and leisure service provision.

The content for Labour's prominent policy to deliver its reform agenda for sport echoed support for the neoliberal arguments associated with modernisation, particularly in localised health and community outcomes (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002) with some policy quotes hinting at the waste of resources due to the mismanagement of local sporting organisations:

> A significant portion of the budget is spent on the management and maintenance of facilities (rather than the strategic development of sport and recreation). (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002:138).

The Audit Commission (1989) identified that due to its non-statutory status; sport and leisure services had minimal monitoring of participation, facility use or broader plans as to how the services could be used within the community (Bloyce and Smith, 2010:42).

Thereby, further confirming further pursuit of the ideological premise of Thatcher's neoliberal government that public sector officials cannot be trusted due to bureaucratic mismanagement and increasing sector deficits.

As part of Best Value, the recommended use of 'performance framework tools such as targets focused on public health outcomes and Public Service Agreements (P.S. As) (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002:136). The Comprehensive Performance Assessment

(C.P.A), a later compulsory framework for local authorities to adhere to, contained targets relating to participation, attendance and volunteering (Bloyce and Smith, 2010: 52). The C.P.A., as part of Best Value, demonstrated the first application of localised sport-related targets across England.

Collins (2008:70) observed that differing sport service provisions were now more accountable and transparent to their local authority paymasters through performance indicators during the Labour-led period. However, in Salford, the reality of sport and leisure delivery began to reflect a picture of service being led by cultural and political influences and missing out on opportunities to be entrepreneurial to ensure its survival.

The Senior Leisure Manager considered his work environment during period when the local authority was responsible for service delivery:

> There was a lot of Council involvement, every day we were answerable to councillors and members. You've got to invest in the service to a certain extent to make it attractive, but we never had any competition in Salford at that stage, so we pretty much had a clear run. We never got any significant investment as any money would be veered off into education. We were the poor relations. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

> The facilities were looking very tired, getting older and how were we going to invest and sustain those facilities and services going forward. I think the council saw it as an opportunity to bring in an external player because they brought in a consultancy at the time. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

The reduction in funding of the service, introduction of monitoring and attempts to introduce external interest through partnership working (Clarke and Newman, 1997)

demonstrate the boldest attempt by Salford City Council to modernise its sport and leisure service by concepts related to new public management.

5.2.2 Localised Restructure

The section will describe the process involved in the transfer of the in-house sport and leisure service to a community co-operative. In Salford, Westminster's Best Value requirements were juxtaposed against a strong influence from the Labour-led council. Even though the council appeared entrepreneurial in its redevelopment plans for the city, opportunities to improve their internal sport and leisure service were missed. The Leisure Manager described the decision making from well-meaning members:

> who may or may not have had a good understanding of how to run a leisure business because, to a certain extent, a lot of what we were doing at the time was about repeat business. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

When referring to partnership working, Newman (2002: 81) encourages further exploration; as on the one hand, it 'signifies equalities of power, shared values and the establishment of common agendas and goals', whilst on the other, 'the organisational reality tends to be very different'. Indeed, in their review of partnership working in sport, Houlihan and Lindsey (2008:238) found 'plenty of examples of conventional top-down bureaucratic management', as will be demonstrated within the empirical section on this thesis.

Salford City Leisure, the sport and leisure D.S.O. entered a period of 'malaise', experienced a lack of investment and upgrade within small community-based sites despite being in an area with no other competition. Clarke and Newman (1997) and Simmons (2008) recognise that divestment within public services is reminiscent of the globalised neoliberal ideology that supports a state's reconfiguration. The key features

represent an opening up of services to the market and a shift of delivery through semi-autonomous organisations.

Understanding the working basis of these new relationships is to appreciate the balance between local authority influence/control and organisational autonomy (Simmons, 2008). However, Goodwin and Grix (2010) posit that this relationship may be more hierarchical than balanced due to the financial reliance upon funders within the sporting context.

The local authority manager at Salford City Council was not working for the organisation in 2003 but was familiar with the background and offered some insight into the reasons for transfer to Trust. He provided a retrospective viewpoint, suggesting:

> I wasn't here at the time; I understood that we tested the market and went out and did some competitive tenders against the private sector. The view was that the private sector could have probably done it a little bit cheaper. However, all the added and social value that S.C.L. can offer would be chargeable. So therefore, it will become more expensive in the long term (Interviewee 3, 2020).

Jarvie (2003:139) observes that whilst sport can influence individual's lives; it is unrealistic to expect that it can sustain a sense of community revitalisation without a more in-depth exploration of its ownership, accountability and partnerships. Evident from this thesis, two interviewees suggested that the transfer of sport and leisure in Salford could be attributed to financial as much social value reasons. This view sits in agreement with work by Henderson et al. (2007) and Salford Council officers, who suggested that social objectives have always been secondary to the aim of attracting commercial investment to the city. The Leisure Manager outlined their position:

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Without the investment, the facilities were beginning to look tired and there was little available to reinvest to sustain them going forward. Following consultation with an external organisation, recommendations were made that included an option for externalisation. Still, none of the private organisations that had tendered wanted to proceed because of the bid's reality.

We were left with the default position, what should we do? S. said, "Hang on! We think we can do it." He put together a management buyout, basing it on a private-sector comparison. I was involved and we put this paper together to say we think we could run it. Where there was a benefit to the council at the time, there was a saving on business rates (Interviewee 2, Senior Leisure Manager, 2020).

Despite staff attempting to gain autonomy and retain a viable sport service for the community, the local authority partnership manager explained that the co-op model's option created an opportunity for the council to maintain influence within the service through funding and board representation. The prospect of a transfer of service offered financial savings and gains for the council. The externalisation of sport and leisure offered the council reductions in V.A.T., business rates due to the model's charitable status and opportunities for additional external grant funding. The latter potentially opening further opportunities for this new organisation to be controlled by additional partners. Although, it appeared that allowing the service to go to an employee buyout created an additional element of control for the council

Salford is extremely focused on controlling things, so the infrastructure, the assets, and the leisure facilities, even though S.C.L. run them on our behalf, are still the council's facilities. So, it created an advantage to have a staff buyout so that if they

ever folded the council could claim back their assets, whereas a private contractor would 'have held the whole lot, lock stock and barrel. Then the council would lose a bit of functionality then' (Interview 3, 2020).

Reid (2003) questioned whether new leisure trusts really were representative of a third way to approach the delivery of sport and leisure. As leisure trusts purported to offer autonomy, efficiencies, and increased financial opportunities within its operational structure, they were still subject to external influence from the local authority around the service delivery. Such external involvement influenced the direction of business plan and resulted in 'business-like' over 'business' fashion operation due to the requirement to adopt the social policies of their parent local authority partners. So, the question remains as to whether Salford's City Council's role was to 'support' its new sport and leisure service (Salford Community Leisure) or continue to influence the direction of its work as it did under the in-house delivery during the early 1990's.

The following section will consider the current position for Salford Community Leisure and explore the main factors that are influencing the direction of the business based upon the data collected as part of this thesis.

5.3 Where are we now?

Salford Community Leisure (S.C.L.) has been trading since 2003 as an Industrial and Provident Society (I.P.S.), which transferred as a registered society under the Co-operatives and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. This new society was organised to manage the sport, leisure, library, museum, school music services and associated assets on behalf of Salford City Council.

The relationship of power (Foucault, 1987:11) between these organisations continues to be guided by the parent authority, which has placed several strategic objectives in

exchange for funding. Thereby demonstrating the state's hierarchical influence to steer what Foucault (1983:221) describes as 'the possible field of action' of S.C.L. Three key areas of action within the business; namely, strategic priorities, accountability and partnership working are discussed in more depth below.

5.3.1 Strategic Priorities

As a registered society under the 2014 Act S.C.L. now had a degree of flexibility as a new social enterprise. As a Community Benefit Society run by and for the people of Salford, offering memberships with voting rights to staff and community alike. Its charitable status allowed S.C.L. to raise income from other sources, unlike the council. The Senior Officer within the Council working as a liaison officer to S.C.L., suggested that they been able to raise millions to reinvest and for revenue' yet despite this apparent financial flexibility, it was still reliant upon its host authority for its management fee funding. In 2003, the management fee was £12 million, which reduced to £3.5 million in 2020. The contracted goal by 2025, is to be as near to zero funding as possible, 'but that may never happen because of the sheer cost of running the facilities' (Interviewee 3, 2020).

In exchange for council financial support, S.C.L. return data relating to income, participation and health outcomes which form a holistic picture of the impact of their offering amongst the residents of Salford borough and beyond. Senior S.C.L. managers outlined the line of reporting to Salford Council, which consisted of a collaborative working relationship between the two organisations, underpinned by regular communication through key staff, thereby negating the penalty requirement. Most of the interviewees who had direct strategic involvement suggested that they had a good relationship with their funders despite a constant 'political game with the council'. (Interviewee 2, 2020)

Table 5.1 below summarises Salford Community Leisure's Strategic Delivery Plan which was formulated in collaboration with employees, partners and team members sets out its strategic framework for business during 2019-2024

Table 5.1: S.C.L. Strategic Delivery Plan 2019-2024

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
1. To prioritise investment into our facilities
2. To increase participation and engagement in our activities and services (physical and virtual)
3. To improve the health and wellbeing of our customers through our services
4. To explore opportunities to enhance the lives of more people through expanding the activities and services we deliver
5. To continue to deliver cost reductions and maximise income generation opportunities
6. To continually invest and develop our digital presence and use of technology to enhance the customer experience
7. To maximise community involvement in the delivery of our services
8. To continue to invest in our organisation and people to ensure we are a 'great' organisation to work for.

The Salford Locality Plan (2017) suggests that Salford is ranked the 22nd most deprived local authority out of the 326 within England, with 70% of the population living in areas that are classed as deprived, which itself creates health and life inequalities across the community. Salford has adopted a complete system approach to improving physical activity across the borough, which has seen investment within green and

neighbourhood spaces, active travel, workplace strategies, targeted community work, and consequently, incremental improvements within adults' participation data.

For S.C.L., being part of a holistic approach creates more opportunities to work with local partners to achieve their physical activity-based strategic objectives. As a 'trusted partner', rather than a traditional contractor of Salford City Council, it offered strong value within the community and the council. The local authority considered that S.C.L. offered considerable social value within the community, whereas a private contractor would charge for additional services. The Local authority manager explained:

> They (S.C.L.) work as part of our City Leaders Group, where all the key partners, housing, police, fire service et cetera so they sit as equals around that table. Even though technically they are working as a contractor...the reality is that they are seen as a massive part of the council (Interviewee3, 2020).

A few of these initiatives will be introduced below and discussed in more depth within later sections. As physical activity is linked to health and wellbeing outcomes (Kreuser et al., 2013), close working exists between S.C.L. and the local N.H.S. to formulate grassroots initiatives across the patch. Therefore, Salford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are heavily involved in supporting a mutually beneficial sport development service to address some of these inequalities. In his liaison work, the local authority manager describes the close working relationship between the City Leaders group, including the target led interface between CCG and S.C.L.

S.C.L. targets are borne out of city partners conversations with community health as a focus. 'Although the health service is very much involved and will say these are targets that we need to hit, how can you as an S.C.L. provider feed into those? It's

very much a partnership arrangement between the two bodies' (Interviewee3, Local Authority Manager, 2020).

The Sports Development Manager discussed some of the close work that her team does with N.H.S. partners to focus on improving older people's health and those with long-term health conditions. She described how the S.C.L. Active Lifestyles Team works closely with G.P. surgeries across Salford.

> Yeah, how many people were targeting how many people get more active. You know inactive to active. You know the disability side of things we link in a lot with the health service.

> Not my team in particular, but we do have an Active Lifestyles team, more so working with older people which looks at long-term health conditions. We get funding from the NHS to do this. We have a 'can do' which is a cancer programme which is the people who have been diagnosed with cancer, helping them get back into fitness and that sort of thing. Trips and falls, GP referrals and they work quite closely with all the GP surgeries in Salford. (Interviewee1, 2020).

Foucault (1980:170) recognised attempts to regulate a nation's health whilst disciplining an individual's behaviours as a historical tool of state power. Government power and scientific knowledge equated health as 'at once the duty of each and objective of all' (Foucault, 1980:170). The government emphasised creating local solutions to local problems through policymaking; however, autonomy was conditional upon excellent performance and not granted for compliance. (Houlihan and Green, 2009: 680) Organisations such as S.C. L's attempts to deliver health related initiatives had to demonstrate their worth in return for funding.

One such funder was Sport England, appointed to work with partners to deliver on 'the social value agenda' contained within The Government's sport policy, 'Sporting Future: Towards an Active Nation Strategy' (Cabinet Office, 2015). This document placed emphasis upon 'improving people's lives', 'community cohesion' together with 'social and community development' (p.73) offering a commitment to funding to raising and widening participation among 'hard to reach' groups (p.69). Sport England have a close working relationship with S.C.L. and like its association with its health partners their relationship reflects the appearance of the 'self-organising, inter-organisational networks characterised by interdependence' (Rhodes, 1997: 15) that is cognisant within the governance narrative.

Yet, despite the social rhetoric of 'sport, physical activity and health' being promoted to 'encourage us all to lead healthier and more active lives' (Cameron 2015:6) in its home nation response, Sport England's (2016) Towards an Active Nation: Strategy: 2016-2021 outlined its goal to continue to modernise the sector thus:

> Sport England's role to lead that shift of funding in an effective but responsible way…. a sport and physical activity sector that operates on a more efficient and sustainable basis. This means finding better and more efficient ways of meeting existing customers' needs and supporting the sector to free up resources and to operate more efficiently (Sport England, 2016:26).
>
> Help those organisations who receive substantial amounts of public funding to become more sustainable by setting targets for efficiency savings (Sport England, 2016:26).

The N.P.M. narrative within this document begins to reflect evidence of an asymmetrical relationship between actors within the sports policy sector in England demonstrated by its agenda to pursue partnership relationships based upon hierarchical managerialism that shape localised outcomes and influences the sector's strategic direction (Grix, 2009; Grix and Phillpots, 2011:14).

A localised example of this asymmetrical relationship is evident from S.C.L.'s involvement in delivering Sport England's Greater Manchester Local Delivery Pilot (LDP), with funding support from the sub-regional C.S.P. Greater Sport. The Sport England Manager explained (Interviewee 4, 2020) that the LDP, which began in 2017, focuses on developing a universal system approach to understanding and improving access to physical activity opportunities for several inactive and underrepresented groups so that the learning can be recreated in other areas of the country.

Research partners from Sheffield Hallam University capture the pilot's learning to monitor progress on the grassroots delivery team and their output. Rather than be a learning opportunity, Foucault (1980:170) argued that statistical data recording reinforces the state message of required behaviour change in areas where the wider population's behaviour is not deemed to be contributing to the community.

Across Salford, a multi-skilled operational team comprising S.C.L., Salford Community Voluntary Service, Health Improvement Team, and Salford Youth Alliance deliver the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) working with targeted groups in the community. The LDP's focus and funding in Salford is to address, identify, and improve opportunities for children and young people to get active. Additional work is being delivered at Little Hulton and Walkden's two key areas, which are perceived as 'hotspots for inactivity and obesity'. (Interviewee 1, 2020)

The LDP Manager, an experienced S.C.L. member of staff, has been seconded on to share local knowledge of active opportunities with partners, groups, and individuals. He described his role as 'to link those assets to maximise their potential' through having conversations with partners about existing provisions and links that could reduce inactivity and potential antisocial behaviours in the targeted children and young people community groups across the borough.' (Interviewee 5, 2020)

Despite the outward appearance of collaborative working utilising sport to deliver on wellbeing outcomes across Salford mirroring the governance narrative, deeper exploration identifies a conflicting picture within the delivery and discourse founded upon enhanced state control through continuing modernisation of the wider sector (Grix, 2009). Phillpots et al (2011:67) observed a conflicting presence at the governance level within the community sport context. On the one hand, the presence of 'enforced' partnerships, were offered funding to deliver community sport programmes through autonomous means, whilst on the other, the presence of strict governance mechanisms suggested greater state control intimating its influence on the direction of organisational strategic objectives.

S.C.L.'s funding agreements with Sport England and its host local authority contain fiscal control and performance measures that mirror neo-Foucauldian approaches to 'shape, guide and direct the conduct of others' (Scott, 2000:94). The use of data collection within communities and performance-based techniques of power within the organisation are said to "subjugate individual and institutional conduct that is consistent with government objectives" (Foucault, 1983; Raco and Imrie, 2000: 2,191). Accessing performance linked funding to deliver on S.C.L.'s strategic objectives, creates a democratic deficit (Simmons, 2008:282) as it potentially allows more

recourse to its partners despite its primary requirement as a co-operative, to be accountable to its members (Phillpots et al, 2011).

5.3.2 Accountability

New Public Management was the first movement to integrate performance information into the management systems of the public sector. Due to the number of stakeholders involved in a publicly funded sport service delivery, transparency of individual and organisational performance information may be relevant to an array of 'others' also involved (Romzek and Dubnik, 1987). Salford Community Leisure is accountable to a vast number of 'others', but this section will discuss their relationship with the local authority and Sport England which monitors S.C.L.'s spend of public funds on sport-related services. Sport England are keen to see those deliverers of sports services 'do so efficiently and at a lower cost to the public purse.' (Sport England, 2016:5).

Key scholars would argue that accountability relationships are based on reporting through financial outcomes. Yet, a publicly funded service is rooted within the democratic context of the public sector, which considers the social, political and institutional impact of its delivery (Broadbent et al, 1999 and Broadbent and Laughlin, 2013). Demonstrating accountability within a sporting co-operative almost runs counter-intuitive to the modernisation of (sport) services which places a greater emphasis upon market-driven notions of performance-focused on efficiency savings at the behest of eliminating wider public interests (Broadbent et al.1999.).

Senior managers at S.C.L., have attributed improved internal efficiencies and business processes to the imposition of internal performance standards, the strategic support of an internal board and ongoing external reporting mechanisms. However, interviewees from S.C.L referred positively to the smarter developments within their

working day offered 'a perceived degree of autonomy, in exchange for sustaining the service through external investment.' (Interviewee 2, 2020)

The previous local authority model was often 'hamstrung' (Interview 2, 2020) by political influence from members who held a pivotal role in the department's future. Despite a preference for streamlined working by staff within the spin off S.C.L., the leisure manager explained that the organisation was still subject to the same political forces that influenced the in-house provision of sport and leisure in Salford. As in the current structure, members were able to influence the strategic direction of decisions within the organisation due to their presence as a funder, board member and externally as democratically elected representatives of the community. This political pressure around S.C.L may still be in existence, due to what, Spear et al, 2007; 2009 describe as pressure to conform to public sector norms and requirements.

Managers talked of an ongoing relationship reminiscent of the old service that still needed to be carefully negotiated between S.C.L. and the council to secure funding and allow certain high-level decision-making to proceed. As part of the partnership agreement, the Leisure Manager explained that prior to changes to a local leisure facility could be made, there is a statutory requirement to gain community and members approval, suggesting:

> We still have that pressure, whereas if you were an outside operator, you may not have those issues to deal with; yeah, we still are intrinsically linked to the City Council (Interviewee 1, 2020).

The relationship between S.C.L. and the Salford City Council is supported by multiple levels of internal and external accountability to demonstrate a strong governance framework. An overview of the S.C.L. framework suggested an internal audit and

monitoring and evaluation processes ensure that KPI's which form part of S.C.L.'s Strategic Delivery Plan 2019-2024 are being achieved by all staff. The S.C.L. organisation itself comprises a board of Trustees, the Chief Executive and the operation and leadership board, then the staff structure below that. The Board consists of a mix of internal (local authority) and external members who have experience within the private sector. Due to S.C.L.'s charitable status, access to other funding sources creates some degree of self-reliance, particularly as, over time, the capital grant decreases in size. But as these funding pots come with their own objectives, applications and delivery can create additional targets to attain (Grix, 2009) The Sport Development Manager describes the working context as:

> we do have some freedom and aren't reliant on the investment in the council's because we now have the opportunity to invest to save. The opportunity to get private finance which we do in certain instances, but that is based on a business context. We are far more responsive and far more independent. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

As a funded 'tenant', S.C.L. will remain answerable to the council and as such there will always be that scope for a controlling influence. But Simmons (2004:172) argues that to develop legitimacy as an independent public service provider, leisure trusts need to ensure an adequate balance between local authority control/influence and retaining organisational autonomy (Simmons, 2004:172).

In Salford there is scope for negotiation, The Senior Leisure Manager illustrates how the flexibility and boundaries within the trusted partnership compared to the restrictions imposed under the local authority model.

> For example, fees and charges have always been hamstrung. It goes to our Board to decide fees and charges, which is a notable change but gives us the opportunity. The council pay a decent chunk of our income anyway; we will always be beholding to them (but not totally); they are still in the background, saying that we should have significant social motives (Interviewee 2, 2020).

As part of accountability and maintaining the formal side of their relationship, S.C.L. outline the performance of the business to the local authority, City Leaders Group and City Mayor within their S.C.L. Annual Impact Report; a summary document to record the organisational outcomes against performance indicators within a framework relating to health, participation and community outcomes. The Leisure Manager describes the ongoing reporting mechanisms that inform the council and other funders of appropriate business procedures:

> Internally we do quarterly and six-monthly reports. We also have financial reports and do reports for funders. Often, our reports are amalgamated and sent to the city council, the main reason for doing it because we got to show what we are doing (Interviewee 2, 2020).

The S.C.L. governance framework upholds Sports England's premise that any organisation receiving public money should achieve recognised standard within its organisation to deliver a 'productive, responsible and sustainable service'. S.C.L.'s public spending is checked through audit by the local authority and reflects its ability to influence the organisation's policy direction. This controlling approach to funding runs counter to the autonomous partnership discourse of the governance narrative (Grix and Phillpots, 2011).

The Sports Development offer delivered by S.C.L. represents a multi-discipline approach to engage people through sport and contribute towards broader internal and external funder objectives. Funding bids are supported by data from more comprehensive consultations from Sport England or the local C.S.P., Greater Sport, who then must demonstrate a stream of accountability, particularly to the service user directly.

In terms of translating N.P.M. ideas into streamlining service delivery at S.C.L., the digitalisation of the customer accountability function at S.C.L. resulted in a reduction in overheads and loss of several key touchpoints for S.C.L. and its customers. The Sports Development Manager explains how these face-to-face interactions were designed to provide feedback on the standard of service delivery and increase the fitness of its customers but have now been replaced by a multi-functional website.

> In all our centres we used to have points of view cards where people would offer their comments. We haven't done this for some time. Any compliments or comments go onto the Internet now and their details normally go to the P.A. or to the Chief Executive to answer.

> We used to do an annual customer survey which we haven't done for some time. We had this thing that was in our sites, and it was about staff interacting more with customers. Every interaction was recorded on a computer system in the fitness suite, then we looked at emails sent out to customers and Net Promoter Scores to calculate customer satisfaction. It was quite an expensive package so in the end, they decided to take it out. (Interviewee 1, 2020).

Another example of Salford Community Leisure's accountability to its customers and Sport England is demonstrated in its role working in partnership with Public Health

England and Youth Alliance as part of the Local Delivery Pilot. This pilot is an asset-based community initiative that focuses on improving outcomes for children and young people who are recognised to be displaying inactive behaviours. A Senior Manager at Sport England offered insight into the organisation's involvement in the Local Delivery Pilot at Salford:

> Greater Manchester was chosen as one of the local delivery pilots; therefore, Salford is 1/10 of the G.M. pilot. I suppose what we have done is funded at the local level, in the sense of people being able to use that capacity at a local level to engage with their communities. Our responsibility is to work with the team that has now been put in place at the core from G.M. So, to work out and have an eye to each of the ten localities and understand at local level, Ward, Street, a neighbourhood across the whole of Salford in that sort of sense and then back up to a G.M. level and all the layers that come between that. (Interviewee 4, 2020).

In Salford, the adoption of participatory asset-based community development (ABCD) principles (Hylton and Bates, 2020) may demonstrate an economically and politically rational approach to delivery in a service which has been particularly impacted during austerity (Parnell et al., 2017). The Local Delivery Manager discussed how the pilot has attempted to ensure regular linked up activity during and after school by drawing on existing local provision and offering teacher training and support in the provision of sport and PE:

> We wanted to see logistically would it work and what would the impact be. Based on all that knowledge, we look to build on further engagement beyond the school through the local delivery pilot. Again, just adding to what already

exists and building upon local assets and building a network around the provision (Interviewee 5, 2020).

Tying in schools, facilities and services all as one. This is because if the local pilot finishes tomorrow, then these links still exist. It's based on discussions between gatekeepers, whoever they may be, head teachers, service organisers, local grassroots volunteers continuously adding dialogue with them. To ensure that it works for them and there is an impact on children and young people (Interviewee 5, Local Delivery Pilot Manager, 2020).

But as Hylton and Bates acknowledge (2020), the use of participatory asset-based approaches to community sport development is still in its infancy, so it is not clear about their effectiveness in delivering sporting outcomes, particularly in this instance, for children and young people. S.C.L. is required to demonstrate its accountability for sporting outcomes in Sport England's recording of active participation in The Children and Young People's Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2017; 2019).

The C.Y.P. Active Lives Survey, which collects data during the school year, suggests that there is still work to be done to increase activity levels across the borough. During 2017/18 and 2018/19 there was a change to the Chief Medical Officer's (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019) recommendations for physical activity to 60 minutes per day for attaining health and wellbeing outcomes. Despite this being reflected in the data methodology, Sport England (2019) suggested that at least half of the borough's children and young people could be at risk of being inactive. In the absence of gender specific data, Table 5.2 below, outlines activity levels across returns from children within the Salford borough area.

Table 5.2: Children and Young People activity levels in Salford, as recorded in the C.Y.P. Active Lives Survey 2017- 2018 and 2018-2019

SALFORD RETURNS YEAR	LESS ACTIVE (Under 30 mins per day)	FAIRLY ACTIVE (30-59 mins per day)	ACTIVE ACROSS THE WEEK (60 mins per day, not every day)	ACTIVE EVERY DAY (60 mins or more every day)
2017/2018 (n = 323)	37.8%	18.6%	23.7%	37.8%
2018/2019 (n=361)	36.1%	17.7%	46.2% (Merging and replacing of above categories under new heading: 'Active: 60 min or more per day')	

Krauser et al., (2013) consider that sedentary behaviours in children and young people can lead to obesity. A view which is supported by profile evidence from Public Health England (2019), who have recorded that 11% (Reception) and 22.7% (Year 6) children in Salford are clinically obese, the figure being above the national and regional benchmarks.

The Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2017; 2019) demonstrates an attempt by Sport England to develop data collection methods and understand trends in participation across England but to also enforce an accountability framework to grow and sustain sports participation at the national and local level (Gratton et al, 2013: 176). The Children and Young People Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2017; 2019) as detailed in the tables above, could be attributed to this holistic approach to borough planning, building upon existing assets and what works well across the city to increase physical activity.

However, the Local Delivery Pilot Manager suggested that:

The LDP positions in Salford were filled (including myself) in summer 2019, so there will be no measurable impact upon those two Active Lives Cycles; this creates a significant gap from G.M. receiving the grant to action within Salford. (Interviewee 5, 2020).

The responsibility of accountability through hierarchical means is never far away as all respondents agreed that elected representatives are the critical point of recourse regardless of whether the sports service is delivered internally for S.C.L. customers or externally as part of a funders programme (Aberbach and Christensen, 2005: 236).

5.3.3 Collaborative Working

This section discusses the collaborative working that has taken place within S.C.L, Sport England, their community partners and the local authority. The last thirty years has resulted in the modernisation of local authorities across England and the reform of direct delivery of non-essential services such as sport and leisure (Hazenberg and Hall, 2015). So, the formation of various forms of social enterprise to deliver these services working in partnership with the parent authority utilising market mechanisms to offer non-economic outcomes has become commonplace in England (Nicholls, 2007; Dart et al., 2010).

On the surface, the idea of partnership working demonstrates a seemingly positive use of resources which links in with social policy agendas, sharing resources and retaining Council involvement. Discussing the Salford 'trusted partnership' context, the S.C.L. Leisure Manager explained how:

The council made a significant saving bypassing it almost overnight. I think that's why they went down the co-operative route because there was still Council involvement. As they had representation on the Board. The council saw

that as a feasible way for this to happen. They thought, hang on, we are still going to gain an element of control and financial gain in terms of business rates. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

Given that this thesis is interested in the structures, institutions and actions that comprise the 'trusted partnerships' between S.C.L. and their parent authority Salford City Council, further clarity is needed. The partnership between S.C.L. and its parent authority at Salford appears strategically managed by its Chief Executive, the Board and a senior representative from the council. Despite the literature describing this partnership as 'tense' (Brandsen and van Hout, 2006; Whitehead 2007 and Fenwick et al., 2012), representatives from S.C.L and Salford City Council regularly communicate in what appears to be a positive transaction as more services as being transferred over into the S.C.L trust. Nevertheless, senior managers at S.C.L. suggest that the hierarchical manoeuvring between sport and leisure in the local government service structure is still in existence in a requirement to demonstrate continual value through the Chief Executive and Board to the local authority and council members. Reflecting Phillpots' (2010: 110) thoughts around the presence of enforced partnerships in sport, that far from being collaborative are linked together under the umbrella of efficiency savings. The senior management team advised:

S.C.L. have to play a political game to ensure that we are in the right place from now on because we have that link to the city council, we have to ensure that they are happy with everything that is going on (Interviewee 1, 2020).

it's about playing the game with the local community and the councillors, so we still have that pressure. Whereas if you were an outside operator, you may not

have those issues to deal with. Yeah, we are intrinsically linked to the City Council. (Interviewee 2, 2020).

Similar 'collaborative' working within an asymmetrical environment and political manoeuvring is ongoing with staff who originally came from different sides of the council and now coalesce under the Salford Community Leisure banner. Following an organisational restructure, staff members worked with an external consultant to develop the business's strategic priorities by creating 'A Better Place to Work'. Despite S.C.L. being an employee-owned business, with members in effect becoming owners of the organisation, The Sports Development Manager explained that all staff now have individual development plans and a requirement to demonstrate how they contribute to an annual performance review. A few years into S.C. L's inception, changes to business processes were made to improve staff morale, however, despite the autonomy granted by becoming owners of their own business, the introduction of N.P.M. style KPI's and flexible contracts has also increased the level of hierarchical control by management over the workforce.

> In 2018, I think we went a bit back to basics, things would fall by the wayside a bit in terms of our strategic priorities where we wanted to go as a company. Our team and facility plans link back into the strategic priorities. It was about making everyone understand their role in our strategic priorities. (Interviewee 1, 2020).

The Leisure Manager explained that his side of the business is treated differently across the multi-disciplined SCL and seen as the 'blue-eyed boys of the organisation'. As without leisure as a revenue-creating side of S.C.L. there was no business. Whereas the LDP Manager also highlighted the entrepreneurial skills of sport development colleagues who offered holiday programmes and various one-off events

'for profit'. The Sports Development Manager highlighted limitations and positive aspects within the multi-disciplinary partnership across S.C.L. Leisure staff can now upskill as sports development volunteers, and sport development workers can promote their programmes within library settings. Although having additional internal business resources can limit external funding applications, as another area of the business may have already applied for a stream that she may have earmarked.

A key example of S.C.L.'s role in delivering a funded programme within the community has been its role in Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot programme. In Salford, the pilot adopts an asset-based community development approach (ABCD) to sport development (Misener and Shulenkorf, 2016; Bates and Hylton, 2020), thereby increasing participation opportunities in physical activity for children and young people.

The Senior manager on the Local Delivery Pilot (representing Salford Community Leisure) describes a strong network between community organisations (Community Voluntary Service, Youth Services and Public Health) who focus on bringing people together part of a collective team'. A large emphasis in the work has been around participants co-designing and leading within the pilot, he explains:

> everything we do is based on participant's viewpoints. So, when we work with an organisation, yes, I get insight from a gatekeeper, whoever that might be say for example its head teacher. I also take notice of the children what they want, what do they see as issues, what do they see needs changing (Interviewee 5, 2020).

Adopting community orientated and participatory processes are recognised by Bates and Hylton (2020:1) as key components to the ABCD approach to sport development to eradicate some of the exclusions inherent within the community itself (Blackshaw,

2010). The Local Delivery Pilot Manager describes interventions to address the concerns about sedentary behaviour in Salford's children and young people (Sport England, 2019), S.C.L. are working with Youth services who have identified a number of 'inactive' primary school children who will be invited to a club at school to increase their activity levels through 'phased introduction into activity' to a point where they feel more comfortable to join a local provision.

> The club won't be identified as a sports club, as that has been identified as a major barrier for participation, to build relationship with volunteers which releases into further provision locally. By invitation only, the aim of this is that it breaks down a lot of the social barriers that come typically with inactive young people, joining in an environment with children that are active which would be an immediate barrier (Interviewee 5, 2020).

Coalter (2012:595) highlighted issues around the lack of comparable and robust monitoring and evaluation of sports programmes (Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2007). Primarily, the term 'sport' refers to a collective definition with a broad church of pursuits, each with its cultural norms, which may offer sites but not necessarily the cause for improvement in participation (Coakley, 1998:2).

Nevertheless, the LDP Manager has a background in sport for development in Salford and so was keen to stress that the focus of Local Delivery Pilot was a home-grown approach that could offer learning to others. He suggests:

> we did it ourselves that based on our work over this period how did that manifest itself, did it work did it not work, what did we learn? Then Sport England are able to use the learning across the pilots across the country to inform their future funding. (Interviewee 5, 2020).

The Sport England manager explained that her organisation was keen to understand the facilitative process involved with sports participation from a place-based perspective.

> I guess what we're talking about is, it's important that money gets to the right place and that's where I guess we have been trying to break some of our traditional processes by putting smaller pots of money in the hands of local people and listen to what people are telling us and including massive amounts of local evaluation (Interviewee 4, 2020).

By adopting this asset-based approach; whilst there will be a gain in knowledge of existing provision, this will ultimately result in a reduction in future investing within the patch. The L.D.P. acts as a form of new public management in the delivery of sports development as it offers up efficiency savings and increased monitoring within the community.

At Salford, the pilot is facilitated at operational round table meetings where traditional hierarchies and targets are absent, and ideas are shared co-operatively. Children and young people feed in their ideas through other channels. However, despite the Sport England Managers goal of understanding their needs, these participants do not see what goes into the decision-making process beyond their initial 'idea' phase, suggesting that the hierarchical expert role is still in play within the pilot.

Despite the participatory nature within this asset-based community development initiative, Bates and Hylton (2020) warn that it is essential to remain mindful of the hierarchical influences that shape ongoing inequalities, as these may reduce the effectiveness of projects designed to create changes in behaviour (Bates and Hylton, 2020).

The effectiveness of interventions to address barriers to sports participation for children and young people in Salford appears to come at the price of being locked into the top-down constraints of performance agreements which appear to be time-limited. The Local Delivery Pilot Manager explains:

> We have a lottery funding agreement with each of the local delivery pilots, and they will have funding agreements with each of the localities. I guess what we are talking about is, money must get to the right place and that is where I guess we have been trying to break some of our traditional processes (Interviewee 5, 2020).

Examples of S.C.L.'s collaborative work across the community is undeniably driven from the top-down by Sport England due to their creation of a structural and conceptual framework which is designed to exert influence over the distribution of funding and the selection of appropriate methods and sources for evidence gathering (Harris and Adams, 2016).

5.4 What is the future?

The following section discusses the future for SCL and its relationship with its Sport England and local authority partners. The implementation of Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot in Salford (Greater Manchester) and its other eleven locations across the U.K. created a unique opportunity to change community sport's future investment principles. By learning more about placed based physical activity and the provision across a community, it sought to divert away from the traditional model of funding 'with an agreed output over a defined time period' (Interviewee 5, 2020). The pilot itself focused on building trust and building collaborative relationships that would challenge existing resistance and develop communities.

Foucault (1987:11) argues that there is no such thing as total power and that it extends through a network containing a myriad of actors who develop 'relationships of power'. These relationships are the source to which an exchange can occur and may influence another's behaviour. However, his theory on power is limited to the freedom of those involved, 'power is exercised only over free subjects, and only as far as they are free' (Foucault, 1983:221). The hierarchical restriction on freedom remains evident in future plans for delivering community sport in Salford.

5.4.1 The Local Delivery Pilot in Salford.

The Sport England Manager discussed the pilot's delivery and its learning within Salford as they attempt to become more visible within the community and be right at the heart of their projects. However, this strategic policy decision can be challenging to deliver at an operational level when there is limited staffing and a large geographical spread to cover.

> What our relationship is about is being able to provide the capacity at the local level in order for people to be able to do that. As it won't be us, because with the best will in the world there is not enough of us to be able to do that. So, you need to invest in people in place who understand and know the locality (Interviewee 4, 2020).

Therefore, modernisation of sport policy has resulted in a more significant role for the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector. However, both Sport England and the Local authority perceive the ultimate goal: this sector has greater involvement at 'every table' (interviewee 3, 2020). But this has not come without its problems across G.M., since evaluation has demonstrated evidence of closed governance systems that support hierarchies and prevent collaboration (G.M.

Moving,2019) and confusion over-representation. The Sport England Manager explains that:

> Trying to understand communities and trying to get close to people in communities is not as easy and straightforward as perhaps we once thought. Sometimes you find that people and groups who say they speak to for the community when you dig down in it sometimes aren't. I think that is a significant piece of learning. (Interviewee 4, 2020)

On the ground, the Local Delivery Pilot Manager working on behalf of S.C.L. spoke of the pilot's future delivery within Salford, which had recently been extended from 2021 to 2025. Despite the apparent autonomy afforded by Sport England to the Salford community to shape their own community sport provision, funding for the capacity to support the Local Delivery Pilot in Salford was still underpinned by a traditional hierarchical lottery funding mechanism. Any extension is provided on the basis that the Pilot 'meets the profile and is underspent.' (Interviewee 5, 2020).

> 'In Salford, the vast majority of our funding was put into capacity, so a couple of staff members in needed roles. So, there is no budget to spend on the extra years. As it stands in Salford, local pilot will finish next summer as there will be no funding to continue that work.' (Interviewee 5, 2020)

The presence of Sport England's performance-related funding with agreements as part of the Local Delivery Pilot, represents disciplinary power by the state in sport (Foucault, 1991:105) over the participants and organisers within the Salford community to become 'subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault, 1991:136). By designating Salford as a 'disciplinary space' (Foucault, 1991:141) subjects become objects of analysis by handing over their personal power in exchange

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for 'autonomy' as organisers and 'wellbeing' as participants in community sport development programmes.

In this case, the Local Delivery Pilot is hierarchically led, and target funded, so the direction of the programme is pre-decided. Such an approach encourages participants to improve their health for the good of the community but enables the home nations sport's council to effect control over grassroots agents of sport policy and influence the direction of the context and people's lives.

5.4.2 Future relationship between S.C.L. and the local authority

Continuing the efficiency theme, the partnership agreement between S.C.L. and the local authority received an extension until 2025, but this was still subject to ongoing KPI's as laid out within S.C.L.'s strategic plan 2019-2024, which underpins their service delivery. The controlling interest retained by the local authority in their sporting, social enterprise reflects what Foucault (1979: 200) describes as an 'object, observed continuously, and always an object of information (derived from his or her regularly monitored actions), and visible only and at all times'. This theme of observation is reflected despite the Council promoting perceived autonomy in the development of S.C.L. staff takeover, the organisation is still continually monitoring its partner (S.C. L's) actions whether visibly or at distance by setting benchmarks and funding accordingly.

A common theme from S.C.L. staff interviewed was that the company was viewed as 'a safe pair of hands' due to its relationship with the host authority and outcomes delivered. The Local Authority Manager offered some insight into the ongoing procurement process, as part of his role within the local authority working with external consultants to explore the potential viability of maintaining the relationship into the future. He suggested that:

we are starting to look at now what happens, we will look at the viability of continuing it as it is, we will look at the private market is a better way of doing it, is there potential to pull it in-house… At this moment in time, I don't think there is any plan to change it is quite frankly we're getting good value from it. (Interviewee 3, 2020).

Moore (1995) considered that 'value' in public management terms encompasses measures of social, economic or personal significance that may not be quantifiable by other means. S.C.L. have reviewed and integrated several business planning tools into their working practices in line with their partnership with Salford and Sport England's (2016:34) desire to 'offer the best value for money to the public purse.'

A series of strategic outcomes and KPI's within S.C.L.'s strategic plan 2019-2024 map out the organisation's future direction (see Table 5.1). The plan maintains a N.P.M. market-inspired monitoring framework designed to maximise value around delivery and participation in sport and leisure orientated services. Community participation has featured within N.P.M. literature previously but in practice, continues to be an aspirational target that organisations inch towards (Roberts, 2004) due to misunderstandings around the focus and potential to create impact and what remains a multi-dimensional concept (Strokosch and Osborne, 2020: 8). Admittedly, DCMS (2015) aimed 'to look beyond simple participation to see how sport changes lives and becomes a force for social good.' (Sport England, 2016: 6). As the participation KPI's still remain for S.C.L.to attain as part of future plans, this approach implies applying the technologies of domination to raise a state of consciousness (Foucault, 1991:200) which will assure that distant political control is maintained over both organisation and the citizens of Salford.

Despite the lack of clarity around participation in the N.P.M. literature and engagement with its target market at S.C.L., market-inspired models of leisure may reflect a heavily packaged and priced service thus reformulating the idea of non-market based 'leisure time', which may be motivated by personal enjoyment (Davis and Davis, 2007).In this case, the direction of S.C.L.'s sport and leisure offering appears to restricted in its delivery by hierarchical whims of policy and funders. Thereby resulting in a service that Coalter (1998:32) suggests impinges upon individual freedom and replaces it with duties and obligations that implore citizens to adopt a healthier lifestyle as part of a hierarchical moral duty to others and the state.

5.5 Conclusion

This case study presented empirical research findings into the modernisation of sport and leisure services in England. The research explored Salford Greater Manchester's geographical context, outlining the political, historical and economic drivers that may have influenced the transfer of the original council-led service to a community co-operative organisation delivering sport and leisure provision the borough.

Each section considered the Salford service transformation and contrasted it against policy and academic literature, delineating the work, into three categories; namely: I) how did we get here? ii) where are we now? and iii) what is the future?

Firstly, in line with Conservative and Labour policy changes (designed to tighten local government spending), the modernisation of the management of the publicly delivered sport service in Salford resulted in changes to its business model and delivery mode. Initially, transferring to a direct service organisation and then an arms-length company. Despite becoming part of a statutory service in Salford, sport and leisure were still seen as a second-class entity and almost deconstructed by ideological decision-making, which served to become its financial undoing. In later years, the service and

associated assets were transferred to a leisure trust model; Salford Community Leisure promised increased financial, social value for customers, members, and parent authority alike. Yet this research demonstrated that the side effect of the modernisation of sport and leisure in Salford meant that funders' hierarchical influence was an ever-present force to be managed.

The creation of Salford Community Leisure offered closer working ties across the community with N.H.S. and other public third sector organisations as part of its 'trusted partner' status in a series of suitable programmes that are funded and delivered to act 'on people'. While these partnerships created a broader remit for sport, it also brought the responsibility of contributing 'social value' through programme delivery and associated periodical reporting to this broader range of organisations, including the local authority. This could be attributed to the joined-up nature of addressing community issues across Salford, this meant that S.C.L.'s strategic priorities tended to be shaped hierarchically, with reduced means for capturing the community voice. As much of the face-to-face insight work had been replaced by digital means, potentially leaving some vulnerable groups without a means of direct contribution to the strategic conversation at S.C.L.

S.C.L. is subject to several internal and external accountability measures designed to present a strong governance framework and report the business's commercial performance. Despite the potential of funding allowing SCL to become entrepreneurial in their service delivery, this is restricted by checks and reporting of funders which can introduce a level of influence over direction of the service. Generally speaking, there is a positive relationship between the local authority and SCL. While the methods may have changed the level of accountability is still an ever present 'political game' to be played with members and the community which in some ways reduces the

independence of this co-operative business. This case has identified that sport and leisure in Salford is still subject to the same political puppeteering that is has always been. However, the general consensus from interviewees from S.C.L and the Salford City Council is that they both seem happy with their arrangement and future extensions to their partnership arrangement is planned.

Another key funder and partner of S.C.L., is Sport England, who work closely with them on several projects, one being the Local Delivery Pilot, a programme which focuses on joint working with organisations, community members to link children and young people to existing sport provision. Sport England are keen to capture the children's views on Salford's sport provision, which is welcome in an area of high deprivation for this cohort.

Yet, the reality suggests that much of this work is filtered through gatekeepers and is subject to the constraints of traditional hierarchical funding, which could result in the programme ending as quickly as it began. The following chapter seeks to identify how modernisation has impacted the delivery of the community sports function within Wales and will focus on a case study example of 'Aura Leisure and Libraries' in Flintshire.

Chapter 6: Wales

The Case of Sport Wales, Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited and Flintshire County Council

6.0 Introduction

This chapter's case study demonstrates a range of localised influences that have impacted community sport policy making from Sport Wales in an arms-length partnership between employee co-operative Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited and Flintshire County Council in Wales.

First, the study offers an overview of the local infrastructure for community sport within Flintshire to reflect the contextual background and demonstrate its current priorities in line with Sport Wales's vision of encouraging 'every child to be hooked upon sport.'

The final sections examine the past, present, and future for community sport policy making within Flintshire whilst contrasting it against the formal arrangements in policy. It does so by drawing on a range of data collated through document analysis from publicly available organisational or other recorded sport policy documents and interviews conducted with five relevant policy actors.

This cumulative data is designed to create a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of previous, current strategic plans to develop an insight into community sport policymaking within the Welsh case study example against the empirical reality of utilising alternative delivery models in sport and leisure services

According to the data, Flintshire could be considered a prosperous area in comparison to Salford. The county measured relatively low (1.1%) in identifying these LSOA's within its WIMD (Welsh Government, 2019) alongside the considerably higher (30%) LSOA for its English counterparts.

Sport Wales (2018) used the WIMD results to identify the most deprived areas/ lower layer super output areas (LSOA) in Wales as being less likely to participate in sport three or more times a week (26%) when compared to adults living in the least deprived 20% of communities (40%).

The senior manager in Flintshire and well positioned to comment on the local authorities' programme of change which began in the late 2000's:

> I saw this coming, when we got to the peak of budget cuts for public services and local government, as part of changing the structure, reducing the management and reshaping ourselves, we worked on developing a programme of alternative delivery models (ADM's). I wanted us to philosophically to move towards having more of mixed economy model (Interviewee 9, 2020).

An earlier internal document, The Actif Strategy (FCC, 2008), outlined a local authority sport-based strategy which sought to unify participation in sport and leisure in Flintshire but details a transformative process for both departments. Under the umbrella of 'regeneration' of the county's leisure portfolio, options were considered for the future management and operation of Flintshire's leisure assets. These included 'the creation by Flintshire County Council of an independent legal entity, a company limited by guarantee (a Trust with Charitable Objects)' (FCC, 2008: 72) which would mean that the service would be run independent of the council and by the wider community.

Whilst commentators (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Pratchett, 2004; Cornelius and Wallace, 2010) warn that this type of localism echoes the introduction to changes in the institutional arrangements in the delivery of public services (sport and leisure) and instigation of business-like practices linked to New Public Management. Foley and

Martin (2000) argue that the regeneration of services through community partnerships can encourage localised cohesiveness. Nevertheless, doubt is offered around the level of trust, resources and autonomy afforded to community groups in practice by government. As Grix (2009) notes that sporting organisations are particularly vulnerable due to their reliance upon central funding to deliver programmes.

The strategy claims that services (along with others detailed) merged and became Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited. Current plans to fully demolish and redevelop the Shire Hall site will create financial efficiency savings for the Council by relocating staff to alternative locations and negating projected excessive operating costs (Flintshire County Council, 2018).

6.1 Community Sport in Flintshire

Community Sport in Flintshire was established during the late 1960s and 1970s under the recreational welfare agenda. Flintshire County Council is recently known as 'Sports Development' and 'Leisure Services' until July 2016 originally held responsibility for several leisure facilities, some of which were co-located in schools, swimming pools and broader agenda public open spaces such as football pitches, allotments, community changing rooms etc.

Flintshire County Councils Sport Development Unit ('Sport Flintshire') aimed to increase opportunities for residents to participate in sport and physical activity. Several dedicated sport development officers were responsible for critical sports such as football, netball, basketball, cycling, and hockey. Whilst other SDO's concentrated on the management and delivery of the active young people's programmes in schools (PESS), Dragon Sports (multi skills/sport programme for 7–11-year-olds), 5 x 60

(secondary school sport programme), disability sport and community delivery and coach education.

The modernisation of sport and leisure services in Flintshire created changes within the administration and delivery of sport across the county in line with Climbing Higher's (WAG, 2005) overarching strategy for increasing sport and physical activity in Wales. In 2008, Flintshire entered into a partnership agreement, known as a Local Authority Partnership Agreement (LAPA) with Sports Council for Wales (becoming the main funder for sport development to deliver its key programmes in schools).

The Welsh Audit Office (2010) notes that the LAPA was designed as a long-term planning tool for Local Authorities to demonstrate performance improvements around the core areas of funding provided to Sport Wales's partners. Thereby suggesting that even before any changes to the sport service provider took place, the funding relationship between local authority and Sport Wales was subject to the hierarchical control through monitoring systems synonymous with Foucault's (1997:68) governmentality 'understood in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior'.

Continuing modernisation throughout the council, saw the promotion of alternative delivery models and opportunities across the county for community asset transfer of several sites. A Senior Manager at Aura described how local community groups adopted two sites; Holywell and Connah's Quay swimming pool, whereas remaining sites were packed together under a spinout company christened Aura Leisure and Libraries, which took responsibility for leisure service, sport development, play maintenance and library service across the county describes the sport and leisure service at the time prior to Aura

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That exercise was completed in July 2016 in order to get what we now know as aura quite lean and ready to spin out. So that when we did go, we would effectively be taking from a leisure centre point of view, Deeside, Jade Jones Flint, Mold and Buckley. We would also take sports development national exercise referral, play design and also the children's play areas. (Interviewee 6, 2020).

Following the transfer to Aura, the sports development service adopted a new title of 'Aura Sports Development.' Its current sporting priorities are to deliver programmes that support the following areas: 1) Developing Physical Literacy 2) Tackling inequalities 3) Supporting children and young people through the sporting pathway 4) Developing leaders and coaches (Interviewee 2, 2020). The team has an agenda scoped out within the Sport Wales (2012) Community Sport Strategy 2012-2020, Vision for Sport in Wales (Sport Wales, 2019) and the Aura Leisure and Libraries (2018) Business Plan 2018-2023 which will be used to support later interview data detailed below.

The following sections will consider the journey of modernisation within public sport and leisure service in Flintshire based upon accounts from a senior manager with Aura, Aura board member, a sport development officer, a senior manager within Flintshire County Council and senior manager from Sport Wales and analysis of the strategic documentation. The sections below outline three key areas: firstly, the organisation's journey by contextualising the public delivery of sport and leisure service as part of Flintshire County Council. Secondly, the section assesses where the organisation is on its modernisation journey and outlines Aura Leisure and Libraries' development and its impact upon community sport delivery in Flintshire. Finally, the

section considers upcoming plans for aura and the future development of community sport in Flintshire.

6.2 How did we get here?

The Welsh government keenly felt the impact of austerity, the Chancellor's emergency budget (June 2010) and Comprehensive Spending Review (October 2010) with a reduction in £1.8 billion up until 2014-2015 and 42% from capital programmes. David Cameron, the Prime Minister of the UK at the time, had decisions to make around public spending, pursuing policies that promoted 'a leaner, more efficient state' in which 'we need to do more with less. Not just now, but permanently' (The Guardian, 2013). A reduction in UK public spending would mean an impact on Welsh public services.

6.2.1 Rationale for change

The Welsh response (Welsh Government, 2010) to budget cuts was presented with a fait accompli to protect core public services within its limited resources from the Treasury. Consequently, the future of discretionary local government services such as sport and leisure were brought into question (Parnell et al., 2015; Parnell et al., 2016 and Parnell et al., 2017).

Several interviewees discussed their experiences within Flintshire County Councils Sport and Leisure departments and highlighted examples of the impact of budget reductions within their working environment.

An Aura board member who also worked at Flintshire in Leisure Services, described the previous local government culture as somewhat 'loose' with expenditure being 'thrown around' as it was the council. He recognised several changes that began to affect his day-to-day work very quickly.

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Initially I would say it was the first reaction to austerity, in terms of let's pull the purse strings tighter and be resilient to anything that's going to happen. I can see that there is sense in that but perhaps the approach could have been better.

In the past we went through a period where the gym had not been painted in seven years. That was prior to when I started and when I arrived. Which gives you a sense of how much the department had fallen down the pecking order (Interviewee 8, 2020).

Leisure services relied on budget funding from centralised sources within the local government, Sport Wales and externally from the public. In the local government model of sport development there were few opportunities for internal income generation. A sport development officer in Aura but started his career within Flintshire, echoed these points through his own experience. He described how 'it was just crazy' to have several sport-specific development officers to cover what was a small county area, but he outlined the innovation used to ensure that job roles, terms and conditions were protected using the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regs (2006). The sport development manager explained how their work has been funded by Sport Wales, but over the past five years their grant has been cut by 5% year on year.

Luckily, we've never had to lose any staff. Staff have either TUPE'D over into other positions or staff have left the business and we have not replaced them. We have adapted people's roles, get them in on a part-time basis, utilise existing coaches and volunteers to do roles. We've been quite fortunate that peoples' jobs have not been on the line (Interviewee 7, 2020).

The senior manager at Aura, also had a senior role within Play and Leisure at Flintshire, described the impact of reductions in funding at the more strategic level.

> I suppose the real pressure and big reduction as an in-house service started around 2010. After the first three years after that we were part of the lifelong learning directorate. The emphasis was on action plans. We had things like 10% challenges but effectively it was death by a thousand cuts (Interviewee 6, 2020).

The 'Simpson Review' (2011a:44) commissioned by Welsh Government focused on a reorganisation of local government: 'Local, Regional, National: What services are best delivered where?' In particular, the paper highlighted sport provision as a key example for efficiency saving through outsourcing of delivery to social enterprises and continued collaboration with Sport Wales.

Bevir (2009:7) describes outsourcing as a method of introducing marketisation into public service delivery via private or not for profit organisations; sometimes being a company formed from previous service providers as public sector employees. King (2013) argues that whilst local government transformation of sport services may promote more control over the policy sector, it will do little to raise and widen participation across the community as the primary focus will be on efficiency savings.

Recommendations within the Review led to the signing of the 'Simpson Compact for Change' (Welsh Government, 2011b) between Welsh Government and Welsh local government which forms the basis for a mutual relationship between the two parties. Newman (2001:26) reflects that whilst the partnership approach narrative relies upon more networked forms of governance which increases the number of actors within policy delivery it suggests a 'oversimplified' perspective on change which overlooks

the continued reliance on hierarchies and markets. A salient point in the solution to delivering publicly funded sport programmes. As Grix and Phillpots (2011:10) advise, state paymasters have already decided the sector's direction despite autonomy claims within sport policy narrative. Incorporating market-based solutions into public sector sport services, could open the sector to economic exploitation and programmes of governing at distance through budgets, audits, standards, and benchmarks (Power, 1995;1997 and Rose, 2009:17) all hallmarks of new public management.

6.2.2 Localised restructure

Between 2010 and 2014 the council began a period of savings across its services and assets in line with national budget reductions which would eventually transform the delivery of sport and leisure away from local government, regardless of Flintshire being the sixth (out of 22) highest attended leisure facility in Wales during this time. (Stats Wales, 2020).

The Welsh Audit Office (2010) highlighted budgetary overspending in sport and leisure services leading to added pressure to reform. As Interviewee 6 recognised, 'We were dealing with less budget and the perception of a good manager does not overspend and it was starting to become a problem, therefore something had to change.'

The Senior Manager within Flintshire council offers some background insight into the strategic level direction of sport and leisure at the County from this time

> I got the sense at that time going back a few years, as did people working in the leisure and library service, [that] it was developing around the UK. They were quite impatient and fettered in creativity, growing the business and marketing, particularly and competing more. It had always been a very well

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performing, fairly well respected but not a particularly creative service (Interviewee 9, 2020).

The encouragement of contestability and creativity into the management of sport and leisure at Flintshire reflects two elements present within New Public Management practices' characteristics. On the one hand NPM advocates competition into public service delivery to focus on customer choice and performance results, copying non-governmental business to improve performance (Hood, 1991,1995). On the other hand, promoting creative leadership that views managers and workers' portable potential over technical expertise, thereby reducing the public or bureaucratic way of working.

The new Chief Officer's appointment in 2014 meant a time for reform across the Council and within sport and leisure. For example, the Senior Manager at Aura, suggests that this appointment was instrumental in leading organisational change for Flintshire sport and leisure services:

> His area was leisure, libraries and Theatre Clwyd. So, the writing was on the wall. He was always open and direct with us. He had a lot of drive, and he knew what you wanted to achieve; what was the best vehicle to sustain these services. So, it was pretty open early on in 2014 that we were going to be leaving the authority. (Interviewee 6, 2020).

Although, according to 'An Actif Future' (FCC, 2008:62), Flintshire's earlier sport policy, identified a 'way forward' for sport and leisure some time ago. Its content contained objectives 'to attain an effective and high-quality leisure service (including sport development)' including the possibility of an alternative delivery model for sport

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and leisure. Thereby suggesting that the blueprint for organisational change for sport and leisure existed long before post austerity reductions in local authorities' budgets.

It was clear that the 'Simpson Compact' (Welsh Government, 2011b) was to deliver resource savings and demonstrable improvements in service delivery for the people of Wales.' The hierarchical influence by Welsh Government on the future direction of community sport as recommendations within the wording of the Compact referred to

> Local Government with the support of Welsh Government to review the scope for collaboration in the future delivery of culture and leisure services' (Welsh Government, 2011a:13).

This broad rhetoric of collaboration was echoed by Sport Wales (2012:43) in their Community Strategy, who highlighted the Simpson Compact as an opportunity to develop sport across Welsh communities.

> Clearly, genuine, sustainable collaboration between local authorities will now be required to ensure consistency of service quality, and to minimise instances of fragmented delivery, duplication of effort and inefficiencies. This is a real opportunity to make our sporting infrastructure more effective. We should not restrict thinking to simply local authority collaboration but also embrace the work of the voluntary sector. (Sport Wales, 2012:43).

These policy documents highlight that despite the array of resource dependent partnerships that proliferate the sport policy community, the real power to make decisions, to decide on who is to be involved in delivering the service and the standards that they must uphold, is held by the Government, not actors with 'significant autonomy from the state' (Rhodes, 1997:15; Grix and Phillpots, 2011:15).

A way to understand the connection between the role of the state in gathering knowledge and retaining their influence in the delivery of publicly funded sport and leisure services is through the work of Foucault. Dingwall and Wilson (1995:125) alluding to Foucault suggest that an institution can retain a 'contribution to the maintenance of order or discipline in the social world' through a discrete organisation of discursive practices where knowledge and can be formed and produced through rules, systems and procedures.

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> 'To govern, therefore, whether to govern a household, a ship, or a population, it was necessary to know that which was to be governed, and to govern in the light of that knowledge.' (Rose et al., 2009: 7)

The Aura board member, who has played an instrumental role in the transition from public service to Aura, explained the rationale behind selecting a social enterprise model from its infancy in 2008. He described how initial exploratory work raised the idea of an NDGO to Aura's current operating model.

> the senior management and Flintshire had been developing the model and what happened was legally they had done some investigating around funding and various things like that. In the end it came out that an employee led organisation, Community Benefit Society with charitable aims would fall under greater range of funding opportunities (Interviewee 8, 2020)

New Public Management and local government reform create an opportunity to encourage third sector organisations (social enterprises) to develop 'new leisure trusts. These trusts allow public services to create financial savings and retain the social aspect of delivery (Simmons, 2004: 280; Teasdale, 2012). Westminster has promoted social businesses to develop economic outcomes, social good and 'a way

to reform services which had been stifled by bureaucracy and a lack of innovation' (Teasdale, 2012). Whereas Foucault believed that the market would enter every facet of everyday life more specifically, governing a *state* will mean 'to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising toward its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all' (Foucault, 1994: 207).

The Welshman Robert Owen was one of the founding fathers of the co-operative movement in the nineteenth century. The Welsh Government has adopted his legacy to promote sport and leisure delivery via trust options as a favoured method to reduce local authorities spending. The Welsh Audit Office (2015:17) explained that trusts have 'the potential for attracting additional grant funding and possible tax and VAT savings, particularly in terms of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief. A trust with a charitable status is entitled to relief from rates on any non-domestic property which is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes.

As the Aura Senior Manager clarifies, the decision to transfer to a form of social enterprise has some specific efficiency savings in that 'we can have an 80% reduction in business rates and an improved VAT position'.

6.2.3 Staff Engagement

Flintshire County Council formally transferred the responsibility for delivery of key leisure sites, sport development, national exercise referral, libraries, museums and service/inspection of play areas in August 2017. Flintshire's employee led model became the first in Wales with the council which could be attributed to several factors, the Council Manager offered his perspective on the reason for this choice:

> Partly because that's our values, and partly because we like to be different, partly because we could see a different model and partly because libraries were included' (Interviewee 9, 2020).

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Hyman and Mason (1995) critique the employee-led business model as a social democratic approach to avoid trade union intervention during a time of austerity. The Aura (2020) website stresses that 'the transfer of the management of these buildings and services from Flintshire County Council to Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited DOES NOT represent 'privatisation' or the 'externalisation' of services to the highest bidder', citing 'partnership and collaboration' as a motivator to retain the service.

> Whilst other things moved away, there was no rationalisation of the service from what leisure and library services used to run but there were changes to what we called public open space. We discussed that if you're going to spin out, we didn't want to take on those parts of the service. Although they might not be expensive, they would be a huge drain on management time and effort, but we wanted to go with areas that we felt we could make a go of. As in improve libraries from the social value point of view and improve leisure centres from the commercial angle (Interviewee1, 2020).

Ridley Duff and Bull (2015:75) consider that New Public Management will inevitably present itself through the initial collaborative intention as managerial led, target driven approaches integrated within a contract culture.

Interviewee 5 outlined the nature of the council's NPM service contract relationship with Aura, which is underpinned by a business plan, and strategic KPI's which are then cascaded down for employees to attain.

Under the traditional public sector model, long-term employment was afforded to employees in exchange for a broadly defined role and a reasonable level of pay; therein is developing a sense of public sector ethos (Pratchett and Wingfield 1996; Hebson et al., 2003). This body of work has suggested that modernisation of local

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government services have begun to eradicate some of the internalised ethos/institutionalised behaviour in exchange for output efficiencies and shortism which match 'the new spirit of capitalism' (Fairclough and Chiapello, 2002:186).

At Aura, following a staff ballot to move the new model, remaining public sector staff were expressing concern over two key issues I) future engagement and ii) terms and conditions. However, the focus was 'An exercise of 'winning hearts and minds' of staff' (Interviewee 6, 2020) to coalesce under the new Aura brand.

Some of the interviewees reflected on the apparent two-tier workforce during the changes, with some engaged ready to proceed but others were convinced that it was doomed to failure.

> Regardless of how dire financial situation might be, people still feel comfortable and reassured by being at the council. (Interviewee 6, 2020).

Amongst this committed group were the Sport Development Team, all interviewees explained how 'there wasn't really much difference' apart from reductions in senior managers and the loss of sport specific development officers. In real terms, saving of 'over a third to the combined services' (Interviewee 9, 2020).

The Aura Way project was launched as an embedded employee programme that offered transparency in the changes ahead. Described as a 'coaching approach to get you thinking.it un-harnessed old beliefs. It gets you thinking in a different way.' (Interviewee 8, 2020). The Aura Way delivered a message of a unified entity and was designed to shed some of the old public sector ethos as 'we couldn't have the same organisation or same front of an organisation going into commercial organisation or entity' (Interviewee 8, 2020).

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Pratchett et al 1999 and Hebson et al. (2003) argue that former public sector employees are often the target of most local government reforms with their participation providing meaning and key to the successful delivery of change. Share schemes that individualise ownership, combined with soft-HRM policies, aim to induce 'high-commitment' that undermines collective action to overturn the investor-led model of enterprise (Marchington, 2005).

Since the switch to Aura, annual funding for sport development staff is still received within Flintshire and distributed alongside other funds. Aura Sport Development's role is to promote opportunities for sport and physical activity participation for across Flintshire, in addition to delivering key Sport Wales programmes. Under the New Public Management model developed between Flintshire and Aura, the comfort afforded under the public sector has been exchanged for certain unknowns. There was a unique experience felt by staff at sport development.

> I think the only thing that causes instability is that we've only been on one-year fixed term contracts. Year on year we usually get an early nod around Christmas to say no panic you can be funded for another year (Interviewee 7, 2020)

A Sport Wales Manager interviewed, who was at the strategic forefront within the Sports Council felt a real impact from the Welsh Government budget reductions that influenced the modernisation of sport across Wales.

> We get funded annually by Welsh government but what we will say is all things being equal if we have the money next year and the year after we will support you as a partner. We are no longer able to do that at the moment because our funding is getting cut year on year (Interviewee 10, 2020).

Alongside other Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies, Sport Wales funded by annualised grant-in-aid cycles and additional internal income generating business activities. In-addition, Sport Wales is responsible for the distribution of National Lottery funds to both elite and grassroots sport in Wales. The annual remit letter for 2015/16 from Welsh Government outlined Sport Wales's targeted budget (£23.50m), together with the direction for policy for the following year's funding.

> Sport Wales's performance will continue to be measured by its progress against the strategic priorities and goals within this Remit Letter, and the agreed outcomes, performance indicators and targets in its business plan (Welsh Government, 2015).

The Welsh Government investment into Sport Wales, for 2017-18 is £22.52m, during this period there was an increasing focus on community sport. Current budget 2018/19 to 2019-20 has seen a decrease to £22.42m and £22.41m respectively, with amongst other objectives, Sport Wales tasked to continue to explore the potential for a new model for community sport across Wales. The strategic focus by Welsh Government on community sport has meant a break with tradition for Flintshire as the main provider of sport and leisure within the county. The following sections will discuss Aura's modernisation journey, highlighting the key concepts that affect their work. Finally culminating in a discussion around future plans and concluding the work.

6.3 Where are we now?

Despite Flintshire County Council transferring the management of its sport and leisure service and wider services under the Aura umbrella, it continued to retain power by 'governing at a distance' (Rose and Miller, 2013) demonstrating that the hierarchical influence of the state can still be felt through re distribution of its organisational assets.

6.3.1 Strategic Priorities

Aura shaped its strategic priorities to mirror achieving the contractual relationship that it had entered into with FCC, whereby funding was awarded in return for delivering against predetermined objectives. This approach sought to ease any tensions with members, the community and increase confidence in this new business model. Reflecting upon the transition from public service provision to alternative delivery model, the local authority representative suggested that:

> The old arrangement was not a negative it was just of its time. It takes a long time with a council like this that has a high level of direct provision. It takes a long time to build trust and confidence in order to introduce alternative delivery models. They were going into the unknown, they were worried about accountability and performance. (Interviewee 9, 2020).

Since entering the 'service contract' with Flintshire, Aura have become subject to a triple set of priorities of organisational, localised and national standards for all of its services, including sport and leisure (delivering on behalf of FCC and to adhere to Welsh Government standards). These standards demonstrate a 'regulated freedom' (Miller and Rose, 2008:53) enforced by the states use of 'disciplinary technology' to create a docile body which may be subjected, used, transformed and improved' (Foucault,1991:136). The Table 6.1 below outlines the key priorities as detailed within Aura Strategic Business Plan 2018-2023.

Table 6.1: Aura Strategic Business Plan 2018-2023

Aura Strategic Priorities	To grow in order to be financially sustainable
	To improve the health and well-being of Flintshire residents
	To deliver community benefits for Flintshire
	To improve skills and to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and employment for local people
FCC Funding Outcomes	Number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 populations
	Percentage of Quality Indicators (with targets) achieved by the Library Service
	Percentage of NERS clients who completed the exercise programme
	Percentage of NERS clients whose health had improved on completion of the exercise programme
	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year
	Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week

6.3.2 Accountability

Van de Walle (2010:309) recognises the use of the performance monitoring approach through embedding non-governmental business tools as part of New Public Management. These tools were designed to create more trust and restore political legitimacy as the public sector was deemed to be inefficient, lack transparency and understanding of service need within the wider community. New Public Management with its roots in public choice theory, promotes a premise that public officials cannot be trusted (Niskanen, 1971) yet ironically, monitoring systems can create an environment of distrust and blame. When discussing how the council used performance monitoring within the relationship between Aura and Flintshire County Council, the Council Manager stressed that although performance outcomes were in existence, they weren't necessarily something that he was in favour of.

You have income targets, performance targets, don't forget you have you have statutory things. I don't necessarily agree with them. The National library performance standards, which is about performance and standards. So, there is quite a lot of public sector KPIs as well as commercial ones. (Interviewee 9, 2020).

Despite personal opinion, talking with the Senior Manager at Flintshire County Council, it would appear that attaining performance outcomes are integral to securing funding from local authority. The establishment of performance monitoring systems reflected examples of surveillance and created an opportunity for the local authority to retain a 'gaze' on the work of his its contracted provider (Foucault, 1977). In work that examined the nature of the relationship between sport council funders and NGBs, Grix (2009) highlighted the hierarchical nature between funder and recipient which exists in observable and non-observable power relations between the two. This work noted that the disparity of the relationship is reinforced through the modernisation process of structures and eventual policy delivery. Foucault (1977) and Purdy (2015) uphold that the use of surveillance techniques uphold power by creating repressive/ preventative power and productive power which encourages the delivery of certain behaviours. The present case study appears to suggest that a similar picture exists between local authority funder and its alternative service provider for sport and leisure which reinforces delivery standards within a funding agreement and detailed outcomes. Aura's Senior Manager clarified

The legal term is we have a funding agreement with outcomes. 3.4 million which is 1.7 every six months. The council developed a template of seven funding outcomes which are very high level and not precise. They are not prescriptive

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at all, and we just have to demonstrate what we are doing to contribute towards them (Interviewee 6, 2020).

Aura has been part of a service contract with FCC for three years (Interviewee 9, 2020). The annual funding agreement began with a £4,152m investment (2017/18) with a pro rata release every six months. Subject to continued attainment of KPI's, the annual funding will remain but will be subject to a reduction of 10% year on year, which mirrors the reductions felt under previous local authority management. Despite delivering a balanced community service that can offset social value with commercial success, a reducing budget means that it is imperative for the business to operate under a lean structure.

> They (managers) would prefer social value as it is easier to measure than pounds and pence. But there is a huge pressure on the sports side of the business to deliver financial targets too. Again, it's the social side of the council wishes to fund. So, there is the inherent tension which is difficult but without sport there is no company (Interview 6, 2020).

Despite some positive results around the use of NPM within a modernised sporting context (Crabbe, 2007; Schulenkorf, 2012), there largely remains scepticism around the use of performance monitoring due to the hierarchical role held by the external funding stakeholder and the resource dependent relationship created with the grassroots sporting deliverer (Taylor, 2009; Coalter and Taylor, 2010).

In the modernised sporting context of Aura, the Sports Development Team have been encouraged to be entrepreneurial in their approach to achieving targets laid out by the organisation and Sport Wales. In one example, they have been able to 'develop a business plan and income generate' (Interviewee, Sport Development Manager, 2020)

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to positive effect through the creation of a number of alternative provisions for primary physical activity (PPA), for example, one interviewee stated that 'a lot of primary schools have no PE specialist to deliver for them…but you can buy us in' (Interviewee, 7). In addition, high schools use Aura's alternative education pathway to develop employability skills in 'young people who get kicked out of school, sucked in and spat out by the system. We are now taking them in with Aura so that they can gain several sports led qualifications' (Interviewee, 7, 2020).

Aura's work supports under skilled teachers in this area that whilst no funding is attached there is still the requirement for sports development officers to meet the Sport Wales vision of creating a nation of children who are 'hooked on sport' or participating in sport at least three times per week.

The School Sport Survey administered by Sport Wales examines the apparent 'hooked on sport' performance indicator, which feeds into Aura's business plan as 'percentage of participating in sporting activities three or more times a week. Observing the idea of using participation statistics for children through a Foucauldian lens suggests that the state encourages individuals from an early age to engage in regular physical practice, reflecting their bodies as a site of subjugation and indicating how individuals become involved in their own oppression unwittingly.

 Examining Sport Wales (2015) (n=111,893) and Sport Wales (2018) (n=115,386) offers a comparative overview of Flintshire's performance below in Table 6.2. There has been some slight's shift in the publicly funded indicator around sport participation for children and young people in Flintshire between local authority provision and alternative service delivery Aura.

Table:6.2 'hooked on sport: three or more times a week' sports participation figures for children and young people across Flintshire in 2015 and 2018.

FLINTSHIRE RETURN YEAR	ALL	M	F	ALL YRS 3-6	ALL YRS 7-11	M YRS 3-6	M YRS 7-11	F YRS 3-6	F YRS 7-11
2015 (n=5, 090)	49	52.1	45.8	50.4	47.8	52.4	52.0	48.4	43.5
2018 (n=5,175)	48.3	49.4	47.5	47.9	48.8	47.2	51.4	48.6	46.6

In 2014/15, Flintshire recorded that nearly 50% of its school population was 'hooked on sport' and participating in activities at least three times a week. This place Flintshire as fourth highest performer, alongside its other North Wales colleagues and at a mid-point across Wales. The data collection for Flintshire's input to Sport Wales (2018) was taken when Aura had been trading for a year. It is evident that despite an increase in returns there are slight decreases across the board in participation, particularly in male participation. A slight increase in female participation, was attributed by Interviewee 5 to closer working with Street Games and the development of a string of 'Us Girls community festivals' (Interviewee 5, 2020).

The delivery by Aura Sport Development Team of alternative education, Teacher's preparation time cover (PPA) and Street Games partnership work Aura has delivered on Sport Wales's (2012:21) community strategy wish for partners to 'create good opportunities through good enterprise and innovation'. However, despite the encouragement of an entrepreneurial climate by Sport Wales and the delivery of increased participation from partners like aura, there is little recognition within the methodology of the Sport Wales School Sport Surveys around the unique contribution of commercial providers who can generate social value in terms of additional resources and expertise to a school or community environment (Wicker et al.,2013).

Interviewee 7 as a regular deliverer within the community pointed out the reliance of funders on their service. As a coach, he was expected to adopt the entrepreneurial vision to attain outcomes laid out by Aura, Sport Wales and other funders,

> they see we have a bank of specialist staff, specialist equipment and specialist facilities to deliver these programs in. We have a good track record (Interviewee 7, 2020).

The withdrawal of local authority management of public sport and leisure services, increase in confidence and use of contracts reflects what Harris and Houlihan (2016:454) observe as 'attempts to promote policy goals of good governance and empower community actors to create their own commercial strategies.' Yet, the continuing existence and adherence to surveillance through adhering to policy standards as part of this entrepreneurial relationship reflects examples of the employment of disciplinary technologies by the local authority in order to exercise, 'coercion upon the body' (Foucault, 1972: 137-138). Examples of biopower are reflected in the continual 'transformation and improvements' expected by Flintshire and the Sport Wales/Welsh Government around increasing sports participation within the local community.

Sport Wales and Welsh Government shape the direction for community sport policy across Wales. In line with the same wider UK policy field, the Welsh policy direction been characterised by the turbulent shifts around sport for good and sport for sports sake as described by Coalter (2007). A recent independent review of Sport Wales (Welsh Government, 2017) identified the conflicting role of the organisation to deliver government policy aspirations outlined within these documents Welsh Government (2005) as the long-term strategic document for sport and its home nation response

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(Sport Wales, 2011. Particularly as a period of reducing budgets, has resulted in an era of organisational and sectorial adaptation within Wales (Welsh Government, 2017:3). The Review made recommendations for longer periods of policymaking and closer working with the partners to share learning but offered support to Sport Wales to remain the main (state sponsored) voice for sport in Wales. (Welsh Government, 2017: 44).

Sport Wales Community Sport Strategy (Sport Wales, 2012:31) outlines perceived drivers and investment primacies for grassroots sport in Wales which linked to 'prioritising work to identify what the community needs; basing decision-making on evidence and demand'. Foucault (2002) recognised the importance that knowledge creation played in development of power relations; in particular, in creation of the 'truth' or discourse to pacify others. The 'art of government' necessitates that, it is useful for a social structure like the state to gather knowledge about those that it makes decisions over in order to create further analyses and tactics, which is often political and economic in nature (Foucault:1991: 92-102). The reality of practice indicates that regardless of localised sporting need and evidence collated, it is really the annual notification of budget from Welsh Government to its sporting body 'that sets the strategic agenda for Sport Wales's which are consequently cascaded down to partners within the regions in exchange for funding (Welsh Government, 2017: 7).

Since the move in local authority delivery to the sporting partner Aura, the Sports Development Team have noticed minor change in their work in the community. Albeit the spread of delivery 'partners' has become 'smarter' and wider. Despite losing some sport specific staff, the focus on remaining team members was to deliver shorter interventions and do more work in areas of social deprivation.

Over the years we've seen staff reduced, funding reduced, and staff being regionalised. So, we had to tighten up on what we deliver because we can't be all things to all people, and we are having to work smarter to be more productive and get better outcomes. I think that's probably one of the main reasons why we are delivering and getting better outcomes than we did before (Interviewee 7, 2020).

In addition to monitoring children participation, the Sport and Active Lifestyles Survey-SALS (Sport Wales, 2016) and the subsequent Survey for Wales (Welsh Government, 2018) are the preferred method for measuring participation in sport for people aged 16+ in Wales. The National average for 'percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week' was originally set by Sport Wales but also continues be monitored by the Welsh public sector standards laid out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Welsh Government, 2015b). This hierarchical monitoring of sport participation demonstrates that biopower exists over adults' bodies just as it did for children, with Aura's acting as agents of free-market rationality that places both limits and stresses on the body and mind of individuals within the community (Esposito and Perez, 2010, 2014; Sugarman and Thrift, 2020).

Foucault (1990: 89) argues are …the new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed by all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus.

At the local level, this sport participation target is demonstrated as a key performance indicator within the Aura Business Plan (Aura, 2018) and performance from the commissioned service provider is subsequently supported by funding from FCC and

Sport Wales. Sport Wales too described 'seeing very little change' (Interviewee, 10) as the staff were still the same and the Local Authority Planning Agreement (LAPA) cemented their funding arrangement, with Aura Sport development now responsible for feeding localised data into FCC and Sport Wales (Sport Wales, 2016; Welsh Government, 2018).

Following the introduction of sport related targets through Aura's business plan, in addition to the local government and strategic demands, it demonstrates that sport policy is governed by multiple stakeholders not only at the macroeconomic but also at the micro economic level who are 'seeking to keep control' (Taylor and Gratton, 2002) in this geographical area.

Despite Sport Wales (2016) and Sport Wales (2018) offering insight into sport participation when local authority was responsible for the service and then was latterly replaced by Aura Leisure and Libraries, methodological differences between the two prevent the drawing of inference over time. Following the change in service provider, it may be difficult to seek causality around participation, as there may be several policy agendas influencing the resultant funding received from the local government (Widow et al, 2017). Therefore, discussion below in Table 6.3 will focus on the output from Aura in 2018 and its comparison to the National Average as indicated by Wellbeing of Future Generations

Table 6.3: Sports participation figures for adults across Flintshire (Sport Wales, 2016; 2018).

% Of people participating in sporting activities (3/more times per week)	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
2016	23	29	16
2018	31	40	23
National Average (Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, 2015)	32	37	28

In 2018 Flintshire came close the national average for sports participation at 32% and from a gender perspective, they exceeded for male participation but sadly demonstrated the ongoing work to be done everywhere with female national standard being 28%. Whilst the data returned by Sport Wales and Welsh Government figures still did not reflect a massive improvement in participation for Flintshire, as clearly not everyone in the county shared Sport Wales's vision for adults' level of sports participation. Interviewee 10, the Sport Wales manager, offered an interesting reflection on how the data within the surveys is used to promote the political discourse in Wales.

Some of it was around where we were at the time, Welsh government and politicians wanting to say we've invested X into this and had thousands of participants (Interviewee 10, 2020).

The growing impact of the work produced from inter-organisational relationships generated by commercial sports providers who work in the non-profit sector remains unrecognised at the highest level (Isett and Provan, 2005; Wicker et al., 2013). Particularly as Aura are required to live up to the standards outlined within the Welsh Government set participation statistics Whilst Sport Wales's were flexible with local demands, the manager advised 'what we had to demonstrate to Welsh government was participation figures it was as simple as that' (Interviewee 10,2020).

6.3.3 Collaborative Working

Sport Wales has sought to move away from using punishments and rewards as 'we haven't historically punished inferior performance nor have we been able to reward good performance' (Interviewee 10, 2020) looking instead to work collaboratively with their local authority partners.

Collaborative working practice has been part of Welsh way of working which have cascaded down from a social democratic ethos designed to develop an alternative to its English counterparts (Andrews et al., 2007; Birrell, 2010). Joint working is demonstrated by Sport Wales's attempts to work 'with' sport development partners to construct alternative methods for reporting participation data.

Workshops encouraged movement away from quantitative measurements where possible, to get partners to think of 'what gets measured gets done and if what gets measured are the wrong thing is, then it's driving the wrong types of behaviours' (Interviewee, 10). Yet, the partners still reverted to using numbers within their returns and it was still the primary requirement of Welsh Government. to demonstrate performance through quantitative measures,

In the funding arrangement, between Sport Wales and Flintshire, hierarchy is the dominant mode of governance (Marsh, 2008:257). This asymmetrical networked approach to funding is enacted through the Welsh Government's practices of monitoring and conditional autonomy (Grix, 2009: 35). It is apparent that the requirement to be accountable to the state impacts upon the work of Sport Development Officers at Aura who have their actions guided by the wider agenda of the hierarchical government (Rose, 1999: 15).

Whether Sport Wales's values and practices are intentional or apparent, Fairclough (2000, 2013) recommends focussing attention on power play around New Public Management language used in political text, as this discourse within sport policy could justify the use of a LAPA and related targets.

The wider business of Aura experiences vertical and horizontal accountability to the local government (as a local agent of Welsh Government) through a structured external and internal approach which feeds into the service contract and business plan. The local authority manager describes the governance of Aura as 'much lighter' as it was based upon a good collaborative 'working relationship' and an important level of 'trust' which was deemed more important the development of a good 'socially owned' model. However, Goodwin and Grix (2011:541) would indicate that trust and autonomy from the state is not achievable yet due to the ongoing requirement to be accountable to externally set targets and the continuing peripheral influence on internal working practices,

Flintshire's alternative delivery model for sport and leisure; Aura, has incorporated what it considers to be a 'formal and informal approach' to inform its collaborative

relationship with FCC. The formal process was outlined by the Local Authority Manager who described the

> Annual review of the business plan, which is linked to the annual review of the service contract payment. What's agreed for the year, strategy services KPIs and so on (Interviewee 9, 2020).

Further monitoring systems include open book accounting, auditing and biannual partnership board meetings between Aura and Flintshire. There are also monthly meetings between the Chief Exec of both organisations to talk through the finer details 'so there are no surprises at the annual review' (Interviewee, 6, 2020). Significant upward accountability away from grassroots stakeholder is cognisant with public service reform. Hierarchical accountability effectively ties an organisation into political control and government led targets so that it never truly becomes an independent organisation free to pursue its own strategy which may lead to tensions between central and local accountability (Grix, 2009:46; Spear and Cornforth (2010).

Collaborative work between Aura management and staff is an ongoing affair. All employees as members of the Aura business model are encouraged to attend the annual AGM which is staged as a participatory celebration of organisational and individual achievements across the organisation. There is also opportunity to be part of the Aura Work Force Voice committee which contains members across the business and runs alongside the non-executive board of directors. The Work Force Voice committee ensures that there is transparency and staff input is fed directly into strategic decision making (Interviewee 8, 2020). Yet, the literature appears to suggest that the worker experience within NPM organisations, reflect increased managerial control (Diefenbach, 2009), rhetoric (Hutchinson, 2012) and declining collegiality due

to the lack of lifespan career opportunities within the changing organisational context (Plimmer et al., 2017). These points were supported by data collected at both English and Welsh sites as opportunities for progression were limited and whilst suggestions were effectively fed into by staff, external KPI's directed the shape of strategic direction of both organisations.

The Senior Manager at Aura envisaged the bi-monthly workforce voice forum as an environment where organisational pyramids are suspended, as the focus was 'to communicate and jointly find solutions about the way things can be improved.'

> We have really tried to tighten up and reinforce what I call proper discipline. I don't mean that as a negative, I mean that as a positive. I mean let's have respect and accountability amongst colleagues. We want you to behave this way, but we also want your managers to behave this way too (Interviewee 6, 2020).

Personal accountability amongst staff is evident amongst employees within house staff appraisal and sickness absence systems which all links to business targets for performance. Aura's Senior Manager conceded there was still room for progress but, under the unified Aura Way approach, there has been a huge improvement in sickness absence and staff turnover. Pollitt (2015:113) reflecting on the impact of NPM, observed, that there has been some productivity gains and staff efficiency noted through leaner working practices in what is termed 'reasonably well understood processes.'

Personal accountability extended toward staff in Sport Development, where it was suggested that the role of the traditional community coach has all but disappeared and

been replaced by a 'business savvy' (interviewee 7) individual who is expected to innovate and sell their expertise to multi-agency partners across the community.

> How can we income generate? What is out there? What are they doing in England, Wales, Scotland and beyond that we can bring back into our part of Wales and adapt it to suit our own needs? How can we sell our facility space? can we sell our products to other people? (Interviewee 7, 2020).

To reach beyond the sporting world, staff have received training in high level 'youth, community, leadership, management and business-related qualifications. (Interviewee, 7). Whilst the boundaries and identity of sport development work have always been blurred, it is clear from this case study that the influence of modernisation has dictated officers operational 'frameworks and contexts' (Hylton and Hartley, 2011; Harris and Adams, 2016:104) and professional identity (Mackintosh, 2012). It has been observed that sport development can be promoted through different means (Girginov, 2008) and this change may be reflective of a neo liberal influenced shift from traditional sport development to sport management of resources and resources for sport (Adams, 2012:97).

Sport Wales's top-down attempts to modernise the community sport provision, which in the creation of Aura sets the organisation apart from the local authority service. The reliance on government funding has resulted in the demonstration of behaviours that encourage the promotion of sport through an opportunistic lens, potentially reducing autonomy and shaping the direction of the local sport to suit the wider government agenda. Foucault (1978:104) may recognise the changes within sport development as more reflective of the 'conduct of conduct' or the generation of a deliberate set of behaviours as part of governmentality, where all citizens (employees) become

accountable for their actions. In Aura, staff duties and partnership working are all linked to outcomes within the business plan, which itself could be viewed as a technique of power under an accountability framework. The organisational focus is outlined through clear objectives for staff creating opportunities for self-management and improvement. Improving quality standards of working, is viewed by Joankowski and Provezis (2014:480) as a form of 'coercive accountability' through constant monitoring of performance.

The extent to which this case study example reflects what Foucault would describe as 'docile bodies' enacting 'techniques of power' is open to interpretation, but the hierarchical influence enforced through funding would suggest that this is not beyond the realms of possibility (Harris and Adams, 2016). Despite the changing environment, the love, drive and commitment of the staff to the role remains focussed on the development of sporting opportunities for the people across the community of Flintshire.

6.4 What is the future?

Sport Wales previously adopted an all-Wales approach to investment, which equated to mixed outcomes from the twenty-two authorities. As modernisation across the community sport sector in Wales continues with subsequent budget reductions to follow there are alternative plans to adopt 'a new operating model based upon regional investment coordination, commissioning and delivery' (Sport Wales, 2016).

6.4.1 Sport Wales Restructure

Sport Wales's decision to create what they describe as 'a sustainable, resilient and efficient delivery model for community sport' (Sport Wales, 2017: 25) is reflective of Foucault's (1972:472) 'the invisible hand of punishment' that apportions blame for

failing through spectacle, but appoints professionals to assure other stakeholders that punitive actions are not linked to financial losses for local authority partners

Yet, local authorities were not convinced, as within an Independent Review of Sport Wales (2017) it was suggested that whilst North Wales councils were keen to explore the potential for the redevelopment of existing Sport Wales sites across North Wales, into one unified 'Sport North Wales' model, a number of significant issues had come to the fore. Such as the 'potential loss of revenue for councils from grant income for development posts' (Ibid., 25) and an 'increase of further layers of bureaucracy' (.25).

Within the Sport Development Team at Aura, this has created a level of uncertainty for staff, who are unsure what the future holds for their role. As April 1st 2020, it is planned that all staff will be regionalised within the Sport North Wales entity.

> We don't know if we will stay within aura or be governed by Sport North Wales. We are at that level of engagement where we don't know what our job roles are going forward. We don't know if we'll even have a job (Interviewee 7, 2020).

Thus, creating a situation of further hierarchical control over the partners, where the latest phase of modernisation of community sport represents an invisible threat of inevitability which may be more effective than the penalty itself (Foucault,1972: 472).

Adams and Harris (2014) recognise that the modernisation of sport has engendered a critique of sport development programmes that are supported by a weak evidence base around 'what works?' Such 'what works?' questions are commensurate with policy outcomes supported by wider social research (Sullivan, 2011; Nutley et al., 2012). Yet, the need to demonstrate accountability within a sport policy framework demonstrates NPM in action, placing a broad emphasis upon rigorous processes of evidence as part of the funding process (Harris and Adams, 2014). Whilst the use of

performance indicators and accountability is accepted as commonplace within sport, their use and insistence upon provision of evidence, serves to enforce the hierarchical, asymmetrical relationship between funder and partner (Goodwin and Grix, 2011) and demonstrate governmentality in action in the delivery of sport and leisure.

In this case study example, Interviewee 9 on behalf of Sport Wales, argue that they are trying to change the monitoring and evaluation process of their funded community partners.

> There is a marked shift from justifying 'what they have done for the cash' to 'It's about what you've learnt, how you are looking to improve next year, what is the evidence base that you are using, why are you doing it like this.' (Interviewee 9, 2020)

The aim of this approach is to develop what Interviewee 9 describes as 'a local evidence base in terms of what's happening, what's working and what isn't working and why'. It is proposed that the evidence base will be created from existing Sport Wales surveys and partnerships with health board professionals, academic colleagues and other partners across the community.

Governmentality, according to Foucault (1979:102), utilises the 'apparatuses of security' to build up specific knowledge about the population in order that unhealthier behaviours could be understood, and individual social practices can be developed and disciplined through passive surveillance within state sponsored projects relating to sport.

Harris and Adams (2014) report that whereas there are privileged voices (academia, professionals and consultants) that enforce power relations through utilising qualitative evidence within the community, this tends to be ignored by policy makers. As

demonstrated by Interviewee 9 when reflecting on Sport Wales who have been trying to move away from traditional quantitative reporting measures, but Welsh Government are still interested in hearing the statistical picture:

> They want a strapline to say… 5 million quid has got us for example hundred and 50 kids that they didn't have before. I guess that's where the tension lies. (Interviewee 9, 2020).

Foucault reminds us that 'power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault, 1978: 93). So, for that reason, it is not the preserve of the privileged elite to resolve all problems as solutions can come from anywhere, including from within the populations that they affect. In accessing evidence to inform policy such readings overlook the truism that describing a problem is different from solving it (Morrell, 2008: 626). Therefore, it remains to be seen as to how participation data in Wales will be recorded in the future as currently, data is still recorded by the traditional quantitative route.

6.4.2 The partnership between Aura and Flintshire County Council

Similar uncertainty lie in store for the wider Aura business as the budgetary support from Flintshire continues to see a 10% annual reduction following austerity measures, although this economic loss is buffeted by increases in leisure revenue and participation. As Aura's senior manager explained:

> We are about 8% increase on last year, our direct debit membership as in membership of gyms has gone up significantly. We are collecting from around 7200 people which is an increase from six percent in the previous year (Interviewee 6, 2020).

The Aura Business Plan 2019-2023 (Aura, 2019) suggests that despite the uncertainty over the future of the Aura Sport Development Team 'the company's focus over the next 12 months will be on improving the performance of all business areas to ensure we continue to protect and sustain those services currently funded by the Council.' The internal integration of non-governmental business practices such as cost saving and increasing productivity, demonstrates how asymmetrical power is maintained by the Council in their relationship with Aura (Goodwin and Grix, 2011:538). The nature of this relationship which is predicated upon funding ensures the Council's omnipresence in daily life, thereby creating an internalised situation for Aura which generates 'a state of consciousness or visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' by their landlord (Foucault, 1991:200).

Interviewee 10, as a senior council manager talked with confidence about renewing Aura's contract with Flintshire for Year's 4 and 5 and was currently in the planning stage to make this happen.

> I'm really positive, and I don't mean just about Aura, about what we are investing in. So particularly in some of the things that are less seen, like the social value in communities. Sport development and their work with vulnerable groups. Some of the areas that we work in not just what you would consider to be the standard offer (Interviewee 10, 2020).

The Local Authority are particularly keen that Aura can retain the Flintshire asset network across the county's communities 'not just important for access but for community identity.' (Interviewee, 10, 2020) Yet Green (2006) would posit that this policy decision was part of the development of the 'active citizen'; the making up of an

individual or within a community who can take greater responsibility for their own welfare and decision making (Raco, 2004).

Since its inception in 2017, initial decisions around Aura's performance outcomes which supported Flintshire's investment were originally 'handed to' (Interviewee 6, 2020) the company from the council. Although broad and descriptive in nature, the outcomes still had to be regularly reported back within all lines of governance and partnership board meetings. Since then, Aura has demonstrated itself as a settled company, with improvements in sport and leisure participation and was recently awarded a Social Business of the Year Award by Social Enterprise Wales, all pointing to an avoidance of 'political egg on the face' (Interviewee, 6, 2020). Despite the positive overtones, an air of uncertainty was raised by the Aura Senior Manager around the renewal of the service contract, which could be accompanied by a revisiting of the original performance outcomes so that the council could say

> this is what we really want from Aura, they may tighten them up and make them more prescriptive. (Interviewee, 6, 2020).

The inclusion of both descriptive (what should happen) and prescriptive elements (what will happen) within funding outcomes represents the introduction of 'double binding' within performance measurement because of the introduction of objective setting. Hood (1995:97) infers that moves towards more explicit and measurable (or at least checkable) standards of performance for public sector organisations demonstrates a shift away from trust-based relationships, further integration of business practices and increase of control of workflow based upon output rather than matters arising daily. Thomas (2004:11) suggests potential problems of perception and interpretation of data: 'the performance captured by a particular set of measures

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will always be partial and contextual, reflecting the fact that the measures have been selected, analysed and interpreted through the lenses of the organisations and individuals involved with the process.'

As such, further reductions in budget supported by enhanced performance outcomes continue to demonstrate the asymmetric power relationship (Goodwin and Grix, 2011:538) between Flintshire and Aura.

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the empirical findings in a case study example of modernisation in public sport service in Wales. As the study was based within the confines of the unitary authority of Flintshire, the study presented the historical and political subtext that may have impacted upon the original delivery of the original council run sport development service before its transfer to the employee-owned business Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited.

For ease of consideration, the study was then divided into three sections, namely: I) how did we get here? ii) where are we now? and iii) what is the future? with each considering the transformation of the service, the influential factors at each time point and contrasting it against the literature and Sport Wales' and the Welsh Government's policy making.

Initially, short reflection was given to the former council sport and leisure service which demonstrated delivery under pressure in a time of dwindling budgets due to austerity. Following policy directives from Welsh Government and council restructuring, the council run service transferred to what is now Aura Leisure and Libraries Limited.

Aura's current business operate under a community benefit society together with offering VAT and National Non-Domestic Rates (NDDR) savings demonstrated a more

socially democratic model to its community. The inclusion of business planning linked to outcomes suggest that the invisible hand of NPM was not far away, including the ubiquitous reductions in funding that were ever present under local government.

The employee-owned organisation has sought to eradicate the public sector mentality within its brave new world. The adoption of the 'Aura Way' reflected the influence of NPM on the individuals within the organisation, which has brought mixed results, with improvements in staff sickness and turnover. Whilst staff seem motivated, sport staff in particular face an uncertain future due to annualised funding awards from Sport Wales for their posts.

Despite this lack of clarity, sport staff describe smarter ways of working which has impacted upon improvements in participation statistics with adults and harder to reach groups across Flintshire, but this has led to altering the range of duties within the working day.

This case study identified a reorganisation of community sport in Wales with the creation of Sport North Wales. Sport North Wales as a regional hub of Sport Wales in the North, will offer a smarter delivery service and seeks to minimise its transactions with local authorities. At the same time, Sport Wales are calling for further evidence-based development programmes, thereby generating further uncertainty and demand on the Aura Sport Development Team.

For the wider company, Aura, their future seems linked to a potential of more prescriptive outcomes, even further reduced funding and the incentives of a modernised way of delivering sport and leisure services with the ever-present council guiding their decision making.

The following chapter compares and contrasts the findings discussed in chapters 5 and 6 which dealt with two case studies in Wales and England.

Chapter 7: Discussion Chapter

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a more focused discussion of the similarities and differences between the two cases identified at Salford and Flintshire. The chapter will begin with a recap on the main aim/research questions within the thesis and offering an overview of the key findings therein. Secondly, the work will evaluate broad themes and relationships within the findings in each of the case study contexts. Finally, the work will unpack these findings in line with three critical areas in the layout of the case studies, namely, 'strategic priorities' 'accountability' and 'collaborative work.' All findings discussed will be evaluated for it in relation to existing theoretical literature from Foucault and his work on governmentality and related concepts around power and knowledge.

7.1 Aim/Research Questions within the Thesis

This thesis provided an exploration of issues arising from the modernisation of local government sport and leisure service by observing the inter and intra relationships within two employee-owned sport and leisure contexts in England and Wales and identifying the reality of community involvement in the delivery of these 'new' service models. This thesis considers as its main aim, to compare local authority responses to modernisation reforms which impact upon sport policy making. This thesis explored the impact of the conflicting dialogue contained within modernisation policy making for public sector reform on actors involved in the process and highlighting the degree to which their behaviour is modified, using the Foucauldian lens of 'governmentality' and related concepts as an organisational framework. The cumulative data collected at

these sites (5 interviews and relevant national/organisational policy data) utilised Foucault to answer the key three research questions. Namely.

How has Salford (English local authority) responded to modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How has Flintshire (Welsh unitary authority) responded to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

How do these English and Welsh councils compare in their respective responses to the modernisation of their sport and leisure services?

7.2 Key Findings

Taking a broad view at each of the sites, initially the first and second questions sought to determine Salford and Flintshire local authorities' response to calls for modernisation of their public sport and leisure service. The most obvious finding to emerge from the case study was the similarity around the everyday influence of the local authority on the delivery of service from both stand-alone models.

If you were an outside operator, you may not have those issues to deal with, yet we are still intrinsically linked to the City Council (Interviewee 1, 2020)

We've got Auras boards' priorities and the seven funding outcomes from the council. The council is our chief funder as they have given us 3.4 million a year (Interviewee 8, 2020)

Despite a vision in Wales of the local authority owned and run leisure centres, it will eventually become an extinct species (Welsh Government, 2015) leaving the transfer of ownership/management and delivery of sport and leisure services in Salford and Flintshire to individualised operating structures appears to have created a partnership

relationship of regulated freedom (Rose and Miller, 1992). At both sites describe speedier lines of service-related decision making with the employee ownership structure negating the committee process of the original public service but still locking the employee owners into a relationship with the local authority owners due to their ownership of the assets and distribution of funding.

> We can be a lot quicker in our responses in this organisation, where we think there is a gap in the market to generate income or to improve poverty or antisocial behaviour we try and fill it (Interviewee 6, 2020)

Individuals talk of still having to align their work to satisfy local political priorities and /central policy priorities rather than customer need or want.

> part of our high-level strategic priorities is to increase participation (Interviewee 6, 2020)

> A blanket approach to sports development is not going to deliver the transformational change we need to see if we are going to achieve significant increases in participation rates. (Sport Wales, 2012: 3)

Despite the legal distance between the two, both sites are still using a 'charm offensive' as part of their strategy to secure funding and retain member support for their delivery as they are people responsible for decision making around budget allocation. The bureaucratic rituals of NPM within the new model of service require quantification of practice, demonstrated by the economic policymaking and contracting that underpins the partnership arrangements between local authority and employee-owned business within the community (Fraser, 2018).

This result may be explained by the objectives within contracts with external funders and the ever-present political forces both locally and nationally that drive the direction of the new service rather than its customers within the community. The evidence of concrete relationships of power demonstrated via the contract and policy demonstrates pastoral power whereby the connection between governmental discourses and the constitution of pastoral actors is affected (Martin and Waring, 2016).

This finding builds on the observation of the sport policy community of the influential role of the state in the direction of sport, however in previous work (Green and Houlihan,2006; King, 2009;2011 and Sam and Jackson, 2011), this influence was attributed to the role of central policymaking. From a Foucauldian perspective the role of local authority is legitimised due to pastoral power as it offers them a key role in instructing and caring for the communities that they serve.

Following on from, changing central-local relations as recognised by Grix (2010) and this work, inferred that the marketization of sport and leisure has created a role for local government as agents of the state to influence the direction of community sport. Utilising pastoral power (NPM) as a technology of governmentality the state demonstrates how they are 'on one hand, 'relay' of surveillance and discipline; and on the other, promoter of self-reflexive, self-governing subjects' (Martin and Waring, 2016:1298).

The results of this thesis show within the case studies, that the transfer of public sport and leisure to employee-owned businesses has become a 'site of governmentality' where according to Foucault (2008:243) the introduction of economic policy making across the community has resulted in social professions being transformed by the

state to further the goals of neoliberalism and marketization of public service. The governmentality literature offers little in terms of the impact of the flow of governmental discourses 'down' into individual and collective subjectivities, and back 'up' into governmental discourses – feedback that might act as a corrective or realignment (Martin and Waring, 2018:1297).

7.3 Interpretation of results.

The final research question provides an opportunity to interpret the result on a more specific level by comparing and contrasting how Salford and Flintshire approached the requirement to modernise their respective sport and leisure service as part of overall public sector reform. This section will follow the format of the original case studies, taking each finding individually.

7.3.1   Strategic priorities

This research identified many similarities and differences between the two Home Nations case studies central to this work and their responses to modernisation of sport and leisure services. The factors identified may be too insignificant to suggest that this difference was representative of 'English' or 'Welsh exceptionalism,' simply due to differing delivery models adopted across the country. However, the thesis has identified clear similarities and differences between the levels of knowledge and power in different areas of the community subsequently being developed because of utilising governmentality in policy making.

A clear difference between the two sites was the length of journey to their current employee-owned form. Previous literature (March and Olsen, 1989; Bolton and Fleming, 2007; Houlihan and White 2013) recognised the inconsistencies in policy

guidance driven by differing political philosophies around the reform of sport and leisure was resultant in differing approaches to the same problem.

It was evident from Salford local authority whose journey to modernisation had been over 20 years long, driven by policy making direct from Westminster that differing transformations and partnerships had taken place. Whereas in Flintshire, sport as a devolved context received a level of protection from the Assembly until 2016.

Possible explanations for the divergent administrative arrangements facilitating the modernisation of the local level could be attributed to organisational culture at each site (Wynen and Verhoest, 2015) resulting in differences in funding and administrative streams but Foucault (1998:71) would attest that regardless of culture, greater focus should be placed upon the power behind the cultural technologies involved.

Rose (1996) observed that community offers a prime site to enact the 'government of community' or governance of individuals in line with a range of government priorities, thereby suggesting that regardless of devolved context, these employees owned businesses may be perfectly located at the community level to act as agents of the state to deliver on governmental priorities through sport and wellbeing interventions.

Taking a Foucauldian approach to this finding is to consider the power, knowledge and space around the strategic priorities observed across two case study organisations in Flintshire (Wales) and Salford (England) and their relationships with local authorities, funders and the wider community and to 'criticise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent' (Foucault, 1974: 171).
 It is interesting to note that Sport England and Sport Wales, as the voice of policy making and a source of centralised funding in each of these Home Nations, have demonstrated a shared vision of encouraging local authorities to become more astute

and innovative in their strategizing for sport delivery. Policy literature has encouraged their local authority partners to work with a 'wider range of partners, including the private sector' (Sport Wales, 2012 and Sport England, 2016). This policy rhetoric accords with Foucault's perception on knowledge being a way to develop disciplinary power through increasing the networks of experts, who under their 'gaze' can define, survey and discipline their subjects (Foucault, 2012).

> Sport England does best when it stays actively involved – not in delivery, but by contributing insight, advice and support (Sport England, 2016:13)

The level and construction of local authorities' involvement in these new businesses bore the hallmarks of governmentality (Foucault, 1980) with evidence of 'pastoral power' from funders shaping the behaviour of staff in the form of a service to meet wider policy objectives and targeted contracts (Foucault, 2007:127). In both Salford and Flintshire, the local authorities work together with their respective delivery partners to keep them updated and monitor progress on their service. These partnerships were constructed as part of a 'collective responsibility' call (Welsh Government, 2015:3) to deliver services sport, leisure, and other cultural services that managed ageing stock, met increasing customer demand and funders' targets.

Discussions with both organisations around the relationship with their respective authorities suggest a supportive environment. Whilst the relationship may not appear overt, the presence of business plans and strategic objectives support the presence of disciplinary technology (Foucault, 1977) designed to progressively "make up" subjects and their identities as performance accountable actors (Power, 2019: 8; Hacking, 2002) to what is their main funder.

Both businesses' internal strategic priorities were comparable and driven by their parent local authority and other funders' contractual relationships. The external demonstration of these hierarchical relationships is reflected within business plans containing predetermined objectives designed to shape the organisations' strategic direction in exchange for funding. Interviewee 6, a manager in Aura explained that the budget that they received from the council was subject to achieving a series of strategic priorities, which has also raised the profile of the organisation

Despite the similarities in the authors of these outcomes, differences were identified from site to site as it became apparent from speaking to staff and analysing the business plans that each country had taken an individual approach to adopting 'responsible and sustainable decision making' (Sport Wales, 2016:3) in responses to reductions in budgets within their respective country.

At both sites, targets were linked to health and wellbeing, arts, heritage and culture, library, sports participation, however, Salford placed a larger emphasis on the environment, community involvement and long-term financial planning. Evidence of these wide-ranging agendas within the organisation's objective could be attributed to attempts to holistically govern at the grassroots level using techniques that will make it possible . . . the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities (Foucault, 1994: 217).

Both SCL and Aura share several key features in relation to the governance of their employee-owned model with both sites adopting a Board to oversee the business's governance and financial side. Despite having the same business model, each company had differing operating structures. In England, SCL implemented a tiered management structure and community and employee membership scheme. Whereas

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in Wales, Aura focused purely on becoming an inclusive employee-owned structure. Differing interpretations of the same organisational structure in these cases may reflect varied attempts to improve democratic governance and social value offered by these new organisations. The residents of Salford are given opportunities to demonstrate their voice at community committees and community budgeting meetings, whereas in Flintshire a similar voice on community budgeting is absent suggesting the potential for county wide improvements in democratic governance.

The unique role of SCL representing the local authority in the community role instead of their business represents another facet of 'regulated freedom' (Rose and Miller, 1992) in action whereby the business is subjectified to deliver on the behalf of government objectives as part of the funding relationship (Rose,1999)

> We do quite a lot of work in the community around neighbourhood working at community committees where we engage with our residents. We have a devolved budget that we distribute to our community groups to bid for… attending community meetings and representing the city in those meetings. A private contractor would charge for that and SCL would give their time freely. (Interviewee 4, 2020).

Whereas this particular role is not a requirement of the contracted relationship in Flintshire both contracts specify a provision for shared building space with council staff and support in queries relating to the delivery of joined up council services. This facet of the contract at both sites demonstrates how the role of the sport/leisure professional has been transformed through sport policy and domination of NPM related 'technologies of the self.' These changes result in staff becoming 'conduits of governmentality' (Martin and Waring, 2018) or 'experts of community' who 'advise on

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how communities and citizens might be governed in terms of their values, and how their values shape the ways they govern themselves' (Rose,1999:189).

Sport policy highlights the impact of sport on government objectives around health and social outcomes, particularly for sedentary individuals (Sport England, 2016: Sport Wales, 2012:22). Similarly, this thesis identified a nod to health and social outcomes within the strategic business plans in both SCL and Aura demonstrating again their vital role enacting biopolitics within the community; the administration of life itself and developing mental and physical capacities to uphold the wider economy.

For SCL, health plays a crucial role in its daily work with strong partnerships across the community with secondary care providers. Interviewee 1 described

> 'We get funding from the NHS, we have a 'can do' which is a cancer programme which is for people who have been diagnosed with cancer, helping them get back into fitness. Trips and falls, GP referrals and they work quite closely with all the GP surgeries in Salford.'

The relationship between health in Flintshire, by contrast demonstrates a sharp disconnect between the national and local picture. On one level national policy rhetoric promotes a strong joined up role for health, sport and National Resources Wales to collaborate to 'get more people moving more often':

> Public Health Wales and Sport Wales work to create a strong social movement for change to communicate the advantages of physical activity, based on the best available evidence, with the aim of changing the motivations and

aspirations of everyone in our communities towards a more active lifestyle (Public Health Wales/Sport Wales, 2017)

Yet at the local level there appears to be a barrier to collaboration with the Health Board despite policy guidance, leisure delivering health benefits to Flintshire residents as part of the National Exercise Referral Scheme and the mandatory requirement for public sector bodies to work better together (Welsh Government, 2015),
One senior manager at Aura hinted that the approach to community health-related outcomes within sport policy could be understood as one-sided. He states:

> We have never been able to get a slice of that budget. So, whether that be Aura or the council, we both seem to have struggled pairing with Betsi (Cadwaladr Health Board), it seems difficult to make inroads (Interviewee, 6, 2020).

In each case study example, the organisation of health differs, which may be attributed to differences in funding and the need to make reductions within primary care provision during a period of reducing public sector budgets (Hamm, 2009; Bolton and Martin, 2013: 458). In Wales, health is the largest publicly funded and 'politically sensitive' (Bolton and Martin, 2013: 447) area of devolved responsibility in the country and as Interviewee 10 suggested the idea of sharing resources between public sector providers is coming as a bit of a 'culture shock' to some departments who fear losing out.

For Aura of their mandatory ten strategic outcomes, three of which are prescriptively linked to health and set by the Welsh Government. In the English experience in Salford sees a joined-up approach to outcome setting and as a key partner of the City Council, SCL sits alongside other public service bodies (NHS, Fire, Police, Housing etc.) as

part of the City Leaders Group to offer a partnership approach to improve the health of the community (Interviewee, 5).

SCL has eight strategic priorities as part of its Strategic Delivery Plan 2019-2024, slightly less than Aura. All SCL's interviewees described a social outcome focus on their work, around health inequality, social deprivation, addressing knife crime and anti-social behaviour. The sport development officer from the company outlined their overall priority 'it all boils down to getting more people more active more often' (Interviewee, 1, 2020).

Contrary to the Flintshire experience, which attracted limited funding opportunities from its local health partners, in Salford there is a close working relationship between SCL, the local authority and the local Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG). Under the Welsh NHS structure, commissioning of services is conducted by the local health board, in this case Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. In Salford, the SCCG works at the local level with SCL by commissioning their services to address community health issues across Salford.

Despite the outward appearance of a collaborative partnership approach to service provision, a more hierarchical relationship is in place, given that the SCCG recognises Salford Community Leisure as the Council's main leisure provider and adult to deliver postural services until 2023 on the grounds of 'cost effectiveness and continuity of service' (SCCG, 2020).The outsourcing of health services to SCL recognise that this organisation is fully embracing the requirements of a third sector commissioning partner in delivering non-economic outcomes to become more 'business like' (Bull, 2008272) whilst adhering to management systems and quality standards (Baines et al., 2010).

The local authority manager at Salford noted that the health service is very much involved and will say, 'these are the targets that we need to hit; how can you as an SCL provider feed into those' (Interviewee, 3, 2020). The presence of target setting confirms that the funding arrangement between the two parties conforms to a partnership described by Grix (2010:168) predicated upon being 'commissioned to meet objectives' from the top down; a system that sees funding released once pre-set and predetermined KPIs are met. Such a system has been shown to bypass the needs of grassroots customers, who in both cases were not involved in any consultation process to set organisational objectives.

As the government's representative in sport, Sport England (2016:10) go further to apply this asymmetrical grip between health and sport by encouraging a shared funding and partnership approach to addressing their policy goals of improving social wellbeing across communities in addition to elite outcomes. Sport England acknowledges that 'significant multiplier effects' will be needed in approaches to 'tackling inactivity' (Ibid.,10). The so-called 'enforced partnership' (Philpotts et al, 2010: 9; Harris and Houlihan, 2016:433) policy directive from Sport England has led to several SCL sites co-locating with health partners to deliver their services more efficiently and support the continuing modernisation of sport and leisure delivery in Salford. This thesis supports Harris and Houlihan's (2016:433) work which suggests that enforced partnerships, rather than delivering on the narrative of organisational autonomy and community empowerment, create a means of control with the use of business practises to enforce their working relationship.

Closer working between sport and health remains part of a future strategic priority for Aura to reduce overheads and deliver a unique sales proposition against the increasing number of private leisure providers within the area.

The Welsh Government fully recognise the valuable contribution that sport and physical activity can make to our health and wellbeing and its power to tackle the challenges we face in our communities (Sport Wales, 2012: 20)

Some partners might think that if they're working in collaboration, they might lose some money. But it's different. I guess what you're saying is that sport has a social value. Particularly with health and well-being and the well-being of how future generations act. We have a responsibility to society not just to sport itself and that is a huge culture shock because governing bodies have been sport first person second. (Interviewee 10, 2020).

The Senior Managers at the Local Authority and Aura adopt a shared vision to remodel its 'community service delivery working with public health, social services and education to establish what could be a far more integrated leisure and well-being centre' (Interviewee 5, 2020).

On the one hand, the resultant effect in sport policy rhetoric has implied autonomy from the old local authority model for sporting organisations such as Aura and SCL to create 'leisure choice/business activities which can be delivered by others or in a different way' (Sport Wales, 2016:17). Sport policy rhetoric such as this seems to suggest a level of freedom to employees in Salford, which is evident in some examples around time for decision making. However, the freedom to choose approaches to predetermined objectives has also left these organisations' strategic priorities open to being governed by funders who adopt coercive action and create dependency through their financial-based relationship (Green, 2009:137).

7.3.2 Accountability

Despite both organisations operating their social enterprises in slightly diverse ways, standard accountability lines were present at both England and Wales sites. Both Aura and SCL chose to operate within the same legal form of a Cooperative and Community Benefit Society, used for conducting a co-operative business to benefit the community. Under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014, profits and membership are limited to community members, thereby offering accountability to delivery of the service through voting rights. (Ridley Duff and Bull, 2019).

However, the research identified that these co-operative businesses are seemingly locked into a triple bind of accountability to both the legal structure, funders and wider community reinforced by top-down new public management approaches to deliver an efficient service. These areas of accountability will be discussed in more depth below.

In Wales, Aura operates a purely employee-owned membership base which internally is currently represented by an operational board and employee (owners) workforce voice committee. Input from a current board member considers that 'one of the keys to the success of Aura is down to that Workforce Voice and its involvement with the board.' (Interviewee, 8,2020). Interviewee 6 explains:

> 'There is a real sense of buy in and there is a real openness and transparency in sharing information with the teams in terms of the budget position. We have had two annual general meetings and staff have never had that sense of involvement. Or sharing performance or the numbers. In the council it never used to happen. Whereas now we are very much in step

This finding may reflect Freeman and Medoff (1984) and Bryson et al. (2006) viewpoint that managerial responsiveness to worker involvement can increase labour productivity. Although an internalised strategic view may limit opportunities for wider active citizenship and skill base inputting into the strategic direction of this community-based service, thereby limiting opportunities to increase democratic governance within the new operating structure (Grix, 2010; Nicholl et al, 2013)

Whereas, in England, despite operating a similar business model, membership and AGM invitation has been opened out into the community to capture valuable insight, enhance democratic accountability and promote transparency of the service. There appears to be limited employee involvement in strategic level decision making at SCL in comparison to the Aura case study. For example:

> They just go off and do things, then they bring us together as a group and say this is what we've done. What do you think? It's done now, and then you just want us to say yes so that it can be taken on (Interviewee 1, 2020).

The second line of accountability for these new sporting cooperatives were to the main partnerships with funding bodies; in this case, the local government and Sport England/ Sport Wales create their own form of governmentality over SCL and Aura through an array of agreements and targets (Foucault, 2004). Previously the English and Welsh local authority demonstrated an almost laissez faire attitude to sport and leisure services, leaving assets to become 'tired' and without investment. However, since transfer out both sites report a similar tale reflective of 'indirect and unobservable power' (Grix, 2009: 35), suggesting manipulation of the context of trading by the local government to deliver on its desired outcomes.

In addition, since the transfer of responsibility for tenant management of the service to new employee developed co-operative organisations, both local authority sites made significant financial gain from the transfer of the service, (King, 2009; King 2012). These assets are now monitored by local authority through accountability measures, despite the claims that future sport and leisure needed to 'reflect future community needs and satisfy the demands of different customers.' (Sport Wales, 2015:6)

This change in tone was demonstrated in the language and terms of the newly developed partnership contracts in both countries. A Senior Officer from Flintshire County Council described the congenial and collaborative partnership in suitably economic terms as 'a service contract.' which is reviewed on a 'rolling basis' (Interviewee 9, 2020). Rather than following the rhetoric of dissipating power across the community, increased performance monitoring of Aura and SCL enhanced control centrally as a symptom of governmentality, developing knowledge on the trading of the business performance in line with government-led targets (Foucault, 1972).

The contract is underpinned by a business plan with a social value and business side which details KPI's around performance, reach, foot fall, fitness and commercial targets. However, the English experience serves to soften the blow by adopting SCL as a 'trusted partner.' Trusted partner status provides SCL with a seat alongside other public sector organisations in Salford creating place-based solutions to strategic community issues. These anchor institutions (Porter et al, 2019: 6) have the ability and motivation to develop community wellbeing through improving their joint planning and sharing of resources. Although Foucault would counter that it is not just the location of the organisation that creates the positive outcome but the application of surveillance techniques by the local authority to act as a tool to modify behaviour and create a level

of discipline (Foucault, 1977). There are lower-level collaborative strategic planning networks across Flintshire; a similar public partnership board arrangement is currently absent within the local government structure. At present, higher level strategic community issues are decided by members.

Both Aura and SCL trade within a community sport policy environment that operates based on an inwardly adopted 'gaze' which creates modified behaviour directed by steer from national government and adherence to disciplining technologies of targets, KPI's and legally binding funding agreements.

In Wales, Aura work to a Local Area Partnership Agreement (now known as the Community Sports Activity Plan) with Sport Wales. The plan is designed to demonstrate how Aura will contribute towards Sport Wales' objectives of increasing participation. The LAPA/CSAP was not considered to be a 'punitive plan' more a collaborative process developed through regular 'monitoring meetings' with budgetary evidence provided to support how public funding would be spent.

The design of such a plan may suggest a dated approach to community sport planning in Wales as government funding for sport is still distributed to its local authority partner when the modernisation become 'smarter' and wider has changed the spread of delivery amongst community 'partners.' In addition to their resource dependant relationship with the local authority, Aura, are also locked into a similar financially restrictive arrangement with Sport Wales, who use targets and objectives to regulate and manage their business (Phillpots *et* al, 2013:13). The context of this arrangement suggests a predetermined out-come that can be neither punished for deficient performance nor rewarded for positive work. (Interview 10, 2020). As Aura adhered to

the process and modified their behaviour, there was no need by the state to practice repressive power (Foucault, 1977).

A similar top-down relationship exists between SCL and its localised sports partner Greater Sport in England. However, this thesis's focus was SCL's direct relationship with Sport England as part of the local delivery pilot, which aimed to change the way it funded community sport provision by gaining a greater understanding of what assets already existed within a place. However, the Pilot remains subject to the same lottery-funded community programmes. Therefore, leaving participants in Salford, no less 'improved' as the Pilot is subject to the threat of curtailment under the reputation of being another exercise of the 'initiativitis' which is synonymous with community sport (Collins and Kay, 2002; Grix, 2010:168).

The wider community play a key stakeholder role in the supply chain of a modernised sport and leisure offering, yet both sites report a branding issue, where customers still see the new spin out service as 'the council.' Whether the transfer of the service was seventeen (SCL) or three years ago (Aura) the handover of this public service to an alternative provider presents stakeholder management issues consistent with the uncertainty and ambiguity of managing multiple political relationships (Flyvberg, 2006;2009). The Senior Manager described how facilities at SCL now must earn their existence instead of being kept open due to any social attachments formed through a sense of place (Christiaansen and Haartsen, 2017). They suggest:

> Projects and improvements all now focus on the bottom line, and we need to
> create a sound business case to demonstrate income generation. We had an
> indoor bowling green which was really valuable for a social platform for a small

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number of people. We now put a cross fit in there which politically caused problems. Ultimately everything has to earn its place. (Interviewee 7, 2020).

Both the English and Welsh cases identified emotive responses across their local patch, particularly by the members who are elected to be the voice of the people. As a senior manager at Aura explains:

whilst it doesn't mean that they were any less popular than schools or social services, the problem is there was no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide them but doesn't mean that shutting the leisure centre is any easier that shutting the school, it's still an emotive issue for elected members. (Interviewee 1, 2020).

Whilst there is no set way to deliver an asset transfer, in the case of SCL and Aura their arrangement with the local authority suggests that they are tenants responsible for service delivery and building maintenance. In this instance, both organisations remain answerable to their local government (read community) landlords, as the related sport and leisure related facilities remain publicly owned (Findlay-King et al., 2018). This tenancy arrangement is regularly reviewed but still leaves the organisation at the behest to the local authority and the community it serves.

Therefore, in these two cases, community consultation will always be needed when major changes to sport and leisure infrastructure are being planned. In England, community input is gathered through the local authority and by providing opportunities for engagement and feedback via the website, AGM and through their membership forums. Whereas in Wales, customer engagement is gathered through the local authority and Aura driven interventions including the website, community days, in-

house feedback to staff and the annual survey. Aura and SCL create opportunities for increased levels of customer contact which are not seen under the public sector system. Maintaining positive community engagement is important to the local authority as it offers up prospects to shape social discourse through utilising disciplinary power under the gaze of experts who can classify and control problem areas and subjects (Rose, 2007)

Brodie et al. (2015) consider that feedback taken at both the top down and bottom-up approach represents a holistic overview to customer engagement. However, there are future plans for Aura to phase out an ageing site by developing a community hub, to replace it by working with other public sector partners. Historically and currently, sport has been subject to political fervour across Flintshire, with strategic infrastructure plans developed and amended to gain support (Flintshire County Council, 2009, Evening Leader, 2020). Therefore, this latest plans for change may create an ideal opportunity for proactive customer led approaches to community engagement to be developed in Wales. As the SCL Manager summarised:

> Our service is governed by the number of people we have, and facts don't lie. If we don't deliver a service that people want, we are going to go down the pan, aren't we? (Interview 2, 2020).

7.3.3   Collaborative working

The Foucauldian lens offers a useful perspective to observe relationships across post-bureaucratic organisations (Miller and Rose, 1990, 2008). Following governmental reforms across England and Wales, the status of local authorities as primary sport and leisure service partner has been relegated to a collaborative role alongside other sub-regional providers (Harris and Houlihan, 2014). Goodwin and Grix (2011:547)

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recognise that in this move, rather than decrease state power, has increased the influence of central government over sports organisations in the delivery of programmes, due to their reliance on funding (Houlihan 2005:177; Hyndman and Lapsley, 2016),

The main premise of 'governmentality' is the ability to use micro level techniques to govern populations (Ferlie et al., 2012). On the surface, the relationships between SCL and Aura with their local authority partner appear to be built upon a collaborative and trusting partnership. Deeper inspection within the business plans which are scaffolded by objectives and talking with the context revealed that these environments are reflective of governmentalized arenas where an advanced neo liberal state still seeks to govern within regimes of regulated and earned autonomy (Miller and Rose, 2008) using tools of New Public Management to achieve efficiency savings and results.

In the case study example from Wales, the Aura CEO and his direct local authority counterpart regularly discuss the contract and the business seemingly without any external influence from other public sector partners. The Senior manager in the local authority acts as go between for members and Aura, although there is an abridged board meeting with sport members every few months. Flintshire report that they will be continuing a collaborative working relationship with their social enterprise providers because as their senior representative suggests:

> The business has demonstrated performance growth, hitting KPIs, commercial and indeed growing some of those softer areas. So, Aura has, in some very high-level terms, met their and our expectations (Interviewee 9, 2020).

Both providers reported strong links with key external funders, the local authority and sports councils. In England, the local authority manager explained that SCL's CEO

regularly meets with a partnership manager in the local authority to discuss the business. Contrary to the arrangement in Flintshire, SCL's trusted partner status allows it access to other public service providers in Salford, including Sport England suggests opportunities for collaborative engagement at the strategic level to 'improve the community's health and not just on income.' (Interview 3, 2020). The local authority manager explains:

> SCL comes into Cabinet on a regular basis and gives an update on what is happening around the city. They work as part of our city leaders' group, where all the key partners are housing, police, fire service et cetera so they sit as partners around that table. Everything is done as part of partnership, including working with Sport England on funding and feeding in (Interviewee 3, 2020).

Whereas Salford would not want to change their provider as the local authority manager described it offers 'value as a service but the procurement process will ultimately decide as we will have to go out and test the market and prove that we are getting good value' (Interviewee 3, 2020).

Despite the outward appearance of collaborative working between the local authority and their delivery partners at both sites, these case study examples in Salford and Flintshire support the view of previous sport policy authors (Harris and Houlihan, 2014; Grix and Phillpotts, 2011; Philpotts et al., 2010) of community sport being increasingly controlled by New Public Management style discourse and techniques. The Foucauldian perspective extends this established viewpoint by recognising that the development of observations and knowledge enables the state 'to govern effectively' over its partner provider (Rose and Miller, 1992:217). Utilising continual evaluation and management akin to NPM appears to form an important part of legitimising the policy

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decision to modernise the service and maintain the relationship with their chosen external provider.

Internally, both SCL and Aura describe a collaborative approach for the delivery of sport by interdisciplinary staff working closer both internally and externally with public and third sector partners in the community. At each site, staff interacted across leisure, sport development and libraries to cross promote their main funders outcomes. A Foucauldian perspective on modernisation policies promoting collaborative working at each site observes professional power beyond an analysis around jurisdictional change or autonomy, considering instead how social practises and subjectivities are reformed in relation to changing discourse (Foucault, 1994).

Although Aura was a younger company, their model demonstrated collaboration opportunities with senior managers but not necessarily across departments. Whereas at SCL, the reverse was in evidence, as staff voice was limited in senior decision making whilst there were frequent opportunities to volunteer and work in other departments.

Staff at Aura described the impact of partnership working on their daily work thus:

> We are all having to work together and a lot of it was a bit of cloak and dagger and a bit of stand-off to begin with. But over time you have to multitask, and you have to collaborate on different things. That has taken time, but I think that gap is getting smaller and smaller. As we can see the joint outcome and purpose that can be gained from partnership work (Interview 7, 2020).

Collaborative working in sport and leisure at both sites may appear to increase professional authority across the community but it also re-imagines power relations by transforming the disciplinary gaze of funders and the subjectivities of SCL/Aura staff

who are forced to adapt their behaviour to achieve NPM related objectives and results. (Foucault, 1994; Waring et al., 2015) This case supports and extends Grix's (2009) original observation that the modernisation of sport can potentially risk excluding those with the most experience of the service, rather than increase the voice for its stakeholders, in this case the paying customer and more experienced members of staff who took redundancy as part of the transfer process.

The Home Nations Sports Councils are the second largest collaborative partner with SCL/Aura after the local authority. Regardless of devolved context, each was keen to promote the governmentality of sport as a benefit to health and wellbeing in their policies. Sporting Future (DCMS, 2015:7), Sport England's policy promoted a biopower approach that adopted collaborative working by results to tackling inactivity and 'funding groups which have traditionally had lower participation rates'…'with government expecting the sector to become less dependent on a sole source of funding… to find substantial efficiency savings over the coming years' (57).

 The call for efficiency in delivery was supported by Sport Wales (2012:4) with a request for 'genuine, sustainable collaboration to ensure consistency of service quality and to minimise, what it calls 'fragmented delivery, duplication of effort and inefficiencies.'
Foucault acknowledged that the development of capitalism would be impossible without 'the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production' (Foucault, 1976: 141). The absorption by bodies of the values and norms that develop because of working in a funded partnership with the Sports Council produce a culture of neoliberalism and subjectivity due to their use of technologies of power and systems

of domination, such as monitoring and evaluation of these new organisations creating an arena for biopolitics to develop.

This thesis identified that despite the rhetoric, in Flintshire, not all public services work together, despite Sport Wales policy promoting the relative health benefits of participation. The Sport Wales Manager touched on the reasons behind this potential aversion to collaboration:

> I think there's a difference between the intention to work collaboratively and the willingness to actually do it. Some of that comes from the fact that Sport Wales has a finite amount of resources. Some partners might think that if they are working in collaboration, they might lose some money. But it's different. I guess what you're saying is that sport has a social value. Particularly with Health and Well-being and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We have a responsibility to society not just to sport itself. (Interviewee 10, 2020).

Conversely, in England, SCL and their strategic health colleagues have forged a strong relationship as part of working closely together with other community groups in a place-based initiative to improve participation across the city. The Local Delivery Pilot Manager from Salford Community Leisure has identified that his role offers him more opportunities to network and gain insight into existing provision, which further benefits SCL as a wider business. He explains:

> I am getting up to date insight on a daily basis that individual teams haven't the capacity to handle the conversation because they're too busy doing their usual

job and they don't get the opportunity to do what I'm doing (Interviewee 5, 2020).

The Local Delivery Pilot is considered a participatory environment (Blackshaw, 2010; Bates and Hylton, 2020) where residents' input is gathered alongside professionals with different seniority and background to develop an understanding of existing community provision and secondly, co-develop inclusive sporting experiences. As the LDP manager continues

> One of the ethos behind the local pilot is working without traditional hierarchical structures so no matter what your role within the organisation in theory a director sits along an officer, and they have equal contribution around the roundtable, and we bounce ideas off each other to inform the director of the local pilot.

> Everything we do is based on participants' viewpoints…. we ask the children what they want, what they see as issues, what they see needs changing. We just simply use their ideas. Everything we bring forward to that table is the insight that we found in the discussions that we have had. (Interviewee 10, 2020).

The Local Delivery Pilot work in Salford created an opportunity for individuals and groups to influence and develop their own sporting opportunities (Shulenkorf and Spaaij, 2015; Hylton and Bates, 2020) in exchange for offering insight into their thoughts around their existing participation levels and local provision. Sport England (2020) explain the Local Delivery Pilots:

Rather than focusing on distinct projects with agreed outputs over a defined time period, instead we are investing human and financial resources to build essential relationships within places around shared visions and values, to challenge ingrained cultural resistance, and to work closely with communities themselves in order to engage with these deeper themes….All of these are grounded in strong evidence from a much deeper form of community connection (we've learnt that 'consultation' is a bit of a dirty word), which in turn has informed the 'how' and 'what' we have invested in as our pilots take the next step

Whilst on the surface, this initiative appears a positive move forward in creating an opportunity for a voice for the community in how sport participation should look in Salford, the facilitation behind the project occurs in the form of an upwardly accountable financial relationship with Sport England that supported the Pilot's delivery and dictated its reality. The Local Delivery Pilot Manager explained that the Pilot's existence and his role was about 'meeting profile' and was at the behest of public funding from Sport England: 'We are very much dependent on that extension funding at the moment' (Interviewee 5, 2020).

Governmentality is an intricate relationship between the exercise of power and knowledge about the object of governing (Foucault, 1995/1977). Hultqvist and Peterson (1995:26) suggest that governmentality can only exist if knowledge has already been developed about: 'a predetermined view of what an individual is, what her characteristics are and what constitutes her nature.' The LDP can be discussed in terms of governmentality as it creates an opportunity for specific knowledge growth of

target groups to promote sport/exercise and more 'normal' – an indirect institutionalised form of control.

Whilst there are no similar place-based initiatives in Flintshire, there is a requirement for Aura to contribute evidence to the Local Authority Partnership Agreement (LAPA) of all their work in one contract with Sport Wales.

> We have worked with them to identify the areas of collaboration, where we can better measure impact consistently, what are our approaches to the work that we are doing (Interviewee 10, 2020).

In this relationship. Sport Wales has encouraged its partners to move away from quantitative reporting towards more flexible qualitative examples of evidence to support funding bids:

> Over the last few years and guess what we have had, is a shift from our perspective. It hasn't quite happened in the Welsh Government, but it certainly happened with us, in terms of those being more open to other ways of measuring impact. So, moving away from the quantitative, to more towards the stories behind the numbers. Qualitative case studies, social return on investment, we are much more open to that than we were (Interviewee 10, 2020).

But despite offering innovative approaches at the grassroots level, the Welsh Government's focus was still on the political capital that could be gained through good news stories from participation statistics. For example:

> Its ministers wanted numbers. They want a strapline to say… 5 million quid have got us, for example, 150 kids participating in sport, that they didn't have before. I guess that is where the tension lies (Interviewee 10, 2020).

Similar innovative reporting methods are reported in England, as the Local Delivery Pilot manager stressed that this work was more around updates than traditional reporting focussing on feeding back 'anecdotal evidence.' Plus, a focus on investing in a wider range of partners, the Sport England Manager offers: 'although we still fund national governing bodies of sport that is reduced, and we now fund a much broader range of partners.

Grix (2009) and Rose (1994:4) remind us that the continual process of modernisation within sport is a deliberate attempt by the government to utilise and scope evidence to support its own agenda to shape people's structures and performance within that environment.

While governmentality is the art of how to govern others and ourselves, scientific rationality is about how to describe, understand, and explain the world, as it really is and in a way which is as objective as possible (Russell 2001). Therefore, the ways in which ruling takes place across both sites results in developing diverse types of truth. Examples of collaborative working in both sites seem both to be underpinned by a governmentality which focuses not on increasing community engagement and sports participation for its own sake, but on maintaining efficient working practises and controlling the community in line with wider government objectives being supported by New Public Management positivist techniques.

This thesis can support the work of Grix (2009) and Hylton (2013) that those with significant power in sport retain influence around its delivery and direction. A Foucauldian analysis of these two case study contexts has enabled an analysis of the source of power through knowledge gathering and creating belief in 'a kind of regulated freedom' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 174).

In these cases, New Public Management discourse associated with the modernisation of sport created an illusion of autonomy for employee led businesses to deliver their own sport and leisure services. The reality identified observable practises of power applied by funders that retained control within these businesses via legally binding funding agreements supported by monitoring and compliance to quality standards.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the policy responses of two local authority contexts to the modernisation of their sport and leisure service within their respective home nations. Initially, the work reflected on the aims/objectives, research problem and introduced the key findings. The key finding centred on the increasing involvement of the local authority in the work of these arms-length businesses. The chapter identified the similarities and differences in three key findings areas of strategic priorities, accountability and collaborative working drawn from the empirical chapters of this work.

In the first area, 'strategic priorities,' it was noted that whilst both home nations' policies promoted NPM-style smarter working, social enterprises tasked to deliver sport on behalf of local authorities each had their own take on achieving these aims. Both organisations were supported by funding from health, sport and local authority sources. However, these pots were tied up with business and social outcomes, suggesting that strategic working may be driven from external sources with differing levels of support and accountability.

'Accountability' represented the second area for consideration and identified that despite the organisation operating under similar business models and under a culture of NPM, again there were differing ways to deliver sport and leisure outcomes. A

particular area of note were the similar and different examples of involvement of staff and community in the new service.

The final area of exploration was 'collaborative working,' this area explored the reality of partnership working across the home nation contexts and explored the relationship with their local authority partners. In England, the thesis identified a strong example of collaborative working within the Local Delivery Pilot which linked differing agendas, community members and sporting opportunities together to offer a participatory initiative to boost community wellbeing. In addition, this thesis examined how data gathering was utilised in Wales to promote political agendas.

The concluding chapter of this thesis offers an overall conclusion to the work. The conclusion presents the overall findings in more depth and outlines the limitations identified and recommendations for future work. The work closes with a summary table of the contributions to research because of this work, aligned to the initial research objectives.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the key findings from each case study and articulate the theoretical contribution of this thesis to the wider (sport) policy literature. This chapter will introduce these findings, identify limitations within the work and suggest areas for further research.

8.1 Key findings and theoretical contribution to the literature

From an empirical perspective, Chapter 5 and 6 identified the approaches used by Salford and Flintshire local authority in response to calls to modernise their sport and leisure services. Whereas Chapter 7 explored key findings together with similarities and differences across the sites. This chapter will summarise some of these key findings that impact at the empirical, theoretical and methodological level and how they have contributed to existing literature.

The transformation of local authority services following on from the introduction of NPM practices has changed sole delivery of the traditional sport and leisure service (King, 2012, Nichols et al., 2020 and Findlay King et al., 2020) through a broad mix of delivery partners (Hood, 1995; Pollitt, 2000). Governmentality is explained as a management process which guides the conduct of others utilising disciplinary technologies, which aligns their choices to external political agendas constructed into a 'truth' by discursive means (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 1999).

The central aim of this research was to compare English and Welsh local authority responses to the modernisation of sport and leisure services based upon an exploration of this problem through the Foucauldian lens of governmentality together with primary/secondary sources I can conclude three main empirical findings and will

summarise each thus and detail their contribution to the wider (sport) policy literature before exploring the theoretical and methodological contribution.

Firstly, that the most obvious findings identified from both sites was the multi layered relationship between organisation and main funder, the local authority. Positive comments were identified from both parties and a narrative from staff around autonomy and speedier decision making, initially demonstrated an autonomous environment. Particularly, as these employee-owned organisations traded under a legal operating structure of their own, therefore adopting a right to exist as individual enterprises.

Regardless of the operating structure, the 'right to deliver' imposed other restrictions on the trading conditions for these enterprises which was common at both sites. Chaney (2015:159) suggests limited growth in the development of understanding of sport from the political science perspective. This thesis offered an additional contribution to knowledge by identifying and analysing the effectiveness of policy makers' relationships and exploring how individuals have responded to modernisation within (community) sport policy following recent public sector reforms across English and Welsh local authority sites.

> Despite being released from one line of traditional governance in committee rooms, their work was still having to receive 'formal and informal' (Interviewee 10, 2020) approval in another form of modernised governance.

Deeper exploration of the legal scaffolds underneath their 'right to deliver' revealed mandatory policies and legal contracts designed to 'make up' freedoms of the individuals involved. Staff also talked of 'political game playing' to maintain cordial

relationships with those members that had influence in supporting funding bids and community work.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the existence of state-influenced policies and contracts demonstrates evidence of pastoral governance exercising juridical power influencing the freedom of another. (Foucault, 2004) This thesis had added context to the relationship and extended the thesis of the pastor role, in so much as it has shed a light on the potential for 'coercion, exploitation and oppression' (Foucault 1976: 92) on the arms-length organisations from the local authority who are also perceived as the legitimised seat of democratic decision making and community care

The social discourse associated with the reform of the sport and leisure services at both sites supported duplicitous beliefs around central government's motivation for reforming sport held by other sport policy writers who have explored the modernisation of the context (Houlihan and Green, 2009 and King, 2012) Using the work of Foucault, his work has shed new light in sport policy by demonstrating that potential reasons for modernisation of sport and leisure services could be linked to offering up a carrot to citizens for them to become subjective individuals indicated through conflicting rhetoric of empowerment versus autonomy for organisations and individuals involved in an alternative delivery model relationship to deliver sport and leisure services.

Identifying the hierarchical juridical underpinning to the relationship and application of disciplinary technologies such as policies and contracts has resulted in setting the tone for the subtext of transactions and demonstrates government influence around the direction of sport policy which allowed it to micromanage the units of the state (Houlihan and Green, 2009: 681). Such a move was echoed by local authorities' decision to transfer its sport and leisure service out to employee-owned businesses

and its ongoing influence within these organisations the two which are demonstrated in visible representations and 'change from within' the organisations, including the direction of delivery.

In this second finding, this thesis identified the use of objective strewn business plans to support the legal contracts at both sites but differences in access to knowledge production created disparity in democratic governance across the sites. The introduction New Public Management techniques in line with modernisation of the sport and leisure service at both sites has resulted in a continual stream of measurement and assessment beyond what was a forgotten entity under the previous system.

 NPM management tools at the sites contained targets agreed in advance by the local authority and success, was numerically focussed to 'business-like principles' (Houlihan and Green,2009: 678). In addition to commercial targets, the business plans on both side of the border recognised the softer outcomes associated with the social power of sport and leisure which ties in with themes raised in Sport England (2016:4) and Sport Wales (2012:15).

According to NPM of public services, organisations bid for provision based on providing satisfaction to consumers and the only way that success can be acquired is through measurement (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Quality in public service delivery, require positivistic knowledge gathering of consumer preference and the cost of the route to satisfaction is key (Osborne and Geabler 1992: 143; Lapsley 1999: 256-7). Foucault (1980a, 1980c) argued that scientific rationality influences many realms of society and can provide a lens to observe the reasoning behind sport policy decision making.

Across both sites, regular community engagement events offered opportunities to provide feedback through various channels. In their pastoral role it became apparent that the local authority 'still had their ear to the ground. with little getting past them' (Interviewee 10, 2020). On the surface, this thesis identifies with Pollitt (2007); Hood (2007) and Power (2013) and its declaration for an 'English' obsession with numerical accounting for performance as both home nations sports councils still needed to produce figures on sports participation to their national government funder. By researching the impact of modernisation in sport and leisure in England and Wales, this thesis has identified that New Public Management has not been the uniform model of delivery promoted by Osborne and Gaebler (1992), as there are no one size fits all approach to its implementation (De Vries and NeMec, 2013) across the two sites.

Despite Dunleavy's (2005:476) call that 'NPM was dead', the thesis identified that NPM was 'alive and kicking' within sport policy context (Dreschler, 2005; Pollitt, 2007; Hyndman and Lapsley,2016:391) demonstrated in these case studies due to its constant re-interpretation in its use of policy rhetoric, which rather than offer autonomy and choice within organisational strategy, was mostly driven by funding agreements and monitoring processes which filtered down to street level bureaucrats during the course of their work, reflecting the controlling nature of local government service within the stakeholder relationships linked to the funding of alternative delivery models in sport and leisure.

Triangulation of data with interviewees identified the formulation of 'good news' stories for funders to demonstrate evidence of maximising financial outputs and Sports Councils exploring differing ways to report returns on investment, but the final stop at government still requires numerical returns. The ability to steer qualitative and quantitative recording of data reflect the influence on knowledge production and 'truth'

construction held by the parent-authority and externals funders over their partners. The findings from this study complement earlier work by Piggin et al. (2009a/b) and their work on knowledge production to support sport policy by providing evidence of similar governmentalities used to justify the decision to transfer sport and leisure delivery to 'unknown' external institutions.

A third and final finding in the thesis, relates to actors involved in the delivery of sport and leisure under the re-imagined service. To study the functioning of an institution from the singular angle of ''governmentality'', is to consider that it doesn't primarily take hold of subjects whose rights and fundamental duties are codified by a juridical system, but of concrete people in relation to an environment' (Chevalier, 2011: 65). In its central community location, the employee-owned sport and leisure business plays a vital role as a 'conduit of governmentality,' developing subjects whose choices align with those of political centres (Rose and Miller, 1992).

One way in which individual choices are aligned with distant political rationalities is through involvement (Oakes et al., 1998). The degree to which involvement and opportunities to truly 'have a say' (Welsh Government, 2015) in the delivery of services is dependent upon context. Limitations in engagement reduce opportunities to enhance democratic governance puts limits on the wellbeing impact of governmentality in sport and leisure in action in the wider community.

In addition, a wide range of social agendas contained within the business plans, creates opportunities for this business to deliver beyond their traditional sport and leisure format and away from the local authority. Modernisation in sport and leisure represented a coming together of policy agendas to share knowledge and resources. This thesis offered examples whereby collaborative relationships were discussed in

policy and delivered in unique ways across Salford and Flintshire. All partner work needs to feed into original business plan outcomes and is regulated by strict targeting regimes from external partners. Key differences between the sites and external partners include differences in administrative and delivery (or lack of) partnering relationship between external health and home nations sports councils.

In Salford, modernisation created strong links for SCL with their local health representative. On the surface, this collaborative work resulted in externally funded opportunities for service delivery and co-location of services. However, this money was subject to targeting and monitoring for quality standards. Furthermore, as sport is co-opted into health promotion work it extends the remit of new public management into the community to transform the conduct of others (Foucault, 1991) into active participants within their locality.

Contrary to the national drive for closer working within the public sector in Wales, this thesis identified that not all agendas want to work together which may be driven by fear of losing resources or authority. This has meant limited options for health promotion work. However, in comparison to the English model, the Welsh ADM is a younger entity and may not have had the time to develop the strategic relationships required to access the funding which it needs. This is particularly true, as health is an area of devolved responsibility in Wales and remains politically sensitive to changes in its service delivery (Bolton and Martin, 2013: 447).

Staff talk of having to be entrepreneurial in their outlook to think of ways and opportunities to achieve their organisational goals. The intended deskilling and upskilling of sports and leisure professionals demonstrates a 'reorientation of state activity and social relations towards the economic, and correspondingly, the

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constitution of a new human subject, *homo economicus*.' (Martin and Waring,2018). Foucault (2008) considered the development of home economicus is a site of liberal governmentality in action across the whole of the social sphere. Homo economicus is represented as the idealised self, whether that is in the role of buyer or seller. In the case of the new sport/leisure 'entrepreneur' employed within these organisations they are 'empowered' by NPM to seek out buyers for this new marketised service. From an external stakeholder perspective, both sites offer up opportunities for volunteering and customer engagement, however, SCL have the edge in demonstrating their intention by exercising their entrepreneurial ability and offering community membership with voting rights.

This final finding has added contextual application to the understanding of governmentality and its application in the development of knowledge and homo economicus. Areas of social life are considered the environment in which *homo economicus* can and should expand (Foucault 2008: 270-1). This thesis has demonstrated some insight into the theoretical applicability of governmentality into the context of a marketised sport and leisure service. This work has demonstrated the impact of power in relationship by key actors by steering their transactions through NPM style influences towards social and economic optimisation and maximisation in line with wider government objectives

8.2 Additional Contributions to Knowledge

The thesis, developed by a sports policy researcher, has offered additional original contributions to knowledge within this work building upon existing literature in three key areas: the discipline of sport policy and methodology. These will be summarised below:

Taken together, the findings in this thesis offer a contribution to existing sport policy literature (King, 2012, Nichols et al., 2020, Findlay King et al., 2020) by introducing a contemporary problem around a long established but lesser explored 'employee-owned' model of sport and leisure delivery. This work represents the first opportunity to explore the use of these models within a sports context and so in itself creates an empirical contribution to sport policy research due to the contemporary nature of the research context.

King (2012) predicted an increasing fragmentation of the local government sport and leisure landscape in England, following devolution, responsibility for sport policy making responsibility transferred out from Westminster to respective Home Nations. By revealing the existence of this model, these findings have significant implications for the understanding of how modernised sport and leisure services are delivered across the UK and the power relationships are managed therein. This thesis can add knowledge towards the discipline by identifying a valuable concept for future work and contributing towards an accurate typology of CAT's who take on leisure services (Findlay King et al., 2020).

Findlay-King et al, (2020) and Nicholls et al. (2018) describe that previous work which have explored the transfer of sport services on a thin theoretical base. This work used Foucault and concepts relating to governmentality (power/knowledge development) to demonstrate how relationships between key actors are influenced by changes in service delivery. Exploration through a wide-ranging sociological theory creates an opportunity to increase theoretical knowledge within this field

This research created an opportunity to offer a first-time exploration of the (recent) implementation of employee-owned alternative delivery models as a vehicle for

service delivery during an era of financial cuts in sport (King, 2012). This work is conducted 'on the border' (Grix, 2010) between research paradigms in line with real life problems The use of the broader 'hard' interpretivism approach has allowed to not only add the voice of key actors (Phillpots et al., 2011) involved in sport but create an avenue for exploration for the dominating forces within structures in the implementation and delivery at grassroots level.

Previous allied doctoral and published work which has explored CAT transfers to voluntary groups through a social constructionist/interpretivist perspective. This study has contributed contemporary application of Grix (2010), and its epistemological perspective is particularly important in reducing 'dominating force' for these grassroots actors who would feel the brunt of reductions in services and budgets following post austerity cuts to sport funding. In addition,

This thesis sought to develop King's (2012) original piece by comparing and contrasting the impact of modernisation on the English landscape with the landscape of Wales (Bolton and Fleming, 2007; McAllister, 2015) to establish differing home countries perspectives on sport policy making at the local government level following on from Anglo-centred debate in the sport policy field (King, 2012; Parnell et al., 2019, Mackintosh, 2021) relating to the management of community sport and leisure, this work has contributed knowledge by offering insight into a Welsh experience of modernisation and sport policy making. After exploring the impact of regional variations on public policy across the UK, Andrews and Martin (2008) and Chaney (2015) identified devolution as a potential source for divergences in policymaking across the UK. As modernisation of the public sector in the Home Nations and increasing calls for independence continues, this work represents the potential for further research to examine the impact of the changing role on sport at a regional level.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the sample size which in an ideal scenario could have included access to wider range of participants within the contexts to gain a greater understanding of the impact of modernisation of the sport and leisure service within the community. It was not possible to access the community voice in the form of customers or volunteers due to the focus of the research and resources available. Whilst the existing findings are generalizable to Foucault's governmentality lens (Flyvberg, 2006) given future work, this work would provide a point at which a greater number of cases could be derived from the work to demonstrate an exemplar for sport policy in this developing context. Kuhn (1987): highlights that a discipline without many thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and that a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one

8.4 Areas for further work

Based on this work, there is a need to complement the existing work of Piggin et al (2018) and continue to explore the influence of knowledge production by the state and its role in sport policy making. This work has added insight into the role of sport policy in transforming the bodies of citizens into sites of entrepreneurial activity

The Foucauldian analysis of employee-owned alternative delivery models in sport and leisure complements existing literature (Piggin et al., 2018) and expands our understanding of the hitherto virtually unknown sports policy area of Wales. This new understanding could be increased with further research to explore the governments influence on other areas of responsibility under the sport policy making domain (elite/disability etc), particularly as Sport Wales and Sport England seek to reduce their funding and encourage to organisations to become more self-sustainable over time.

One area where this work shed light was on the relatively new application of asset-based approaches to community sport development in England. In this intervention, partnership work is encouraged in a bid to join up community provision and feedback around existing sport services is shared. This context may warrant exploration from a Foucauldian perspective to identify the effect of knowledge production in the 'ongoing subjugation which subject our bodies, govern our gestures and dictate our behaviours' (Foucault, 1980:97).

Bates and Hilton (2020) identified exploration on the participatory approach as absent from the literature and so unclear as to how it may complement existing practice or provide a distinctive and desirable alternative to tradition community sport development initiatives. The current lack of understanding within the research and amongst practitioners presents an opportunity for this thesis to provide an initial point due to its exploration of for further research on SCL's work with Sport England in the Local Delivery Pilot to gain greater insight and to understand 'the tactics whereby on the description of local discursivities, the subjected knowledge which would be released would be brought into play (Foucault, 1980:85).

This thesis offered a comparative understanding within a cross border context of how modernisation is enacted in practice and its impact upon the practitioners involved. The table 8.1 below offers a final summary of several contributions and findings identified within this thesis which are aligned to its initial objectives.

Table 8.1: Summary of Thesis Contributions and Finding

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:	EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH	ACTUAL FINDINGS WITHIN THE RESEARCH	LINKS TO THE LITERATURE
1	*Introduce new insight into the governance of individual local authorities that manage public leisure facilities in England and Wales*	*Identified similarities between local authority involvement with organisation and differences around partnership administration and delivery*	*Foucault (1977)*
2	*Evidence how actors are included in the changing face of public sport delivery in England and Wales*	*Internally: identified collaborative approaches to engage with staff around decision making but hierarchical approaches linked through funding in England.* *Identified collaborative approaches to engage with the community but top-down approach to leadership with staff and organisation in England*	*Grid (2011) and King (2012)*
3	*Evidence when actors are included in the changing face of public sport delivery in England and Wales.*	*Identified closer working between colleagues and external partners which has increased the diversity sport development work.*	*Bolton and Martin (2013) and Mackinnon (2015)*
.4	*Highlight the impact of modernisation to produce sustainable public sport/leisure delivery in England and Wales.*	*Externally: identified an increase in entrepreneurial behaviours and accountability to local authority/home nation sports council funders.*	*Andrews and Martin (2008) and Chaney (2015)*
5	*To deliver collaborative work with practitioners and identify opportunities for community involvement in decision making in delivery of public sport and leisure service y*	*Worked with individual home nations local authority's/sports social enterprises/sports councils to identify opportunities for further community involvement in recommendations section.*	*Bates and Hylton (2020)*

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviewee Guide

Interviewee Number	Role/Location
1	Sport Development Manager - SCL
2	Leisure Manager - SCL
3	Local Authority Manager - SCL
4	Senior Manager – Sport England
5	Local Delivery Pilot Manager - SCL
6	Senior Manager - Aura
7	Sport Development Manager – Aura
8	Board Member - Aura
9	Local Authority Manager – Flintshire County Council
10	Senior Manager - Aura

Appendix 2 – Interview Schedule

No.	Question	Objective (Hood, 1995)	Key Themes (King, 2012)
1	We are looking at the rationale for changes within the delivery of sport services in Flintshire. What were the key drivers? What was the resultant outcome?	To establish the background narrative for modernisation within each home nation context	POLICY PRIORITIES, WIDER POLITICAL AND ADMIN STATUS OF SPORT SERVICES.
2	Could you give some background to any infrastructural changes that may have occurred? On what basis were decisions made?	To identify how the decisions were made to lose certain centres	HISTORICAL& EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE OF SPORT
3	Now to the existing company sporting infrastructure Who made the decision of what it comprises? How does It link together to maintain participation? What steps are taken to ensure that these remain viable and accessible sites for all?	To identify what is part of the existing infrastructure? To establish how the sites link together to offer a coherent model of service? How is each site monitored to ensure that it doesn't become subject to further modernisation?	HISTORICAL& EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE OF SPORT
4	Could we explore the current priorities for sport services since these changes? How are these priorities set? measured? Can you describe any support/interventions that you may be receiving now to ensure that these priorities are being met? How would these priorities impact on your daily job? Any differences between current priorities and those from when the service was managed by local government?	To begin to uncover how much external influence from the govt / senior management was applied during this time. To identify what are the current strategic priorities, how they are being approached and how they were set. I am purposefully using the word 'priorities' as a soft word for 'targets' as these may not be instantly recognisable as such across lower grades (!)	POLICY PRIORITIES
5	On the question of funding. How sport related external funding allocations work for the new organisation? Can you tell me who sets the financial priorities for external funding and how you prioritise your spend accordingly?	To establish the impact of changes to funding and its subsequent impact upon services since modernisation.	FINANCIAL CONTEXT

	Question	Objective (Hood, 1995)	Key Themes (King,2012)
6	Do you work with any other organisations in order to achieve your financial priorities? Plus, any support/ interventions that may be offered to ensure that participation targets are met? How does this differ from when local government were involved in the delivery of service?	Can you describe to me any specific cost/ revenue actions that have implications within sport services that you have noticed since moving? Examining the 'joined up' approach to sport delivery in practice To identify how the funding system works and how it may be incentivised/not by Sport Wales/ England	FINANCIAL CONTEXT
7	Some more about the new model of sport service delivery. Could you give me some background as to how the model is maintained in order to fulfil its partnership with local government? How does accountability work in this type of model of service delivery? How does it differ from when local government had sole responsibility from delivering the service?	To identify how the spin off partnership works in practice and how it is 'policed.'	ORGANISATIONAL MODELS CHANGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY
8	Can we talk about the impact on these changes to staff and customer? So firstly, has can you describe any changes to staffing? Terms and conditions? Engagement? How has this changed from LGov? Secondly, for customers, what has been the impact of change for them? Has there been any change to participation as a result? How has this changed from LGov?	To explore the impact of modernisation on service delivery on staff to identify potential for 'doing more with less' and customers on levels of participation.	ORGANISATIONAL MODELS CHANGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY
9	Can you tell me a bit more about how you the relationship between sport and other internal depts work? What would be the reason for this? How would that compare to an historical perception within local government?	To establish and explore how sport is perceived within the new organisation. To identify if there has been changes since being part of local government	R. SHIP BETWEEN SPORT/ OTHER INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BODIES
10	Finally, can you share your thoughts about your perception of the relationship of sport services and external bodies (Central Govt, Sport Wales/England) since the transfer from government	To establish and explore how sport is perceived as part of a new organisation to external paymasters and operates in practice.	R. SHIP BETWEEN SPORT/ OTHER INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BODIES

III

	How does it operate in practice? What could be the reason for this? Could you give me an example?	To identify if there could be any reasons or pure examples to illustrate the point.	

IV

v

Appendix 3 – Transcript Excerpt

L) The first question is looking at the background narrative for the reform process of sport in Flintshire, what were the key drivers from the local authority for change?

(P) Without doubt the first was finance. Leisure and library services which form part of aura; leisure was a discretionary service. So, whilst it doesn't mean that they were any less popular than schools or social services, the problem is there was no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide them

(L) okay

(P) but that doesn't mean that shutting the leisure centre is any easier that shutting the school, it's still an emotive issue for elected members. So, money was the main issue. We had already endured reductions of 10% in Funding when we were a local authority service. And experiencing 10% funding cuts every year was going to be incredibly difficult to keep everything open. And keep staff motivated. We were aware that this reduction was going to continue for the next three years.

 So, the reason that we spun out, was effectively knowing that we were on a 10% reduction year-on-year there were ways to make ourselves more sustainable. One of those was by making ourselves a social enterprise. The legal reform is a community benefit Society in the in that we can take efficiencies in other ways. We have an 80% reduction in business rates and an improved VAT position.

(L) have you got the benefit of the case study have you got any time frames that you could discuss so that we can put this into some kind of context/or timeline? I can say at this date they started to become apparent.

(P) I suppose the real pressure and big reduction as an in-house service started around 2010. After the first three years after that we were part of the lifelong learning directorate. The emphasis was on action plans. We had things like 10% challenges but effectively it was death by a thousand cuts. We were dealing with less budget and the perception of a good manager is one who doesn't overspend, and it was starting to become a problem. The big change for me when the council had a restructure at senior officer level and brought in a chief officer with a background of organisational change in the summer 2014. That was a guy called I.B he is now chief executive of another council. He was a dynamic guy, and his portfolio was organisational change and obviously you can read into that what you want. His area was leisure libraries theatre Clwyd. So, the writing was on the wall. He was always very open and direct with us. So, it was pretty open early on in 2014 that we were going to be leaving the authority.

Appendix 4 – Salford Community Leisure Strategy

SCL Strategic Delivery Plan 2019 – 24

PURPOSE

SCL exists to enhance the lives of people through sport, leisure and cultural opportunities.

VISION

By 2024 SCL will improve the city's leisure and cultural places and spaces and increase the number of people participating in activities.

OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

| Improving Health and Wellbeing | Increasing Community Involvement | Developing Education and Skills | Enriching the Environment |

5 YEAR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. To prioritise investment into our facilities

2. To increase participation and engagement in our activities and services (physical and virtual)

3. To improve the health and wellbeing of our customers through our services

4. To explore opportunities to enhance the lives of more people through expanding the activities and services we deliver

5. To continue to deliver cost reductions and maximise income generation opportunities

6. To continually invest and develop our digital presence and use of technology to enhance the customer experience

7. To maximise community involvement in the delivery of our services

8. To continue to invest in our organisation and people to ensure we are a 'great' organisation to work for

Team / Venue Annual Plans

Work Programmes

The above priorities were formulated with our employees, partners and community members.

PROFESSIONAL • RESPECTFUL • KNOWLEDGEABLE • PASSIONATE • SOLUTIONS DRIVEN

Appendix 5 – Aura Strategic Business Plan 2018 -2023

3.2.2 Council Plan

Flintshire's Council Plan for 2017-23 identifies six corporate priorities which take into consideration the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act by linking impact statements to the Act's Well-being Goals.

Aura, and the leisure, libraries and heritage services it manages, has been identified by the Council as making a significant contribution to the Connected Council priority.

PRIORITY	SUB-PRIORITY	IMPACT	
Connected Council	Resilient Communities	1)	Supporting local communities to be resilient and self-supporting
		2)	Committing to resilient service models to sustain local public services
		3)	Widening digital access to public services

A key action of the Connected Council priority is to Get Flintshire Moving through partnership objectives via the Public Services Board. Achievement of this action will be measured through:

- Increasing participation in activities that contribute to physical and mental well-being including libraries, theatre and countryside;
- Increasing community assets; and
- Identity and equality of participation

3.3 Financial

The annual funding payable to Aura from the Council for the delivery of the outcomes specified in the Funding Agreement is subject to a circa 10% year-on-year reduction from 2017/18 as part of the Council's five-year Medium Term Financial Plan.

The table below highlights the level of funding due to be received from the Council during the first three years of trading:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Full Year Funding	£4,152,352	3,773,704	3,436,367
Pro-rata (1 Sept - 31 Mar)	£2,422,205		
Reduction in Funding		- £378,648	- £337,337
Percentage Reduction		- 9.1%	- 8.9%

4. Aura's Four Key Strategic Priorities

1. To grow in order to be financially sustainable

Enabling Priority: To generate an increased sense of 'ownership' and personal investment amongst the workforce in terms of the future success of the business

Enabling Priority: To maximise available technologies as the growth engine of a modern, agile, digital organisation

2. To improve the health and well-being of Flintshire residents

Enabling Priority: To support and promote the Welsh language and culture

Enabling Priority: To support local communities to be resilient and self-supporting

3. To deliver community benefits for Flintshire

Enabling Priority: To work in partnership with local services to tackle anti-social behaviour

Enabling Priority: To generate an increased sense of 'our' leisure, libraries and heritage services amongst users

Enabling Priority: To tackle inequalities in leisure, sport and physical activity

Enabling Priority: To support social prescription in Flintshire

4. To improve skills and to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and employment for local people

Enabling Priority: To maintain current free access to ICT and to support people to go online and to access employment opportunities and public services

Enabling Priority: To encourage reading for pleasure through reader development activities

Enabling Priority: To improve pathways into work

Enabling Priority: To support local employment opportunities for local people

VIII

Appendix 5 – Aura Strategic Business Plan 2018 -2023 (continued)

6. How will Aura measure progress against its Delivery Plan throughout 2018/19?

Strategic Priority 1: To grow in order to be financially sustainable

Ref No.	Key Performance Indicator	Frequency
FS5	Number of new direct debit / annual members and live membership total	Month
FS8	Number of reportable events (RIDDOR)	Month
FS9	Percentage of contracted employees formally enrolled as CBS members	Quarter
FS10	Number of kWh used per utility per site	Quarter
FS11-FS512a	Employee sickness absence as a percentage of contracted workforce	Quarter
FS511-FS512b	Employee turnover as a percentage of contracted workforce	Quarter
FS511-FS512c	Relief worker expenditure as a percentage of total workforce costs	Quarter
FS513a	Percentage of employees participating in employee survey	Annual
FS13b	Percentage of employees registered with Schoop to receive workforce communications	Annual

Strategic Priority 2: To improve the health and well-being of Flintshire residents

Ref No.	Key Performance Indicator	Frequency
HW1a	PAM/017: Number of recorded physical activity visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population	Annual
HW1b	'Temperature gauge' of usage based on top ten leisure management system activities	Month
HW1c	Number of children 'hooked on sport' in Flintshire (participating in leisure, sport or activity on 3 occasions per week)	Biennial
HW2	Number of unique children enrolled on the Learn to Swim programme	Quarter
HW3a	PAM/041: percentage of NERS clients who completed the exercise programme	Annual
HW3b	PAM/042: percentage of NERS clients whose health had improved on completion of the exercise programme	Annual
HW3c	Number of new direct debit / annual NERS members and live membership total	Month
HW4	Length of stay (in months) of direct debit fitness members	Quarter
HW6	Percentage of Book Fund expenditure on Welsh medium resources	Annual

Strategic Priority 3: To deliver community benefits for Flintshire

Ref No.	Key Performance Indicator	Frequency
CB2	Number of 'Friends of Aura' groups established	Quarter
CB3	Number of shared reading groups established	Quarter
CB4a	Percentage of service points awarded dementia friendly status	Quarter
CB4b	Percentage of employees that have completed dementia friendly training	Quarter
CB6	Number of website visits and social media friends and followers	Month

Strategic Priority 4: To improve skills and to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and employment for local people

Ref No.	Key Performance Indicator	Frequency
Welsh Public Library Standards Quality Indicators (WPLSQI) x 16		
IS1a	1.Making a difference	Annual
IS1b	2.Customer satisfaction	Annual
IS1c	3.Support for individual development	Annual
IS1d	4.Support for health and well-being	Annual
IS1e	5.User training	Annual
IS1f	6.User attendances at library events	Annual
IS1g	7.Location of service points	Annual
IS1h	8.Library use	Annual
IS1i	9.Up-to-date and appropriate reading material	Annual
IS1j	10.Welsh language resources	Annual
IS1k	11.Online access	Annual
IS1l	12.Supply of requests	Annual
IS1m	13.Staffing levels and qualifications	Annual
IS1n	14.Operational expenditure	Annual
IS1o	15.Cost per visit	Annual
IS1p	16.Opening hours	Annual
IS2	Number of Aura events (jobs fairs) held	Annual
IS3a	Number of online/remote users of e-resources	Annual
IS3b	Usage of public access devices as a percentage of available resources	Annual
IS4	Number of employee appraisals completed as a percentage of contracted work-force	Quarter

Appendix 5 (continued)

Appendix 1: Income and Expenditure Summary

Aura's Five-Year Financial Plan

	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
INCOME					
Trading	5,088	5,440	5,549	5,660	5,773
Grant	552	558	569	580	592
TOTAL INCOME	5,640	5,998	6,118	6,240	6,365
EXPENDITURE					
BUILDING COSTS					
Repairs and maintenance	545	535	540	546	551
Utilities & rates	978	967	977	986	996
Insurance	129	132	133	134	136
Other property costs	179	177	179	181	182
	1,831	1,810	1,828	1,847	1,865
FINANCE COSTS	186	184	186	188	189
PURCHASES					
Book Fund	332	332	336	339	342
Audit / Bank	40	40	40	40	41
Catering	208	206	208	210	212
Purchases and equipment	956	941	951	960	970
	1,536	1,519	1,534	1,549	1,565
SALARIES	5,855	5,789	5,847	5,905	5,964
TRAVEL / SUPPORT	25	25	25	25	25
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	9,433	9,326	9,420	9,514	9,609
INCOME LESS EXPENDITURE	(3,793)	(3,329)	(3,302)	(3,274)	(3,244)
FCC FUNDING	3,774	3,436	3,436	3,436	3,436
FCC REDUCTION (CAPITAL)	0	(95)	(117)	(117)	(117)
FCC PENSION RESERVE	35	0	0	0	0
SURPLUS	16	13	17	45	75

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Funding from Flintshire County Council remains static from 2019/20 onwards.
2. Reduction in funding from Flintshire County Council in 2019/20 to be funded by a mixture of growth in income (60% of reduction) and reduction in costs (40% of reduction).
3. Inflation included at a rate of 1% for each year.
4. Income assumed to increase at 1% above inflation each year

Appendix 2: Public Accountability Measures

Aura currently reports the following achievement measures to the County Council:

- *PAM/017: number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population
- *PAM/040: percentage of Quality Indicators (with targets) achieved by the Library Service
- *PAM/041: percentage of NERS clients who completed the exercise programme
- *PAM/042: percentage of NERS clients whose health had improved on completion of the exercise programme

*Public Accountability Measure

National Indicators for Wales as required by section 10(1) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (and to which Aura can contribute):

- Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year
- Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week
- Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards

X