Evaluating the experience of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the career histories of elite equestrian athletes

By

Donna de Haan

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ABSTRACT

Equestrian sport has been present on the Modern Olympic programme since 1900 with Para-Equestrian Dressage making its debut at the 1996 Paralympic Games. Due to the combined governance of Olympic and Paralympic versions of the sport, the mixed gender of competition and the potential age range of competitors, equestrian sport provides an opportunity through which to understand a unique context of athlete experience. This thesis has sought to identify and evaluate athlete experience within the context of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and to place this experience within the wider career histories of members of the British Equestrian Team. This study utilised a combination of a systematic literature review methodology and ethnographic data collection and analysis with a critical realist approach, creating a framework that values interpretive insights into how the subjects perceive and construct their world whilst at the same time considering ways in which the literature and individual subjects identify, comment on, and frame the reality of the world of equestrian sport.

This study has resulted in the emergence of six themes pertaining to experiencing the games; equestrian sporting culture, identity, values, challenges, performance support and success. Results show many similarities and shared experiences for both the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian athletes. The differences regarding the lived experience for these athletes are predominantly associated with the development of the sport, the relative short Paralympic history of equestrian sport in comparison to the Olympic disciplines, and the place of the Games in the context of the riders' career histories. Recognising and understanding the kinds of satisfactions and challenges that individuals experience, the significant features of their athlete identity, and the structural constraints and opportunities of their environment may help identify and design the services and provision required to support the athletes through this elite sporting experience.

Keywords: Equestrian sport, athlete experience, Olympic, Paralympic, career history

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction: the context and development of equestrian sport in the modern Olympic Games

Equestrian sport has developed a somewhat enigmatic history throughout the Olympic programmes, of both the Ancient and Modern Games. Featuring in every Ancient Olympic Games since as early as the 25th Olympiad (Girginov and Parry, 2005) and due to its historical importance and popularity, equestrian sport remained on the Modern Olympic programme from 1900. Three 'Equestrian' disciplines were officially represented at the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris but not the same disciplines we are used to seeing in modern competition. The three sports/disciplines of 'Eventing', 'Showjumping' and 'Dressage' which appear in the Olympics today were originally included in the 1912 Games. The sport of Para-Equestrian Dressage made its Paralympic debut in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympic Games.

According to Segrave (2000b: p.269) the conception of the Olympic Games in the late 19th century was "a classic expression of modernity, a recurrent, quadrennial celebration of the worldview that embraced science, reason, the sovereignty of the individual and progress as the presumption for human health, prosperity and well-being". The intellectual formulation of Olympism as the quasi-official ideology of the modern games is also rooted in 19th century modernism (Real, 1996). Here it is worth noting that equestrian sport in the modern Olympic programme could be seen as symbolic of the classical formulations of Olympic ideology which were founded in the worldview of modernism. Real (1996) reviews the Olympic ideals of the first decades of the modern games with reference to aristocratic privilege and Eurocentric ideals. During the 20th century equestrian sport mirrored the aristocratic, upper-class, Eurocentric, male dominated zeitgeist of the Olympic Games. In the 21st century there is still an European domination of equestrian sport in the Olympics with regards to both participation and results (FEI, 2014d) and there are general perceptions of the elitist nature of the sport (Economist, 2012). Some Olympic competitors may have aristocratic privilege but the

majority rely on commercial sponsorship (both in the form of endorsements and horse owner syndicates) and equestrianism is one of only a few Olympic sports where men and women can compete equally against one another.

Despite its long and illustrious Olympic history, and an emerging Paralympic history, research into equestrian sport has received limited attention. Mirroring wider Olympic scholarship focussing on the productivity and pre-eminence of the natural sciences, particularly the biomedical and biophysical sciences, there is a plethora of literature and research published from a scientific (veterinary) perspective in relation to equine performance. For many within equestrianism it may appear that the horse is the principal athlete but it is the rider who is recognised by UK Sport. Nevertheless, there is very little biomedical or biophysical research currently being produced which focuses on the rider as an athlete. And whilst Olympic scholarship has, since the end of the 19th century, incorporated sociocultural enquiries, with papers routinely appearing in the leading sociocultural journals on sport as well as in sociocultural journals not specifically related to sport (Segrave and Chu, 1996), equestrian sport has not received this type of research attention.

The relationship between an animal and human within a sport perspective, undoubtedly places equestrian sport in a unique framework. Much research concerning sport focuses on its place in social life (what it is, where it comes from, what form it takes), and the meaning that sport has for individuals, the community, and culture in general (Birrell, 1981, Blanchard, 1988, Bromberger, 1995).   The anthropo-zoological relationship between man and horse very much dictates where equestrian sport resides in a socio-historical context. Equestrian sport relies on a relationship between a horse and a rider and this relationship is bespoke to each particular combination. The performance results of this partnership are based on carefully orchestrated management of the individual athletes (horse and rider). Therefore there is a need for a balanced approach to research which not only looks at the horse but also considers the rider (as is the focus of this thesis) and a combination of both.

Like other sports in the UK, the national governing body of equestrian sport, the British Equestrian Federation (BEF), has developed a strategic focus on the development of its athletes. The World Class Programme of UK Sport has been in existence since just before the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games and has extended to support, within equestrianism, Dressage, Eventing, Showjumping and Para-Equestrian Dressage (BEF, 2014c). The Programme is not about 'support for all' but is about identifying the most talented riders and horses and working with them to ensure that they reach their maximum potential and deliver their best possible results at World level and Olympic / Paralympic Games. However unlike other sports, equestrianism faces a unique challenge in that there is a need for both a World Class athlete (the rider) and a World Class horse. The sport therefore has had to develop a plan to cope with this multi-dimensional need.

The World Class Programmes across all sports must focus their attention on three key areas. Firstly, identifying talent; secondly, developing talent and thirdly, producing performance on the World stage (UKSport, 2014). The Equestrian World Class Programme is no different, although as previously outlined there is a need to do this not only with the rider but also with the horse. The World Class Programme therefore fits into three conjoined areas: the Equine Pathway, the Development Programme and the Performance Programme (BEF, 2014c).

With regards to Long Term Athlete Development programmes, equestrianism does not fall into either an early or late specialisation framework. Age of specialisation appears to be a key issue for equestrianism because it is an early start sport, but also a sport where riders can go on to enjoy a career well into their 40s and beyond. Therefore equestrianism is uniquely classed as an 'early start, late specialisation' sport, with riders starting learning to ride by the age of 6, but only specialising in a specific discipline around the age of 16 (Dumbell et al., 2010). That males and females appear to compete on an equal footing in most disciplines also indicates that developmental age may be less of a factor in equestrianism than in other sports. However, the potential life long career of riders means there are certain management issues and considerations which may be specific to the sport such as consequences of overuse injury, burnout and dropout.

The mixed gender nature of equestrian sport and the potential age range of competitors at any one level of competition (specifically at the Olympic / Paralympic level of competition) combine to make a unique sport with regard to athlete profiles. However, beyond autobiographical publications (such as William Fox-Pitt *What Will Be*: *The Autobiography*, Mary King *Mary King: The Autobiography* and Pippa Funnell *Pippa Funnell: The Autobiography)* there is very little recorded data reviewing the career histories of riders. Reviewing competition records may provide quantitative data about performance but there is an absence of qualitative data which could provide a rich description of equestrian competition. As previously discussed, equestrian sport has a long history within the context of the Olympic Games, but the question of where and how this particular competition fits within the career histories of individual equestrian athletes has yet to be addressed.

The Olympic Games are unquestionably the largest sporting event in the world. It is a travelling mega event entrenched in symbolism and rituals (Tomlinson and Young, 2012), supported by international and national systems of governance (Chappelet, 2008) reported on by the world's media (Rowe, 2003) and centred around the athletic achievements of sporting elite. The world watches the story of the Olympic Games from the early bidding process to the announcement of the host city, right through until the sixteen day spectacular of the competition itself. From this exposure and awareness of the Games it is quite possible we have developed a prescriptive notion of what the Olympics should be like but how close is this to a descriptive notion or analysis of what the Olympics are like, and how they may be experienced?

1.2 Research question and focus of the thesis

My primary interest in this area of research has been to understand the 'Olympic and Paralympic experiences' of an identified group, the British Equestrian team. Encompassing both the Olympic and Paralympic teams, I wanted to understand how the Games as an event fits into the sporting life histories of the athletes, what is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their sporting careers and how is this different from other competitions? Therefore the research

question and the focus of this thesis is 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their career history[1]?' Of course this immediately draws into question what is meant by Olympic experience?

A preliminary view of how this research question will be operationalised in the approach to the interview focuses on the following themes identified in Figure 1.1:
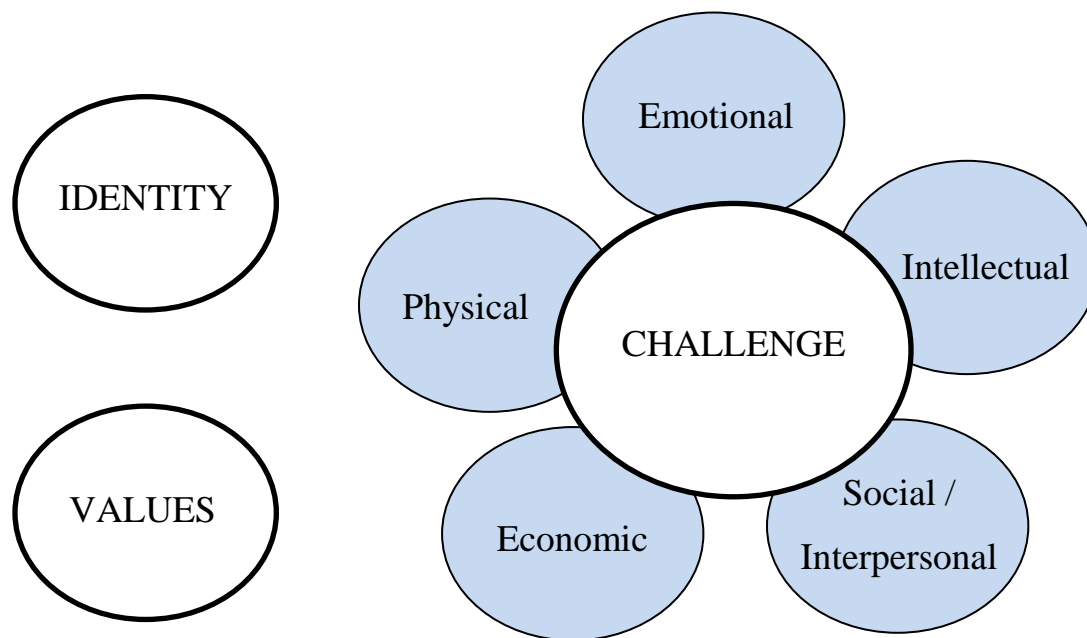
Figure 1.1:   A simplified framework of the elements involved in the experiences of elite equestrian athletes

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Life stories exist in many forms and are denoted by a plethora of terms such as oral histories (Yow, 2005), life narratives (Smith and Watson, 2010), career histories (Dunning and Malcolm, 2003) and life histories (Miller, 2000). All have a slightly different emphasis and meaning, but all focus on the first person accounting of a life (Lewis-Beck et al., 2003). For the purpose of this study I will be using the term career histories as referred to by Dunning and Malcolm, (2003). Whilst this is similar to a life history, I am specifically focussing on the decisive moments in the sporting career of the respondents' lives with regard to their experience.

We already know by virtue of our research question that we are going to focus on a number of different factors, the first of which is 'Identity'. What does it mean to be an Olympian / Paralympian? What are the difference between a World Class athlete and an Olympic / Paralympic athlete? The second factor focuses on the issue of 'Values' to what extent are the values associated with the athletes Olympic / Paralympic experience different from other sporting experiences. The final factor is centred upon the notion of 'Challenge' broken down into emotional, intellectual, social / interpersonal, economic and physical. These initial themes will provide the basis for a Systematic Literature Review and will be modified subsequent to the findings of that review of literature. An initial scoping study of the literature reveals that within the parameters of the Olympics as an event, the primary focus of non-sport specific research has been in areas such as volunteer management (Cuskelly, 2004), organising committee function (Theodoraki, 2010, Chappelet, 2008), and economic impact (Preuss, 2004). In relation to athlete experience, research has focussed on performance (expected and achieved) and the identification of factors which may influence this during the Olympic competition (Greenleaf et al., 2001).

Orlick and Partington (1988) are seen as perhaps the first, and certainly among the few researchers to systematically examine elite athletes' performance. They undertook this using interview methodology to gain an insight into Canadian Olympians' journeys to the top of their respective sports. Other researchers however soon followed their example. In the United States, Gould and colleagues (Eklund et al., 1993, Gould et al., 1992a) provided a very detailed description of the contexts within which performance excellence was produced based on interviews with all 20 members of the 1988 U.S. wrestling team that competed at the Seoul Olympics. In a more comprehensive subsequent project sponsored by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), Gould and colleagues (Gould et al., 2002a, Gould et al., 2002b, Gould et al., 1999, Greenleaf et al., 2001) conducted numerous in-depth interviews and administered surveys in an attempt to identify possible explanations for observed performance differences at the Olympics. More specifically, these investigators were interested in why "some teams and coaches

thrived in the Olympic environment, whereas other teams struggled and failed to live up to pre-Olympic performance expectations" (Gould et al., 1999: p.372).

In another study, (Vernacchia et al., 2000) interviewed U.S. Olympic track and field athletes in an attempt to identify important psychological characteristics associated with successful performance in a variety of events. Thus, there currently exists a small but significant body of studies in English dealing with North American Olympic athletes' experience. However, to date, the Olympic experiences of athletes from other countries have not been examined from a similar perspective, and there appears to be no material focussing on Paralympic experience.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the Olympic and Paralympic experiences of elite riders and to place this experience into the context of their career histories. As previously alluded to, very little has been written about Olympic / Paralympic experience and very little has been written about elite riders. This study adopts a critical realist ontological and epistemological approach to examine the phenomenon of the Olympics / Paralympics for this group of athletes, the nature of their experience, and the importance of structural contexts both as they impact on, and are formed by the actions of various stakeholders. An in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences could be especially helpful for anyone involved in the management of equestrian sport. Recognising and understanding the kinds of satisfactions and challenges that individuals experience will help identify the services and provision required to support the athletes through this experience. Although this thesis is not about providing a prescription for performance, clearly an understanding of athletes' experience in this elite competition scenario should be relevant to performance considerations.

The focus of this study is on a sport-specific team; therefore the experiences of the individual athletes will not be formed in isolation. The culture, community and power relations within the sport, the team and their environments, must also be considered. This study clearly involves qualitative (and at this stage exploratory) study from a critical realist perspective. This will involve analyses not only at the level of the individual

athlete but will also incorporate secondary analysis of structural context, such as the political economy of the sport (for example which countries are powerful and why). Economic dimensions, gender dimensions, the effects of social elite systems including the military will also be points of consideration.

1.3 Conclusion

In order to accomplish the journey which has been mapped out in this first chapter, the thesis will adopt the following structure. As mentioned, very little has been written about Olympic experience and very little has been written about elite riders. Clearly an understanding of both will provide critical insight into the phenomenon of the Olympics for this group of athletes and the subsequent development and management of the sport. In order to understand the multiple variants which may influence any one individual's experience of equestrian sport at the Olympics / Paralympics, and to place this experience in the context of individual career histories we must consider the unique nature of equestrian sport outside the Olympics / Paralympics from the perspective of a sporting career. Chapter 2 addresses these issues and provides an introduction to the historical development of equestrian sport at the Olympics / Paralympics. Military influence, gender and equestrian sport and governance of the sport are also discussed in this chapter.

In order to provide a full review of available literature relevant to this thesis a systematic literature review methodology was used. Chapter 3 outlines the systematic review methodology and discusses the rationale for choosing this method over a more traditional narrative review. The preliminary search using 15 individual meta keywords but with no filters provided a total of 12,736 keyword hits across four databases. However, further analysis using exclusionary criteria resulted in the identification of 253 unique articles which were reviewed using a meta-synthesis approach applied to identify theories, grand narratives, generalisations or interpretive translations produced from the integration of the identified studies. A descriptive and thematic analysis of the literature retrieved was carried out to identify emergent themes that have been deemed key to understanding the Olympic and Paralympic experience of elite equestrian athletes.

Chapter 4 then discusses the research methodology used in this study. The philosophical premise of critical realism, which underpins this study, is discussed, in relation to the chosen method of Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). The combination of a systematic literature review, as discussed in Chapter 3, combined with a critical realist approach, creates a framework that values interpretive insights whilst at the same time also gives space to the application of non-naive positivistic approaches.

Chapter 5 presents an account of the range of rider and stakeholder experiences in the context of Olympic and Paralympic Games. This chapter outlines the aims of the analysis, thereby presenting an overview of the interviewees and a rational pertaining to why these individuals where selected for this study, and provides an explanation and outline of sources used. Finally this chapter presents a critical descriptive analysis of the data.

The final chapter outlines the original contribution of this thesis to existing knowledge in this specific research area. The theoretical implications of undertaking such a study are discussed and some indications for future research within this field are identified.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION TO OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC EQUESTRIAN SPORT

2.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis is on the nature of the Olympic experience and this invites analysis of who has access to this type of experience. In order to understand the multiple variants which may influence any one individual's experience of equestrian sport at the Olympics / Paralympics, we must consider the unique nature of equestrian sport both inside and outside the Olympics / Paralympics and place this in the context of an individual's sporting career. A narrative account providing an historical introduction to Olympic equestrian sport is necessary at this point especially since there is little written about this subject. However the purpose of the narrative is not simply to inform the reader of the development of the sport but to explain who has had experience (and who has not) of the Olympics and Paralympics and why participation has developed as it has. Built into this account is an overview of the type of rider who has developed and also the political, social and economic forces that have shaped participation and the power of decision making within the sport.

In his chapter 'Post-Olympism? Questioning Olympic Historiography', Douglas Booth (2004) refers to and develops Munslow's (1997) threefold typology of historical inquiry of reconstruction, construction and deconstruction. Booth (2004) explains that Olympic history is dominated by the realist epistemology of reconstructionism, whereby knowledge is derived from empirical evidence and forensic research utilising primary sources to reconstruct 'what really happened'. Within a constructionist framework, individuals construct different stories based on perspectives of an individual experience. Constructionists also value empirical methods; however the difference between these two is the extent to which they engage *a priori* knowledge. Constructionists readily accept the concepts and theories of others to explain relationships between events, recontructionist however are looking for an account of *the* real story and therefore reject

the constructionist position. Finally, deconstructionist historians view history as a constituted narrative devoid of moral or intellectual certainty and thereby reject claims of truth grounded in empirical methods. Deconstructionists, analyse ways that sources produce evidence to portray 'truth' and thereby see their role as that of analysing how particular historical accounts promote (largely implicitly) the interests of certain groups over others. Whilst Booth (2004) outlines that deconstructionism is evident in the notion of post-Olympism and its promotion of critical reflection, he goes on to argue that this approach to historical analysis is rare in Olympic history.

Due to the fact that relatively little has been written on the subject of equestrian sport, one is reliant on individuals within the system and the national and international governing bodies to provide detail and background information and invariably these will produce selective accounts which reflect their interests as they reconstruct the history of the sport. Indeed in the following chapter the reader will be presented with a reconstruction of the past, a presentation and rehearsal of the 'facts'. However through the constructive perspectives of gender, military, class and disability we also look to evaluate and promote a view of the significances of these presented 'facts'. Within the context of this thesis I therefore aim to develop critical discourse which will enable me to move beyond the reconstructive narrative to the constructive narrative as defined by Booth (2004), and where appropriate to engage in aspects of deconstruction.

Rather than present a chronological account of the development of equestrian sport within the Olympic and Paralympic paradigm I have chosen to present salient themes which I believe provide a constructive framework upon which the narrative of the sport can be placed. To understand the modern context of equestrian sport at the Olympics and more recently the Paralympics, it is important to first examine the historical development of equestrian sport placed within relevant socio-cultural context; as such this provides the first thematic focus of this chapter. The inclusion and development of equestrian sport within the modern Olympics was at the time dominated by military influences and whilst this has dissipated over time it remains the only Olympic sport today in which athletes can compete in military attire. Militarism of equestrian sport therefore is discussed as the

second theme of this chapter. The historical relationship between man and horse in warfare has undoubtedly emerged from a male dominated landscape and this is reflected in the gendered nature of some equestrian sports. Up until the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, only male riders were permitted to compete in any Olympic equestrian discipline. Today however equestrian sport is the only sport represented at the summer Olympics where men and women have the opportunity to share the winning podium. This does not however negate gendered discourse in equestrian sport. In the third theme of this chapter, notions of gender and the development of equestrian sport are discussed.

Whilst equestrian sport made its debut at the Summer Olympics of 1900, it did not appear at the Paralympics until 1996. In the UK riders are often introduced to the sport through a rehabilitation programme and since the inclusion of equestrian sports on the Paralympic calendar, Great Britain has dominated the medal table. Outside of the Paralympic context para-equestrian riders often compete alongside able-bodied riders at the top level of competition which provides a somewhat unique framework through which to discuss issues of access and identity, themes which are also discussed in relation to social class and the political economy of equestrian sport. This leads us into the theme of governance, which in itself reintroduces notions of elitism and social class, gender representation, and the influence of the military. Finally, we look at the competition experience of these elite riders in order to place their lived experience of the Games into the context of their wider career histories.

2.2 The socio-cultural context of equestrian sport

Much research concerning sport focuses on its place in social life (what it is, where it comes from, what form it takes), and the meaning that sport has for individuals, the community, and culture in general (Birrell, 1981, Blanchard, 1988, Bromberger, 1995). Equestrian sport has many incarnations around the world which reflect the historical relationship between human and horse. Indeed, the anthro-zoological relationship between human and horse very much dictates where equestrian sport resides in a socio-historical context. Most equestrian sport has derived from the need to practice and

develop equestrian (riding) skills, for the purpose of hunting, warfare or animal husbandry (such cattle herding for example).

The socio-cultural context of equestrian sport is often neglected in the Eurocentric dominated discourse surrounding equestrian sport. Issues of social class, gender and elitism are often at the forefront of the discourse. At the point of focussing on the historical development of equestrian sport within the context of the Olympics, a Eurocentric cultural bias is indeed the dominant framework, however, it is important to acknowledge that 'equestrian sport' is not a homogenous entity with global formulaic characteristics, despite the fact that this is often the position taken within sport related literature. There are some obvious, as well as often subtle socio-cultural nuances about the place of equestrian sport in different contexts around the world. For example, the ownership of a horse is a basic requirement for an American cattle ranch worker, and the development of skills required to compete in rodeo competition are simply an extension of the skills used in their everyday working lives. In this context a cowboy would not be perceived as coming from the upper echelons of society, whereas horse ownership in the UK for example is perceived as the preserve of the social elite. Similarly, the socio-cultural norms impacting on women's riding also vary around the world. For example, in the American West, women readily rode astride for work and transportation, however, in keeping with European modernity, it was deemed at the time inappropriate for women to ride astride as feminine attire was not conducive to this style of riding (Adelman and Knijnik, 2013).

Studies focussing on the change in the position of the horse within society and culture, from work and military, to sport and leisure, have captured the various socio-cultural nuances that have shaped the place of the horse in the twenty-first century. Styles of riding have developed according to the utilitarian function of the horse, which concurrently influenced the breeds of horses and husbandry requirements, resulting in different economic and social investment and status. Indeed Adelman and Knijnik (2013) make this point by comparing the popular sport of rodeo in Brazil, which may be practiced by working class men and women who live in peri-urban environments and

who may keep their horses at relatively low cost in their own backyards, with what they refer to as the elite world of Showjumping and Dressage, which in the UK they describe as being restrictive in terms of race and class. Whilst styles of Western riding, associated with the sport of rodeo and European riding styles, associated with Showjumping and Dressage are both represented in elite competition such as the World Equestrian Games, it is only the European style of riding which is present in the Olympic Games.

Equestrian sports have a long and unprecedented history within the Olympic Games, featuring in every Ancient Olympic Games since as early as the 25th Olympiad (Girginov and Parry, 2005) and due to their historical importance and popularity, equestrian sports have remained on the Modern Olympic programme from 1900. Whilst the socio-cultural significance of its inclusion in the Olympic programme has changed over time the European influence pertaining to the disciplines included in the Modern Games has remained consistent.

In the Ancient Olympic Games horses featured in seven events, including ridden competitions and chariot races. Participation in both athletic contests and equestrian events such as chariot racing, were restricted according to social rank, which to begin with was related to a military pecking order, but which over time, also became associated with inherited status and the wealth which this was likely to bestow (Dunning et al., 2000). McIntosh (1993) argues that the fact that participants in the ancient Olympics were required to train for a minimum of ten months before competition, suggests that these athletes must have been dilettantes, drawn largely from the upper echelons of ancient Greek societies.

Competing in the horse races was very dangerous, the charioteers and riders were usually paid professionals riding on behalf of very wealthy individuals, groups or even states and many of them were fatally injured, and often remained anonymous (Finley and Pleket, 2012). The combination of paid professional riders and the anonymity bestowed upon them is demonstrative of the fact that the competitive glory and potential social status and power, resided not with the athlete but with the 'owner'. It is interesting to note that

there are still 'owners' involved in equestrian sport in the modern context, but 'ownership' today is associated with the horse not the rider. As the ownership of a horse at the elite level of Olympic competition requires substantial wealth and ultimately the owner has the choice as to which athlete they want to ride their horse, it could be argued that the symbolism of power and social status is as applicable to modern day owners as it was in the Ancient Games.

Whilst 1896 is an historic date marking the first Modern Olympics, it was not to be a memorable milestone for equestrian sport. The Greek organisers rejected plans to include equestrian sports in the programme of the first Olympiad due to concerns regarding transporting horses, facilities and the preparations of competition sites (FEI, 2009e). Equestrian sport did however make its debut at the summer Olympics in 1900, although it failed to appear in the next two summer Olympics. With regards to the sport itself, chariot racing, popular in the Ancient Games had ceased to exist, and the popular sport of horse racing was considered too professional for the amateur ethos which reigned over de Coubertin's Olympic movement. Three 'Equestrian' disciplines were officially represented at the 1900 Games in Paris but not the same disciplines we are used to seeing in modern competition. Showjumping as we refer to it today was split into 'jumping', 'high jump' and 'long jump' and formed the first three recognised equestrian Olympic disciplines.

The acceptance and place of equestrian sport in the context of the modern Olympics is supported by de Coubertin's reference to the horse and rider as a metaphor for the perfect 'moral' governance of mind over body, and to riding as the ideal sport for regenerating the will and shaping of real men (Weil, 2006). De Coubertin writes:

> Every healthy boy must feel a keen desire to mount a horse and even if this only happens to him two or three times he will have discovered and felt something at once new and ancestral, which will make him grow, if one may dare to put it in this way, both muscularly and even mentally (de Coubertin and Müller, 2000: p.178).

The evolution of the new equestrian sports in the modern Olympic programme could be seen as symbolic of the classical formulations of Olympic ideology which were founded in the worldview of modernism. Real (1996) reviews the Olympic ideals of the first decades of the modern games with reference to aristocratic privilege and Eurocentric ideals. During the 20th century equestrian sport mirrored the aristocratic, upper-class, Eurocentric, male dominated zeitgeist of the Olympic Games. The equestrian events chosen for inclusion in the modern Games were European riding disciplines with roots in classical horsemanship, fox hunting and test of cavalry skills complementing the European Military influence seen elsewhere in the Olympic movement. However, despite its long and celebrated positioning within the context of the Olympics, the status of equestrianism as a sport is often debated.

The fact that equestrian sport involves a relationship between the 'human' athlete and the horse often subjects the status of the sport to scrutiny when comparisons are made to other sports and their cultural agendas (Merlini, 2004). Sport, especially modern sport, in its ideal form as a cultural artefact and social institution, celebrates the supremacy of a particular culture through the representation of the ideal human as manifested in the athletic competitor engaging in ritualised combat (Messner, 2002). The ideal weapon of combat with which the 'warrior' vanquishes his opponent is the athlete's body. The greater the reliance on the athlete's body for victory and the more interactive the game activity, the higher the status of the sport and its competitors. Hence, traditional 'male' contact sports, such as rugby, football or field hockey are considered 'real' sports in ways that car racing, sailing and equine sports such as polo are not (Merlini, 2004). It is interesting to note at this point that the terminology used to support the definition of 'real' sport, such as 'warrior', 'combat' and 'male', are indeed synonymous with military roots of equestrian sports.

According to Bompa and Haff's (2009) categorisation of sports based on skill classification and skill requirement, horseback riding is grouped together with motor sports and water events such as sailing, waterskiing and surfing. The skill classification of these sports is to 'perfect the conduct of different means of travel' and the skill

requirements relate to the need for athletes to make quick decisions, develop complex skills through hours of training and awareness that the quality of the equipment (horse, surfboard etc) may influence the outcome of the competition (Bompa and Haff, 2009). Guttmann (2004) also compares horse racing to automobile racing and similar 'motor sports' and questions if they are sufficiently physical to warrant the name 'sports'? Guttmann (2004) refers to horse racing as especially problematic debating if the contest is between the jockeys or the horses, using the example of an Ancient Olympic race won by a mare after the rider had been thrown and the horse's owner was declared the winner. Whilst in modern racing, bets are placed on the horse, a combination of horse and rider must cross the finish line together in order to be 'placed'. As will be discussed later in this chapter it is the horse's movements (in Dressage) and ability to clear an obstacle (in Showjumping and cross country) which are ultimately judged in the context of the Olympic equestrian sports but the riders physical 'athletic / sporting' ability to get the horse to perform which should not be discounted.

There is thus a lack of balanced in-depth discourse around equestrian sport reflected in comments such as Guttmann's (2004) reference to an Ancient Olympic horse race, with little subsequent discussion concerning modern Olympic equestrian sport. Using Guttmann's (2004) own paradigmatic definition of 'Play, Games, Contests and Sports', one does not find any strong argument to reject any of the Olympic or Paralympic equestrian disciplines from the paradigm of sport, defined as a playful physical contest. However, the proposed lack of universal acceptance of equestrian sport as a 'real' sport may diminish participants' access to symbolic (Bourdieu, 1993) and social capital (Burt, 2005) in the broader sport culture and may force them to seek recognition, opportunity and resources from within their own ranks.

2.3 Militarism in equine sport

The cavalryman and Swedish International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Count Clarence von Rosen had long argued that by the inclusion of military representatives, the Olympic Games would be strengthened and the various governments would show more interest. Indeed, von Rossen's military influence was also evident with regards to the

horse riding discipline of the modern pentathlon as he pushed for the exclusive participation of gentleman riders (Heck, 2014). Baron de Coubertin and many IOC members were supportive and asked von Rosen to present a proposal for horse competitions. In the following section we present a reconstruction of how Equestrian sport evolved in the modern Olympics whilst using a constructionist perspective, we discuss the specific military influence during this evolution, indentifying the exercise of power used and identifying who might be regarded as having their interests served.

The organisers of the 1908 Olympic Games in London were responsive and agreed to place horse-riding competitions on the programme. However, the British Olympic Association was not able to arrange the horse-riding competitions in the stadium. Consequently the newly-created Olympia Horse Show was contacted and agreed to hold the competitions in the Olympia Hall, unfortunately when eight nations entered a total of 88 competitors, the Olympia board found itself unable to carry out the programme. However, Swedish influence prevailed. The Games of the V Olympiad were awarded to Stockholm, their bid contained a proposal to hold equestrian events, and as a result, these Games would prove to be a milestone in the continuing development of equestrian sport at the Olympics.

One military-influenced legacy still prevalent today is related to the actual events which athletes participate in. The Swedish Organising Committee realised that only a few international federations and universally accepted rules existed. They adopted the following procedure: if there were rules of an international sports federation or if there were rules adopted internationally, they would be used, such as for cycling, football, tennis, swimming or yachting. If such universally accepted rules did not exist, such as in horse riding, the Swedish organising committee would draw up the rules for the games of 1912 (FEI, 2009a). Consequently, cavalryman Count Von Rosen came up with the three discipline set-up the Olympic equestrian programme which is still in force today: Eventing (the military) Dressage, and Showjumping (Hedenborg and White, 2012). This format has been consistent, apart from the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp which saw the

introduction and only appearance of Equestrian Vaulting open to non-commissioned officers.

The Dressage and Showjumping events were open to non-military horses and riders but the sport of Eventing had stringent eligibility rules for both the horses and riders. Eventing (originally known as the 'Military') is the equestrian equivalent of the triathlon, incorporating three disciplines designed to mirror the challenges faced by the cavalry. Cavalry horses had to be all round performers, agile over obstacles and all kinds of terrain, highly responsive and obedient. To test these skills Eventing included a non-jumping endurance test (road and tracks) a speed test (the individual steeplechase) a cross-country jumping course, a stadium jumping course and a Dressage test (Bryant, 2008). Eventing was originally only open to active duty military officers, and their mounts had to belong to the competitors themselves or to their respective branch of service. Military owned school horses were ineligible for competition (Bryant, 2008).

In 1911, invitations were sent out to the military departments and to the National Olympic Committees. Von Rosen had shaped and endorsed the new format of the equestrian programme with an upper-class touch, in which only military officers on active duty were allowed to compete in the Eventing competition (Findling and Pelle, 2004). The fact that the competing athletes were officers on active duty meant they had little time to prepare for competition. For example the USA's preparations began on January 20th 1912 when the war department published Special Order No.20 detailing selected officers to constitute an equestrian team to compete in that summers Olympiad in Stockholm (DiMarco, 2008). The team had just six months to prepare before setting sale for Sweden in June. From the fifty plus officers, five were selected to train for the Olympics alongside eighteen horses. Time to competition was not the only challenge the American team faced, they had only 90 minutes a day in which to train outside of their regular military duties and obligations, they were in the middle of a severe Midwestern winter and whilst the officers had competition experience in Showjumping they had no experience of the European sports of Dressage and Eventing (Bryant, 2008).

Ten Nations and sixty two horse and rider partnerships took part in the equestrian programme at the 1912 Games. Although the Showjumping and Dressage competitions were open to civilians, of the 62 competitors from 10 nations, contesting the three new sports, all were officers (FEI, 2009a). Seven European countries, including Russia, and Chile and the United States were represented. The host nation Sweden dominated the medal table, taking all three medals in the individual Dressage, individual and team gold in Eventing and team gold in Showjumping. Germany and France also performed well with Germany taking three silvers and a bronze and France securing a gold, silver and bronze across the different sports.

Seven nations were represented in the team Eventing competition, with each team represented by four officers (Findling and Pelle, 1996). Considering their lack of preparation and experience in Eventing and compared to their extensive travel requirements (a 15 day journey from New York to Stockholm) the US team took home a very respectable team bronze medal. Whilst equality amongst competitors was leveled by gender, rank and active service, the Europeans' distinct riding style and quality of horse differentiated the teams. Lieutenant Colonel F.S. Fontz, the general staff officer responsible for overseeing the American teams efforts, stated that the quality of the US horses was a national embarrassment and that Captain Henry (Team Captain) and his men were physically exhausted by the pace of training while simultaneously continuing to perform their assigned military duties (DiMarco, 2008). The Swedish performance, however, received high praise. The German sporting advocate Carl Diem was so impressed by the Swedish performance he wrote, "What Swedish officers showed was representative of military riding, an honorable work" (Findling and Pelle, 1996: p.45).

The 1916 scheduled Games were cancelled due to the onset of World War 1 in 1914. During this break in competition, changes within the military such as the increase in mechanised and armoured vehicles, and the trench conditions experienced during the First World War would prove to have a lasting effect on the military's influence over equestrian sport at the Olympics. The 'Great Calvary Debate' which had been brewing since the Boer War had continued to gain momentum. There was criticism within the

British military that mechanisation did not occur soon enough due to the "cavalry's irrational attachment to their horses" (French, 2003: p.296). The questionable quality and reliability of early tanks during the First World War, gave horses a revised reconnaissance role. However although the phasing out of the formal mounted cavalry began during the early part of the 20th Century, military influence on equestrian sport would continue until the 1948 Games.

The European dominance of equestrian events continued post World War 1, through the 1920s; the only non-European countries to medal between 1912 – 1928 were Chile (represented however by officers were based at the German cavalry school in Hannover), USA, Argentina, Japan and Mexico. More specifically Swedish domination continued, in the 1920 games in Antwerp they effectively picked up more than half of the 15 medals at stake, and confirmed their stronghold on the sport. At the end of World War 1, Antwerp was awarded the Games only a year prior to the start of competition.

Military influence continued to shape equestrian sport beyond the Olympics. Following the 1920 Olympics, the IOC called for an extraordinary meeting in 1921 in Lausanne; as a result several International Federations were founded, including the Federation Equestrian Internationale (FEI). The FEI, although with only 14 member National Federations, had, in the two years since its founding, evaluated the Olympic programme. This task was helped by the fact that the FEI's Secretary General, Commandant Georges Hector, was also the Secretary General of the French Federation and became the president of the technical committee for the equestrian events at the 1924 Games. Today the FEI is the sole controlling authority for 8 equestrian disciplines and is the only International Federation to govern and regulate a sport for both able bodied and disabled athletes (de Haan and Winfield, 2008).

In 1924 the Games were hosted in Paris, the home city of Pierre de Coubertin. Seventeen nations competed in the equestrian programme and the medals were distributed across nine different nations, including for the first time medals for the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Poland and Portugal (FEI, 2009b). The 1928 Games held in Amsterdam

saw three additional nations compete in the equestrian programme and Czechoslovakia and Spain medaled for the first time. Although Great Britain entered the Olympics they did not field a team for the equestrian events. Major Sloan Doak, a veteran of the 1920 and 1924 US Olympic teams received orders to prepare a US equestrian team just eight months before the Games although the team was only assembled to start training just three months before they set sail to Holland (Bryant, 2008). The American team failed to medal in equestrian events at the 1928 Games and their poor performance resulted in a shake up of how the Army selected, trained and fielded Olympic equestrian teams. Doak's observations of the European model of training and success prompted him to make recommendations that the cavalry begin planning for the 1932 Games immediately after the conclusion of the Amsterdam Olympics, with training starting two years out from competition.

For the first time since the 1904 Games in St Louis, the Games of the X Olympiad (1932) were held outside of Europe in Los Angeles, California. These Games would prove to be a milestone for the USA in relation their participation in equestrian sport at the Olympics. The Military's involvement in the equestrian competition went beyond individual competitors as the US Army, in particular the cavalry, was also responsible for organising and operating the equestrian events. Between 1928 and 1932, changes occurred in the US Army which would serve to improve the quality and subsequent results for the host nation's equestrian Olympic team. Changes to their horse breeding program, the formation of a Cavalry School at Fort Riley and the introduction of a one year advanced course in equitation, helped focus training and preparation for Olympic competition. The captain of the 1912 USA Olympic team, General Henry was appointed as Chief of Cavalry; he was also a member of the IOC and in 1931 became President of the FEI (FEI, 2009c).

Location of the Games outside of Europe coupled with the fact that the 1932 Olympics were held in the middle of the Great Depression resulted in only half as many athletes taking part as had in 1928. The great absentees in the equestrian sport for Los Angeles were Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia – all medal winners

four years previously in Amsterdam (FEI, 2009c). In total 37 nations competed in the 1932 Olympics, but only 6 nations competed in Equestrian events. France only sent a Dressage team; Netherlands only sent Eventers and whilst Sweden was fully represented, to save money, the Eventing riders also had to do the Showjumping competition. In addition there were Mexicans – who had the shortest journey and an Eventer and Showjumping rider from Japan. The US had full representation. As a result of this concerted effort the host nation secured 5 medals, this was a feat which remained unmatched for over fifty years until the Games returned to Los Angeles in 1984 (FEI, 2009c).

Despite a cultural tradition of equestrian sports and a strong cavalry presence, Great Britain failed to make an impact on equestrian sport in the Olympics until the 1936 Games in Berlin where they medalled for the first time taking home a bronze in the team Eventing. The military dominance and influence over equestrian sport with regards to competitors had continued uninterrupted until these Games which saw two civilian riders competing for the first time, an Eventer from the Netherlands and a Showjumper from Norway (FEI, 2009d). Whilst the rest of the Berlin Games was marred by political unrest there was also disquiet within the equestrian community as for the first and only time in Olympic history, one country, the host country Germany, captured all six equestrian gold medals. As the Games had returned to Europe, America was unable to repeat its success and failed to medal. In his official post-Olympic report to Major General Guy Henry, Captain Hiram Tuttle wrote the following: "I had been advised by the German team coach that to win in Dressage required European-bred horses, European competition experience, and political clout in the host country; and that, having none of these, the Americans likely wouldn't fare well." (FEI, 2009d).

Although horses still had military uses during the early part of the Second World War their role in warfare had been irrevocably altered. Many of these new roles utilised the mobility of mounted divisions, over difficult terrain, which increased the requirement for skilled and practised riders and horses (French, 2003). These roles made equestrian sport competitions for military participants more important than ever before. Between the two

World Wars the 'Great Cavalry Debate' continued with passionate support on both sides again it was the anthro-zoological relationship between man and horse which divided the debate. In the House of Commons in March 1935 Brigadier H. Clifton-Brown, a pre-war commander of the 12th Lancers, lamented that "I am sorry that we cannot go on clinging to the horse, but I hope we shall cling to him as long as we can" (French, 2003: p. 297). All British Army cavalry regiments were mechanized by 1st March 1942 when the Queen's Own Yorkshire Dragoons (Yeomanry) were converted to a motorized role, following mounted service against the Vichy French in Syria the previous year. The final cavalry charge by British Empire forces occurred on 21st March 1942 when a 60 strong patrol of the Burma Frontier Force encountered Japanese infantry near Toungoo airfield in central Burma (Herlihy, n.d.).

The USA had only one cavalry unit, the 26th Cavalry, but they had many active engagements, their last horse cavalry actions were fought during World War Two (Urwin, 1983). Two years after the British Calvary was mechanized the last horsed U.S. Cavalry (the Second Cavalry Division) was dismounted. During World War Two the German Army used more horses than in World War One, approximately 2.75 million, and the Soviets used 3.5 million (Keegan, 2011). However, despite their use in large numbers the role of horses in the armed forces had been changed forever and many cavalry regiments converted to mechanised, armoured divisions with lighter, more agile tanks performing many of the cavalry's original roles (Keegan, 2011). As the role of the horse in warfare diminished, this was reflected in the declining of military dominance over equestrian sports at the Olympic Games.

The 1948 Olympics in London were the last Games to accommodate male only cavalry officers in equestrian disciplines including the Pentathlon and the military influence over the sport was to end in a flourish of controversy. In order to abide by the IOC ruling relating to amateur competition (at that time) equestrian competitors had to be recognised by a National Body as a 'gentleman' or they had to be a 'professional officer actively serving' (FEI, 2009e). In the build up to the 1948 Games a sergeant in the Swedish Army, Gehnäll Persson, was a top contender for the Swedish Dressage team,

unfortunately at the time however he was a non-commissioned officer. Sgt Persson was, on 20 July 1948 (barely three weeks before the Olympic Grand Prix de Dressage) promoted to Lieutenant and as expected, Sweden won the Dressage gold medal. Controversially however, merely two and half weeks later, Persson was demoted. In retrospect it seems unbelievable that the Swedish military authorities could believe that such a scandal would not become known internationally. When it was discovered, the FEI, with the approval of the IOC, disqualified Persson (FEI, 2009e). This meant that Sweden was also disqualified from the team event and lost its gold medal. This incident was a clear demonstration that times had changed. Non-commissioned officers were no more professionals than professional officers. The FEI acted quickly and as from 1952, allowed non-commissioned officers in the Olympics (FEI, 2009e).

2.4 Gender and the development of the sport

As gender is a universal cultural construct, so too is sport. Sport it is argued is one of the most prominent and hegemonic social institutions and cultural practices in society today (Sage, 1993). Indeed sport can be perceived as what cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) has termed 'a model of society' and a 'model for society' signifying values, behaviours, conflicts and ideology which reflect a society. Scholars have described sport as a male domain and prerogative and as such have studied how women have faced obstruction to sporting culture and the larger culture (Messner, 1995, Hargreaves, 1990).

In Guttmann's seminal text, From 'Ritual to Record', first published in 1978, he discusses the issue of equality as being a characteristic of modern sport, further dividing the complex concept into two; 1) everyone should, theoretically, have an opportunity to compete; 2) the conditions of competition should be the same for all contestants. Guttmann (2004) continues the discussion on equality by stating that in practice when considering the contemporary state of affairs rather than the conceptual model there are numerous inequalities. One such inequality is exclusion from participation based on sex which Guttmann (2004) refers to as the third anachronism preventing the emergence of modern sport in its pure form.

For centuries sport has been associated with men and boys to the extent that sport and masculinity have become virtually synonymous (Kane and Disch, 1993). This is evident not only on the playing field, but also in the coaching and administration of sport (Whisenant et al., 2002). In the past, early laws (e.g. women could not own property, operate a business, vote etc) initiated and upheld hegemonic masculinity in society in general. The institution of sport was no different as women were frequently banned from watching and, when that barrier was broken down they were discouraged from participating in sporting activities (Whisenant et al., 2002).

Over the past 20-30 years, women's participation in sport has increased, although their participation patterns differ form those of men. For example men and women are interested in different sports, they participate in sports in different context and the tasks they accept and the fields they prefer also differ, with men typically holding decision-making positions while women often do welfare work (Van Tuyckom et al., 2010). This male majority stake within decision-making positions also extends to so-called female sports (defined as sports where more than 50% of the participants are women) such as swimming, gymnastics, handball and equestrianism. However, as Pfister (2010) explains despite increased female participation in sport and the (re)negotiation of the association between femininity and active participation in sport, female sports and athletes are still generally perceived to be less skilful, less interesting, and thus less worthy of reward, attention and praise.

Women's sporting experiences relate to larger socio-cultural issues like gender roles and cultural expectations, women's quest for equality and sport and power relations (Borish, 1996). All these issues are present in the context of the Olympics, as gender bias against the participation of women has been implicit in the history of Olympism and the Olympic Movement. The classical formulations of Olympic ideology were founded in the worldview of modernism (Real, 1996) and de Coubertin's intellectual conception of Olympism as the quasi-official ideology of the modern games was synonymous with the resurgence of Hellenism and the ideology of Muscular Christianity (Segrave, 2000a). In Lucas's (1977: p.134) view "Pierre de Coubertin was a great man in many ways, but

because he was a consummate Victorian-Edwardian gentleman, he found it impossible during his 29 years of the IOC leadership to encourage vigorous 'ladies' events". This framework of Olympic ideals dominated the rhetoric of the Olympic Movement throughout de Coubertin's reign and the modernist ideals of amateurism and the celebration of the human body and elite physical culture continued to be the foundations of Olympism under Avery Bundage (Real, 1996). According to Borish (1996: p.44) the "Olympic Games provide a rich and dense arena for understanding women's gains in autonomy and physical emancipation, as well as constraints of their quest for equality in athletic performance".

The physicality of sport and the ideology of Muscular Christianity combined with de Coubertin's conventional Victorian ideas of gender, form the basis of the outright rejection of female participation in the modern Games. However, women first competed in the Olympics in Paris 1900 but it was not an easy transition onto the male dominated playing field. Hargreaves (2002) explains that it has always been easier for women to gain access to those events that it has been argued are more suited to female biology and less threatening to dominant images of femininity. In the subsequent Games of the early 20th Century, female-specific events were included, these sports lacked male competitors and had aesthetic appeal and gendered cultural expression, such as synchronized swimming and rhythmic gymnastics (Hargreaves, 1983). These female gender-specific sports typically exemplify feminine physical action in what Borish (1996) describes, as harmonious and graceful movements, offering a counterpoint to the traditional masculine sports. Indeed, in media reports following the performances of the first female Swedish Dressage riders in the 1956 Games, the performances of Hartel and Linsenhoff were described as 'gentle' and 'graceful', two concepts connected to a socially constructed femininity (Hedenborg and White, 2012) and the description of feminine physical action as described by Borish (1996).

Discussing the conflicting ideals of femininity faced by one female Olympic athlete in the early and middle decades of the 20th century Cayleff (1992: p.30) explains that "if a woman athlete was shapely but not muscular, sporting but not overly competitive,

heterosexual and participating in a 'beautiful' sport, then and only then would she fulfill the ideal." Indeed in reviewing the discourse surrounding female participation in sport, one of the main issues relates to the physicality and form of the female athlete's body. Debate seems to focus on 'male' or 'female' sports and the consequence of participating in such a sport on the bodily form. With reference to sport and gender there is very little, if any, commentary surrounding sports which facilitate both male and female competition.

When Norma Matthews joined the USA Showjumping team in 1950, press coverage at the time appeared to describe a beauty pageant contestant rather than an international athlete, describing her as 'a pretty blue-eyed blonde, 5'6 ½", 125 pounds.' (Burke, 1997). Some 18 years later, Jane Bullen faced similar reference in the press when she rode for the USA Eventing team at the 1968 Olympics when she was often referred to as 'Nurse Jane Bullen'. Although she was at the time training to be a nurse, the reference to a feminine career detracted from her identity as an athlete.

Guttmann (2004: p. 34) differentiates access to sport based on gender drawing attention to male superiority in sport related characteristics "although men's greater physical strength and quicker reaction time (from age five to age fifty-five) make direct competition with women unsuitable in many sports, the logic of the development of modern sports demands at the very least that women be granted separate-but-equal opportunity for involvement in sports." However, the opportunity and relevance of competing equally in a sport, such as equestrianism, appears to go without commentary. One reason for this may be the fact that little attention is paid to the physicality of the rider; indeed it is the physical prowess of the horse which is often commented on. Regardless of the gender of the animal, the musculature, strength and athleticism of the horse are ultimately judged during Olympic competition and these physical characteristics are synonymous with the masculine sporting ideal de Coubertin aspired to. There is no standard phenotype for horse riders, no definable gendered strength or weakness, and men and women have shared the Olympic podium since 1958, yet this

sport has received relatively little attention from those commenting on gender equality or to be specific on 'women's' sporting experience.

As mentioned previously the historical relationship between human and horse in warfare has, undoubtedly emerged from a male-dominated landscape and this is reflected in the gendered nature of some equestrian sports. The strong influence of the military milieu, which Hedenborg (2007) describes as having a distinctive masculine culture, undoubtedly shaped not only the male homogeneity between the institutional boundaries of the armed forces and associated sports, but also the innate class structure of such institutions.   Indeed, this male homogeneity was clearly evident throughout the development of the Modern Games. From a governance and administrative perspective, the International Olympic Committee evolved as a male-dominated institution. Between 1896 and 1956 the IOC had an all male membership (IOC, 2009). De Coubertin himself was opposed to female participation in public sport:

> I personally do not approve of the participation of women in public competitions, which is not to say that they must abstain from practising a great number of sports, provided they do not make a public spectacle of themselves.   In the Olympic Games, as in the contests of former times, their primary role should be to crown the victors (de Coubertin and Müller, 2000: p. 583).

However, as early as the 1900 Olympic Games, women began to participate in selected sports, namely tennis and golf, during the first 20 years of the games, archery and skating were also opened up to women (Hedenborg, 2009). Women were not however permitted to compete in any equestrian sport at the Olympics until 1952 when they were allowed to compete only in Dressage; in 1956 Showjumping was opened to female competitors; and in 1964 they were finally allowed to compete in the military dominated Eventing competition (Hedenborg, 2009).   However, outside of the Olympics women were competing in equestrian events alongside male competitors. Under the 1938 FEI rules, Dressage was open to military officers and amateurs, under which category women could compete, however Rule 214 stated that Amazons (women riders) could not participate in

the equestrian events at the Olympic Games (Burke, 1997). If they qualified, women could however compete in all other international competitions recognized by the FEI.

Outside of the Olympic competition, women's success in Showjumping and Eventing had not gone unnoticed. In order to strengthen the male only national teams, successful female riders were asked to lend the 'team' their horses. Patricia Rosemary Smythe (known as Pat Symthe) first joined the British Showjumping Team in 1947, the same year she won her first open category. Prior to competing in the 1956 Olympics where she won a bronze medal and was made an OBE the same year, Smythe had been asked to loan her best horse, Prince Hal to the male only team (Smythe, 1954). Success in riding comes from the right partnership between horse and rider, Prince Hal simply did not perform for the male riders. Although the combination of Symthe and Prince Hal had been immensely successful on the international circuit, when she was finally selected for the Olympic team, the coach had black listed Prince Hal and Smythe had to compete on her less talented and less experienced second horse Flanagan.

Within the sport of Eventing, women were successfully competing (predominately in the UK where the sport was more developed) from the early 1950s although they were not permitted to compete in the Olympics until 1963. Again prior to 1963 the successful female riders were asked to hand over their carefully trained and valuable horses for use within all male teams. Whilst the sport has always relied heavily on the cooperation of independent owners, successful women riders were expected to hand over their horses without question or reward.

In 1956 Sheila Willox, who was placed second at Badminton (considered the best and toughest Eventing course in the world – even more challenging than any Olympic course) was asked to loan her horse.

> They came to me in the collecting ring at Badminton before Showjumping (the
> final part of the competition) and said they wanted me to make my horse available

for the male Olympic riders. I said no. I told them that 'High and Mighty' was my only horse and I had no money to replace him (Burke, 1997: p.108).

The selectors persisted and put immense pressure on the 20 year old who finally agreed to sell rather than lend her horse. Mr Ted Marsh bought the horse and lent him to the team. High and Mighty never made it to the Olympics, with newspaper reports claiming he was lame. When Willox contacted Marsh and was told nothing was wrong with the horse, she offered to buy him back and the combination went on to have several successful seasons. Willox explained,

High and Mighty was really just an overgrown pony. If you didn't stir him up, which none of the men on the team could do, he'd think, 'well too bad I'm not doing that!' (Burke, 1997: p.109).

As outlined so far in this chapter we have discussed how Equestrian sport in the Olympic context began in a male military dominated landscape but slowly this gendered stronghold became infiltrated by both civilians and women. In this section specifically we have looked at how female riders were influencing the sport both inside and outside of the Olympic context. In the following sections we begin to unpick how the sex integration in sport does not simply equate to participation parity.

2.4.1 Sex integration in equestrian sport

Over time sports researchers have produced a large body of work on the significance of culture and gender processes in sport. Much of this work is a reflection of the universality of gender processes and practices that rigidly maintain distinctions between, and separation of, the sexes and naturalise power in the male athlete. For example, several authors propose that the construction of sport is a reflection of male hegemony within which the separation between male and female is sharply defined and strictly maintained (Messner, 1995, Sabo and Runfola, 1980, Daddario, 1994). Since sport at an institutional level is largely sex-segregated play, most analysis of gender and sport takes

place in the separate domains of women's and men's sports and associated teams (Messner, 1995;, Theberge, 1984, Lapchick, 1996).

Regardless of the strength, skill or age of participants, sex segregation is usually applied without criticism with few questioning the logic or rationale behind it. Hargreaves (2002) explains that the historical justification for segregating sport was built around the ideas of sexual difference and the belief in the unsuitability of sport and physical activity for girls and women. The contemporary justification for binary sex segregation of sport is based on a complex mix of factors including biological, economical and commercial arguments, combined with social norms which continue to frame sport in a male domain (Anderson, 2009;, Foddy and Savulescu, 2011). At the institutional level and as formal cultural mechanisms, the only sports which require team play and are not sex-segregated, are equestrian sports. According to Merlini (2004), the absence of sex-segregation in equine sport is a further factor which diminishes its status as a sport. Whilst mixed gender participation can be viewed as a currency of equality, it can also be seen as a disruption of social gender expectations concerning the normative expectations of the gender behaviour of athletes. If masculine and athletic identity are a function of how a man 'measures up' in the eyes of other males (Messner, 1995), the equal 'playing field' with female athletes according to Merlini (2004) brings into question whether male riders are not 'real' men. Whilst Merlini (2004) postulates that sport culture (and culture in general) does not consider female athletes the physical equals of male athletes, it is important to place this inside the context of equestrian sport. Dashper (2012b) explains that there are no sex-based biological advantages for either males or females competing in the Olympic equestrian disciplines. "Within this sport masculine sporting abilities such as speed and strength are less significant than in most other sports. Strength of a rider plays a role, but this is limited as within the equestrian partnership the horse will always be the stronger partner, regardless of the sex of the rider" (Dashper, 2012b: p. 215). However, with regards to the equestrian sport of horse racing, Roberts and MacLean (2012) report that women reported discrimination in the sport based on their physical strength, body shape, and the male dominated traditions and history embedded in the racing industry.

To truly compare the gendered physicality of equestrian sport against other sports we must define what 'physicality' refers to. For example, within the Olympic discipline of Dressage, the first of the disciplines to allow female competitors at the 1952 Olympics, scoring and hence placing are based on the quality of the horse's individual required movements. How horse and rider achieve this is to all intents and purposes irrelevant. The gender of the rider is therefore irrelevant, as it is the physical performance of the horse, rather than the human athlete which is judged.

2.4.2 Lack of participatory parity in equestrian sport

The exclusion of women from any Olympic equestrian discipline until the 1952 Olympics is an example of discrimination on the grounds of social status or social class not only with respect to military ranking, but also to gender. However, from 1952 onwards, equestrianism became one of the very few Olympic events in which men and women (civilian as well as military) have competed directly alongside and against one another. In team competition, teams may have any blend of male and female competitors, and are not required to have minimum numbers of either gender. Countries are free to choose the best riders, irrespective of gender. In Dumbell and de Haan's (2012) comparison of athlete profiles over 50 years of Olympic equestrian events, the authors present analysis of participation at six Olympics (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Participation rates in Equestrian events over six Olympic Games

	Dressage			ShowJumping			Eventing			Total		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1952	20	4	24	51	0	51	59	0	59	130	4	134
1956	28	9	37	68	5	70	56	1	57	152	12	164
1960	12	5	17	68	3	71	73	0	73	153	8	161
Mean	**20**	**6**	**26**	**62**	**2**	**64**	**63**	**0**	**63**	**145**	**8**	**153**
2000	23	25	48	62	12	74	59	23	82	134	70	204
2004	24	28	52	66	11	77	52	23	75	142	62	204
2008	19	28	47	61	16	77	42	28	70	122	72	194
Mean	**22**	**27**	**49**	**63**	**13**	**76**	**51**	**25**	**76**	**133**	**68**	**201**

Analysis of the gender patterns among Olympic competitors shows that on average only 5% of equestrian competitors were female in the early years compared to recent Games

where this figure has increased to 34% (Dumbell and de Haan, 2012). At the 2008 Beijing Olympics women made up 42% of the 11,196 athletes who competed in the Games, this figure was closely mirrored in the 37% of female athletes competing in the Equestrian events.

Despite the fact that women were allowed to compete in Dressage from 1952, Showjumping from 1956, and finally Eventing from 1964, male and female participation rates still differ across these sports. Dumbell and de Haan (2012) outline that across all three disciplines, women were most likely to be competing in Dressage both then and now, but they now form a much greater proportion with 55% of competitors at recent games being female, compared to 23% in earlier games. Hedenborg and White (2012) highlight that it was in 1972 that the participation rate of women competing in Dressage first became higher than that of men. Whilst participation rates have fluctuated since, Hedenborg and White (2012) report that Dressage became a female domain after the 1970s. Showjumping however, is still heavily dominated by male competitors with only 17% of athletes at recent games being female, although this has grown since the meagre 3% in earlier games. Finally Eventing has seen the largest growth from no female competitors in the early years, to 33% of the competing athletes now being female (Dumbell and de Haan, 2012). Hedenborg and White (2012) suggest that a likely explanation for the higher number of women in Dressage compared to the other Olympic disciplines is due to the fact that Dressage riding was more compatible with an accepted femininity. As we continue with the discourse surrounding gender and equestrian sport, we begin to unpick the relationship between gender and femininity and specifically draw on the place of Dressage within this space.

Despite the fact that to date there are no longer any explicit, formal barriers to participation for females at any level of equestrian sport (within the context of culturally specific gendered sporting access) Travers (2008) notes that this does not simply translate to equality of opportunity. Indeed, as a result of a three year ethnographic study of gender relations in equestrian sport, Dashper (2012b: p.217) refers to "subtle discrimination and hidden barriers [which] combine to produce a glass ceiling effect at

the top levels of the sport, denying many women participatory parity in relation to their male peers".   One of the hidden barriers Dashper (2012b) refers to includes the combination of gender and class as the following quote from a female young rider suggests:

> It's really hard to get seen, to get noticed, especially with the selectors, because they're very, well, money orientated, and also there's only a few boys and they seem to get all the attention as well. There's so many girls and everything, and the boys just really stand out, I suppose, and they're from very wealthy backgrounds, the boys are, and so they do tend to stand out more and get, you know, first choice of things (Dashper, 2012b: p. 217).

Another potential barrier defined by Dashper (2012b) is linked to the financial pressures of competing at the elite level but specifically the commercial relationship between sponsors and male and female riders. The majority of top-level riders across all three Olympic disciplines are dependent on sponsors in the form of 'owners' who buy the expensive horses required to compete at this level and pay for their maintenance. Owners select a rider for their horse and as demonstrated in the following quote from a female rider, Dashper (2012b) infers that securing financial support is exacerbated by gender for female riders:

> I think it's been a perception really, with owners and sponsors, they're just not prepared to sponsor the women to the same degree, so it's really hard for women to break through (Dashper, 2012b: p.219).

The feeling of invisibility as described in the previous two quotes from female riders is also discussed in the following quote from a male rider:

> A few people have actually said to me that if I were a female I wouldn't be where I am now, they did say that, and you know just cos you're a male you *are* looked at differently, I think you are, yeah, I do think you are; cos when I worked on the

last yard there were decent girl riders there, you know, they were more educated at riding then myself, but they didn't get the rides or the opportunities (Dashper, 2012b: p.219).

Finally the barrier of 'family' is discussed. In a sport where competing at the top doesn't necessarily have a clear retirement age, female riders face the prospect of having to take a career break to start and maintain a family. Dashper (2012b) explains that amongst the riders interviewed, on starting a family, many female riders would opt out of international competition, a requirement at the elite level of the sport, instead opting to focus on family life:

> Many riders marry other riders, and in each case of the three couples I interviewed where this was the case it was the female partner who had scaled back her competition career to concentrate on the domestic side of the horse business (training and horse care), as well as taking the lead in childcare (Dashper, 2012b: p. 221).

2.4.3 Gendered discourse in equestrian sport

As previously discussed the relevance of the gender of the rider is negligible in equestrian sport, as it is the physical performance of the horse, rather than the human athlete which is judged. However gender-neutral commentary has not always been evident. Donnan Sharp Monk, a female rider who represented the USA at the 1968 Olympics, believed that women were well suited for Dressage:

> Women can get in a horse's head and bond with the animal, women ride with their minds, not their bodies, a women would never try to overpower a horse to show it what they wanted it to do (Burke, 1997: p.59).

Monk's comments imply differences between riders based on gender, one can assume that the characteristics she describes in women riders she believes are not present in her male contemporaries, she implies that women ride 'with their mind' yet men 'ride with

their bodies'. This is akin to a radical feminist (and at the other end of the spectrum an anti-feminist) insistence on the essential differences between men and women (Henry, 2001). In other words the differences are biologically related rather than produced by socialisation.

Lis Hartel, twice individual Dressage silver medalist (1954, 1956) wrote:

> Riding is not a question of strength only, or then the horse would win over the rider! It is a question of balance and how your seat, back and hips are applied (Burke, 1997: p. 68).

In this quote however, unlike Monk, Hartel presents a gender-neutral comment. It is important to note however when reviewing Hartel's comments regarding the physicality of riding, her gender may not be the most definable characteristic. Hartel suffered from polio which affected the ligaments behind her knees, weakening and distorting the lower leg to the extent that she could not mount or dismount a horse without assistance. Hartel had ridden prior to the onset of polio and was determined to continue in the sport:

> I restarted my riding in Dressage competitions winning the Nordic riding games in '51. My efforts were crowned with a silver medal in 1952. It was the first time a women had competed equally with men in the equestrian games, and this really brought my name to the limelight worldwide, because not only was it a women, but a handicapped woman! (Burke, 1997: p.67).

During the 1956 Equestrian Olympics in Stockholm, the second time Dressage had been open to female competitors, commentary was laden with masculine and feminine reference. Hedenborg (2009) explains that one Swedish newspaper at the time reported the following:

Lis Hartel as well as Liselotte Linsenhoff showed such gentleness, grace and flexibility that they made several of their male competitors seem too strict (Hedenborg, 2009: p. 613).

Indeed the success of the female Dressage riders, who secured individual silver and bronze, with the German team, consisting of all female riders taking team silver, caused an outcry from experts and the press. The subjective scoring system present in Dressage was thought by some to favour the women because of their femininity. The Swedish gold medallist Henri St Cyr believed that the standard of women's Dressage was so high they should have their own Dressage competition (Hedenborg, 2009). This statement highlights the concern at the time that mixed gender sport was merely acceptable in the context of masculine supremacy.

It is however important to note that commentary laden with masculine and feminine reference may differ from one culture to another. While in Europe it was accepted as the norm that males should participate in Dressage, for at least one American it was seen as 'effeminate'. After General George Patton, a World War II hero watched a special exhibition of the Royal Lipizzaners at the Spanish Riding School, he wrote in his diary that he couldn't understand why "obviously fit young men would spend their days teaching horses to wriggle their butts" (Burke, 1997: p.60). Patton's comments at the time may however have reflected cultural as well as gendered traits. Dressage had yet to become popular in America but was a highly skilled popular male sport in Europe, where at the time most top riders and trainers were male.

More recent analysis of media coverage of equestrian sport highlights the presence of gender constructs. Plymoth (2012) discusses press representation of equestrian sport in Sweden and Hellborg and Hedenborg (2013) review mediated gender relations in equestrian sports in two Swedish newspapers during the 2012 Olympics. Plymoth's (2012) study of contemporary gender construction in media coverage of Swedish equestrian sports highlights the intricacy of the media construction of female riders. Plymoth (2012) concludes that elite female riders are portrayed as feminine women,

either the mother or the glamour girl and leisure riders are depicted as pupils expected to learn horsemanship from male instructors. Hellborg and Hedenborg (2013) conclude that many of the media narratives pertaining to the 2012 Olympics and coverage of equestrian sport, did not challenge the gender order.

Issues of gender within equestrian sport at the Olympics were not solely focussed on the athletic performance of the riders during competition, gender differences amongst support staff; specifically the grooms also caused much debate. Within equestrian sport riders are supported by grooms who are predominantly responsible for the care and welfare of the horse. Birke and Brandt (2009) outline that whilst men outnumber women at the 'professional' end of equestrian sports; women are predominant in what they refer to as the 'craft labour areas':

> Horse keeping becomes much more of a process of production - and women are relatively fewer, especially at the top. Women might be found in the yards, caring for these elite animals (Birke and Brandt, 2009: p. 191).

From a linguistics perspective, it is interesting to note that in the equestrian domain of racing, regardless of gender, 'grooms' are all referred to as 'lads'. In the context of the Olympics a rider is likely to have one groom who will have worked with the rider and horse prior to selection and competition, during which time a close working relationship will have been developed. As mentioned the groom is responsible for the care and welfare of the horse and as such requires accreditation and accommodation throughout the Olympic competition. Grooms do not stay in the same accommodation as the riders but are traditionally housed close to the horses. For example during the 1956 Equestrian Olympic competition in Sweden, male and female riders stayed in the military castles of Karlberg and Nasby where they received full board and lodging in single or double rooms, the grooms however shared with 4 to 10 others, the males in army barracks where the horses were stabled and the females were accommodated in guest houses (Hedenborg, 2009).

Grooms can be either male or female although observation and anecdotal evidence suggests that the profession is dominated by females. Hedenborg (2009) discusses the social class differences between grooms and riders during the 1950s in Sweden and suggests that the position of grooms and associated wages decreased over the twentieth century especially in comparison to those of agricultural labourers and this is thought to have contributed to the feminisation of the profession.

Several Swedish newspaper articles during the 1956 Equestrian Olympics were concerned with the mixing of the genders in a sport context:

> Is it not to tease the riders' nerves, already tense to the point of bursting, to let them look at the blonde Swedish girls everyday, who have a constant smile ready for all the foreigners and their troubles? (Hedenborg, 2009: p. 610).

Hirdman (1990) defines gender systems using either the hierarchal principle which places masculinity as the norm, or the separating principle which emphasises that masculinity and femininity have to be kept apart. Henri St Cyr comments regarding the call for women to compete separately that he supports the notion of the separating principle. According to Hedenborg (2009) the media coverage of the 1956 Equestrian Olympics can also be explained by the gender system's separating principle (Hirdman,1990 cited in Hedenborg, 2009).

Issues relating to gender in sport are not isolated to individual sports. The normative gender homogeneity of team sport, for example, guarantees that male competitors never have to put their physicality to the gender test, thereby ensuring that they will never have to risk defeat by a female opponent. This however makes the assumption that riders see themselves competing only against other riders, rather than competing as a human / horse partnership.

If sport culture considers gender issues in sport in the context of physical performance, equestrian sport reveals another side to the equality argument, that of physical ability or

disability. In 1952, at the XV Olympiad in Helsinki, the Danish rider, Liz Hartel, won the first female equestrian medal when she took silver in the Dressage competition, a feat she also repeated at the following Olympics in 1956. Not only was Hartel's performance significant because of her gender, but as we have noted she was also paralyzed from the knee down due to polio.

Access to the Olympic competition did not however automatically imply equality. Elaine Shirley Watt rode on the American Dressage team in 1956, her former husband Victor Hugo-Vidal commented on her experience:

> A couple of times a year the better riders would come together to be evaluated. Shirley, as a women, was not made to feel welcome, but she earned a place on the team, so she got to go to the Olympics (Burke, 1997: p.69).

In 1957 Kathy Kusner wrote to the American Federation (USET) to find out what she was required to do to qualify for the national Showjumping team. Whilst two female riders, Durnad and Matthews had previously secured places on the team, Kusner still faced initial hostility. First she was informed she was too small, in those days women riders had to carry 154 pounds in competition; if they fell short of this weight naturally, they would have to carry extra lead weight, finally it was also questioned if she would be strong enough for the task as the Olympic courses were long and difficult (Burke, 1997). Kusner was however invited to participate in the trials in 1958 and was selected to train for the 1960 Olympics. When asked to comment on her experience at the trials, Kusner said she had not noticed any hostility towards her based on gender, she explained that:

> While she was a great advocate of racial equality, gender equality was not something she had given much thought. Any inequality she sensed when at the trials was due to her own lack of polish compared with that of the other candidates (Burke, 1997: p.90).

The two examples above, one taken from the male perspective of the experience of women in the sport and one from a female perspective are different. In itself gender equality is not a gender-neutral subject. Both male and female perspectives of the same situation may differ as may any given individual's experience. The incongruent views of women in the sport are demonstrated with further examples. Pat Smythe said the 'woman question' always caught her by surprise, she said when she was riding, she never thought of herself as a woman, only as a competitor. (Burke, 1997: p.84) however comments that some women who competed in Showjumping around the same time remember being criticised "for interfering with men who were trying to make a living".

2.4.4 Notions of masculinity and sexuality in equestrian sport

If we are to discuss equestrian sport in the domain of sport culture and the associated pressures on the corporeal manifestations of gender, we must also discuss the symbolic masculinity of the equine. The shear size, strength and musculature of a fit horse, conjours up reference to power and potency, images strongly associated with hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, with no reference to the gender of a horse, Weil (2006) refers to manhood as projected onto the thoroughbred. Whilst discussing the rise of equestrianism in 19th Century France, Weil (2006) argues that the performance of men and horses together helped to refashion the meaning of virility, as a male spectacle. "England's past has been borne upon his back; all our history is his industry" states a eulogy to the horse which is read aloud every year at Britain's Horse of the Year Show and as Birke and Brandt (2009) explain, this extract not only conjures up images of conquests and empire but also the fact that this symbolic power is associated with the male horse. The fact that equestrian sport involves the relationship with the horse, and that it is this combined relationship which is matched against other such partnerships, is where the true competition lies.

Reference and indeed comparison between the human and animal physique was supported by the physical cultural movement, in the early part of the 19th Century. However, for the more conservative sport enthusiasts such as Pierre de Coubertin, the exclusive focus on the 'animal' body, neglected the moral and psychological capabilities

of the human athlete. As previously discussed, the origins of equestrian sport are grounded in the masculine domain of the military. With regards specifically to masculinity and equestrian sport, Dashper (2012a) draws on inclusive masculinity theory to discuss how Dressage has been identified as an unusually tolerant environment for gay men. Whilst research in the 1990s and early 2000s suggested homophobia was rife within almost all sporting context (Griffin, 1998;, Price and Parker, 2003) and more recent research has suggested cultural shifts into realms of tolerance openness (Anderson and McGuire, 2010, Adams et al., 2010), Dashper (2012a) goes as far as to report acceptance of homosexuality in a specific sporting context. Presenting examples and quotes from straight and gay members of the sub-culture of equestrian sport, Dashper (2012a) discusses how in the sub-division of Dressage there are 'openly gay men present in relatively high numbers' and whilst gay men appear to be accepted, this decrease in levels of homophobia does not necessarily result in a 'reduction in the polarization between masculinity and femininity'.

Dashper (2012a) explains that within equestrian sport, there is general awareness of the presence of openly gay men and as a result members of this group are happy to talk about it. As the following quote from a 45-year-old female Dressage rider demonstrates the 'openness' of the sport is not something that members take for granted, but is something that makes the sport unique:

> It doesn't matter whether you're gay, straight, male, female, when it comes down to it all that matters is whether you can actually ride or not (Dashper, 2012a: p. 1115).

Dashper (2012a) explains how one 35-year-old male rider 'relished' describing how the sport 'was full of queens'!

> There's not many straight ones left, and even those are on the turn! (laughs) But I mustn't go there! It's one of the nicest things about the Dressage world really, there's no bones about, you are what you are and that's it, take it or leave it… I

think it's par for the course, it's more the norm in Dressage than anything else and it's probably one of the few sports that is like that (Dashper, 2012a: p.1115).

Dashper (2012a) argues that the absence of binary sex segregation in equestrian sport specifically combined with the more artistic requirements of Dressage are contributing factors that help diffuse the hyper-masculine cultures reported in competitive male-only sporting environments, where high levels of homophobia are still evident (Adams et al., 2010, Messner, 2002). Messner (1995) points out that men involved in sport are assumed to be heterosexual as sport is seen as the prime area for demonstrating masculine capital. Dashper (2012a: p.1110) thus argues that "the presence of men and women in the same competitive context is important for beginning to break down the persistent homophobia of sport that contributes to the on-going sporting subordination of both women and gay men."   Indeed, drawing on contact theory, inclusive masculinity theory suggests that when heterosexual men actually know gay men as friends or team mates, this encourages a more open and accepting attitude towards homosexuality (Anderson, 2005).

2.5 Equestrian sport at the Paralympics

The only equestrian discipline currently represented at the Paralympics is Para-Equestrian Dressage which became a recognised Paralympic sport in Atlanta in 1996 (de Haan and Winfield, 2008). As a sport, Para-Equestrian Dressage has to date been a neglected topic in relation to research and literature, yet the sport is currently making a smooth transition from the introduction stage to the growth stage of the Paralympic lifecycle. As of January 1st 2007, the FEI became the first governing body to represent both able bodied and disabled athletes, demonstrating that even in a comparatively short Paralympic history; equestrian sport has evolved as a something of a trail blazer in relation to equality and representation.

To keep Para-Equestrian Dressage as a Paralympic sport it is necessary to maintain at least 24 competing nations across three continents (de Haan and Winfield, 2008). Since 1996, medals have been won by 18 different nations, with European countries taking

most of the medals. However, it is the British team which has undisputedly dominated the sport (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Medal results for the British Para-Equestrian Dressage Team 1996-2012

Date	Ranked	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1996	1	3	3	2	8
2000	1	5	0	2	7
2004	1	5	0	3	8
2008	1	5	5	0	10
2012	1	5	5	1	11

Para-Equestrian Dressage is one of only five from the 25 Paralympic disciplines represented in London in 2012, in which men and women could equally compete and hence share the winning podium. From a British perspective since the 2000 Sydney Paralympics the team has always been represented by male and female athletes, and the medals have been distributed across both genders (Table 2.3). However, as the results in Table 2.3 demonstrate, female athletes have dominated this sport.

Table 2.3: Male and female medal tally in Para-Equestrian Dressage

	Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	
Date	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1996*	0	8	1	7	1	7	2	22
2000	4	8	4	8	4	9	12	25
2004	3	9	1	10	4	8	8	27
2008	4	10	4	10	4	10	12	30
2012	3	11	2	12	4	10	9	33

*Team medals not included as only nationality could be sourced rather than details of the individual riders and hence gender of the team

Para-Equestrian Dressage riders may also share the winning podium with able bodied Dressage riders, whilst this has not happened at the Olympics, some paralympian riders

do compete in able bodied classes to gain experience at a competitive standard within the sport of Dressage. This is possible because in layperson's terms, Dressage scoring and hence placing is based on the quality of the horses' individual required movements, in other words how horse and rider achieve this is to all intents and purposes irrelevant. It is therefore, not unusual to have paralympian riders winning classes and qualifying to compete in able bodied championships, such is the standard of the paralympian horses and riders. Indeed, in 2008 current British team member Sophie Wells became the first Para-Equestrian Dressage rider to win an able-bodied international competition, after she finished first in the junior international class at Hickstead. She was also the first Para-Equestrian Dressage rider to compete on both an able-bodied junior team and the Para-Equestrian Dressage team in the same year (2010). This dual sporting career is generally an exception to the other paralympic disciplines where the paralympian athletes compete only in their own categories. Whilst the sports of Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage are separated at Olympic level, this equality through the lower ranks helps not only develop horses and riders; it also helps promote Para-Equestrian Dressage within the dominant landscape of able-bodied sport.

The success of the British Para-Equestrian team resulted in the sport being fourth in the investment table for the Beijing Paralympics, behind Swimming, Athletics and Mens Wheelchair Basketball. Funding figures published by UK Sport show how monetary investment is allocated for both the Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian sports. For 2009-13, ₤13,395,100 was awarded to support 69 athletes on the World Class Programme for the Olympic disciplines and ₤3,605,500 was awarded to support the 16 athletes on the World Class Programme for Para-Equestrian Dressage, demonstrating a higher capital investment per rider for Para-Equestrian (UKSport, 2014).

2.5.1 Classification of Para-Equestrian riders

As with all Paralympic sports a classification system is used to group athletes together for the purposes of competition. In order to provide meaningful competition for all competitors who may have varying types of impairments, a 'Profile System' is used and the required tests (measure of competition requirements) vary according to the grade of

the athlete's physical impairment and functionality. Before any Para-Equestrian Dressage rider can be eligible to compete at an international event, he or she must be assessed by accredited classifiers. All riders must be classified within 6-12 months prior to competing and unless there are significant changes to the individual's classification no changes are made to the riders profile and grade (de Haan and Winfield, 2008). Riders with recovering or deteriorating conditions must be reclassified within 6 months of World Championships and Paralympic Games; it is up to the country which the athlete representing to arrange for the reclassification.

Classification is probably the most contentious issue relating to disability sport. For the majority of sports, classification is carried out based on impairment. The classification of impairment into easily recognised categories, and the grouping of these categories into Grades facilitate and ensure fair competition. Traditionally athletes are classified according to six different disability groups in the Paralympic Movement: amputee, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, spinal cord injuries, intellectual disability and a group which includes all those that do not fit into the aforementioned groups (les autres) (IPC, grading). Para-Equestrian Dressage is a multi-disability sport, open to athletes with a physical disability or a visual impairment; however, there is no category for riders with mental impairment to qualify for international competitions (FEI/IPC). However, in Para-Equestrian Dressage classification is based on functional ability rather than specific impairment, resulting in four classification categories or Grades for Dressage. They range from Grade I for the most severely impaired Para-Equestrian Dressage riders, to Grade IV for the least impaired. The competition within each Grade can then be judged on the skill and performance of that competitor on that horse regardless of the competitor's disability.

The International Paralympic Committee prefers functional as opposed to impairment classification, as it reduces the number of different competitions that need to be staged, which in turn makes it more attractive to the media (Dashper, 2010). Hargreaves (2000) argues that a move away from impairment based classification systems is an important symbol that the bodies of disabled people are being redefined as effective rather than

defective. But critics of this system argue that it puts more severely impaired athletes at a disadvantage, possibly even excluding them completely from the chance of competition (Howe and Jones, 2006). Dashper (2010: p. 94) carried out in-depth interviews with five Para-Equestrian riders and in reference to the classification system used in the sport she reported that the athletes "viewed it as a time-consuming but necessary and essentially fair feature of disability sport".

Within the Paralympic competition, riders compete in two Dressage events; a Championship Test of set movements and a Freestyle Test to music. There is also a Team Test for three to four riders per team. Competitors are judged on their display of horsemanship skills as they ride their horse using a series of commands for walk, trot and canter. Once a rider has been internationally classified they receive an FEI Para-Equestrian International Classification Identity Card (IPEC ID Card) describing their profile number, Grade and a list of compensating aids they are allowed to use in competition. Riders may use permitted assistive devices (aids) such as Dressage whips, a connecting rein bar, rubber bands or other aids.

2.6 Social class and the economic structure of equestrian sport

As previously outlined in this chapter, equestrian sport has evolved in different forms around the world reflecting the different social needs of populations, from hunting and warfare to transport and leisure. Historically elitism and social class may well have been differentiating factors for participation across many forms of equestrian sport and the legacy of this cultural construction may well continue today. Discussions relating to issues of amateurism and professionalism are often carried out in conjunction with reference to issues of social class and elitism in sport. Indeed the stereotypical western perception of equestrian sport is centred upon the Eurocentric military development of the sport within the context of the Olympics which is embedded with clear connotations of gender and social class.

As a man of noble descent, de Coubertin participated in the classic sports of the time including fencing, swimming, rowing and horse riding. In fact, the combination of several of these classic sports, shooting, fencing, swimming and horse riding, were joined together to form the Olympic sport of the modern pentathlon, the implementation of which de Coubertin and his colleagues had fought over for 15 years (Heck, 2011). De Coubertin appreciated that practising riding skills required financial assistance yet he was keen for the sport not to be restricted to the upper classes, he therefore proposed that wooden horses 'dummies' be used to develop the basic skills of riding (de Coubertin and Müller, 2000). De Coubertin's desire to widen participation in horse riding does not however detract from discourse throughout the modern games that equestrianism is seen by many as an elitist sport.

It could be argued that the presiding factor which associates equestrian sport with notions of elitism is the fundamental requirement of 'horse power'. Horses are a requirement of the sport and there is no question that they are expensive assets as buying and keeping a horse takes substantial financial commitment. Industrialisation and mechanism of transport in the Western world significantly reduced access to horses. What was once seen as a working farm, or agricultural, animal associated with lower social status, became a luxury hobby-based animal associated with the higher classes. Heck (2014) refers to the issue of horse ownership in the context of the early development of the modern pentathlon and discusses how at the beginning of the 19th Century the aristocratic character of horse riding represented issues of social exclusion and reflects the power relations in society at that time. Even within the IOC itself, the issue of horse ownership with regards to eligibility for participation in the modern pentathlon caused divided opinion. Several members of the IOC had aristocratic and military backgrounds and they supported the fact that athletes should bring their own horses in much the same way as they would be expected to bring their own swords and guns, de Coubertin however wanted to invite all social classes to participate in the modern pentathlon and therefore he proposed that horses should be supplied to participants (Heck, 2014). As is discussed at several points throughout this thesis the inclusion of horses in the Olympic Games provides unique logistical problems, sourcing suitable horses for all competitors in the

modern pentathlon is one such example. Whilst in early 1911, the Special Committee for Modern Pentathlon officially declared to be ready to comply with de Coubertin's request; organisational barriers meant they could not source enough horses in time. A month before the Stockholm Games of 1912, a compromise was made, athletes would be allowed to compete on their own horses but if participants required a horse, one would be provided (Heck, 2014).

The perception of elitism and membership of a particular social class, may therefore, simply be based on the assumption that participation is linked to ownership. In reality however participation in equestrian sport even at the highest echelons is not solely restricted to those of independent means. For example, Marjorie Haines Gill, the first American women to ride at the Olympics was not backed by moneyed parents. She borrowed horses from local farmers and a local riding school and originally competed in Showjumping as the prize money was better (Burke, 1997). Gill moved to New York in 1951 to pursue training in her sport, living off just $5 a week she ate mostly cereal and rode a bicycle as she could not afford alternative transport. Ransehousen, another female member of the American Olympic Dressage team was only six years old when told by her parents they could not afford to buy her a pony, started saving herself and six years later bought her first pony (Burke, 1997). Similarly, riders such as Kathy Kusner have never owned their own horses but progress their careers by 'catching rides'. Many aspiring riders who do not have the luxury of a permanent string of horses to ride will have to demonstrate their ability to ride anything often at short notice. These riders will often compete wherever and whenever anyone offers them a ride.

According to the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) (2009) an estimated 4.3 million people ride in the UK, approximately 7% of the population, one would therefore expect to find a degree of geo-demographic and socio-cultural mix within this sporting population. However the criticism of class-based discrimination levelled at equestrian sports remains. Girginov & Parry (2005: p. 172) anecdotally refer to horse-riding in Britain as 'quite clearly being class-based' owing to the level of resources required to participate in the sport. The notion of class associated with equestrian sport has even

brought some to argue for its removal from the Olympic programme. Lucas (1996) suggests that some sports currently included in the Olympic programme are incompatible with its ideals. According to Toohey & Veal (2007), equestrian sport falls into this category because of the associated cost that result in only a small number of wealthy elite being able to participate. Equestrian sport only attracts 'those with the wealth to maintain horses or those with access to horses professionally, such as land-owners or the military' (Toohey and Veal, 2007: p.230). Again, whilst this stereotype has been emphasised throughout the history of the Olympic Games, not all equestrian athletes from this century are of noble descent, military standing or personal wealth.

Six time Olympian Mary King recounts in her autobiography how her love of riding and the financial hardship experienced by her family resulted in her begging and borrowing 'anything and everything' to ride. As a child growing up in Devon, not coming from a 'horsey' family, she recalls riding dairy cows and donkeys and borrowing ponies from local farmers:

> My mother, who was frightened of horses, had given up after three lessons. However, I was absolutely fascinated by them, and would spend hours sitting on gates staring at horses in fields. I longed for a pony of my own, but there was no hope, as we had neither land nor money (King, 2009: p. 5).

There is no doubt, that as with any sport, lack of suitable resources may well act as a barrier to entry participation at the lower levels and restrict progression up through the competitive ranks. Dumbell et al., (2010) reported that within a limited study of Dressage in the UK, at the lower levels of competition the competitors were likely to be the owner of the horse they were riding however, as the level of competition (and potential cost of the horse) increased, the likelihood of the rider being the owner of the horse decreased. Although the results of this study indicate that at higher levels of competition external financial support may be provided through third party 'ownership' of the horse, at the lower levels of competition substantial financial resources are required by the athlete (rider).

Nowadays, it is common for elite-level riders to support a full time riding career through either sponsorship or via other means. The majority of elite riders begin their career at an early age working for other elite riders whereby they learn their craft alongside developing sporting experience. Most professional riders do not derive sufficient income from competing and have to support their sporting careers by running their own yards as businesses and secure an income via buying and selling, breeding and training horses across all levels of competition. Involvement in equestrian sport is truly a lifestyle choice. This type of business is not subjected to the seasonality effects associated with many other sport competition calendars, there is no off season. Certainly on the European circuit, riders will return from the Olympics to continue with domestic competition often taking out a string of horses to each competition, competing at various levels (including lower levels of competition) in order to bring on younger less experienced horses. Therefore although equestrian sport requires ownership or at least access to an expensive asset (the horse) which according to some classifies the sport as elitist, the fact that an athlete can secure an income from running a business associated with the sport (i.e. buying and selling horses etc as outlined above) differentiates equestrian sport from other elitist sports such as sailing.

At Olympic level, horse ownership is governed by the FEI. In Olympic competition the rider and horse must share the same nationality and a horse's nationality is determined by that of its owner. According to Chapter 1 Article 619, of the FEI regulations for equestrian events at the 2012 Olympic Games (FEI, 2011), the following rules apply:

> 2.2.1 Horses entered for the equestrian events at the Olympic Games must have been registered with the FEI as property of the owners of the same nationality as the athlete, by 31st December 2011.
>
> 2.2.2 Horses, with multinational ownership, must have been registered with FEI by the 31st December 2011 under the name of the nation for which the horse will compete during the Olympic Games.

The imposed date of registration creates a 'transfer window' of ownership bringing in issues of national, political and economic pressures. As nations secure qualification at an Olympic Games the pressure to acquire or keep appropriate horse power until the registration date can alter the combination of horse and rider who ultimately compete. For example Showjumper Bruce Menzies was short-listed on the British team for the London Olympics but after the Saudi Arabian Showjumping team earned the final qualifying place at the Pan-Arab games just before the December deadline of registration, the owner, a Saudi prince, chose to offer his horse to the Saudi team (Williams, 2012). Whilst it is the combination of horse and rider who secure national qualification at the Olympics, the associated National Olympic Committee in conjunction with the National Federation, will ultimately select the team. In theory Menzie could have ridden another British owned horse but unfortunately in this case he did not have another Olympic level horse on which to compete and he therefore lost his place on the team.

As has been demonstrated, horses are commodities and in a similar fashion to stock options their value fluctuates based on performance with basic economic principles of supply and demand affecting the market value. Horses are also unfortunately highly susceptible to injury resulting in a potential loss of all value. From a sport development perspective, emerging markets such as the Middle Eastern countries of Saudi Arabia and Qatar are becoming very involved in the top end of Showjumping and bring with them substantial economic buying power. Rob Hoekstra, Performance Manager for Britain's Showjumping team explains that the buying power of these countries has 'definitely moved the whole sport and business up a level', 'they've got a big budget, and horses at that level are of course expensive, probably between £500,000 and £2.5m each.' (Williams, 2012).

The cost or value of horses at the Olympic level of the sport is not generally public knowledge. However, it was reported in the press that three of the British horses; Valegro, Uthopia and Alf who were part of the gold medal winning Dressage team at the 2012 Olympics were expected to be auctioned off post Games for about £20 million (Harper, 2012). Prior to the December 2011 registration date, Carl Hester the British rider

of Uthopia, only owned a minority stake in the horse. In mid-December, Uthopia's owners received a sizeable offer from the boyfriend of Swedish rider Minna Telde, it was reported in the press that Hester frantically set about trying to raise sufficient cash to head off the Swedish bid (Williams, 2012). Despite the pressure to sell the horses Uthopia and Valegro remain with Hester although in an article published in 2012 Hester explained 'it was always the plan to ride them until the Olympics and then they would be sold. They're both very talented young horses and of course there are plenty of people who would like to take them on.' In the article Hester goes on to explain that his desire to sell the horses is due to the need to raise funds for his business partner Sasha Stewart, whose work in Ireland has been hit hard by the downturn. Hester is quoted as saying 'I always thought [Uthopia] would release me from a lifetime of slavery to work. I always thought, [Uthopia] will be the one that pays off my mortgage and finally frees me from those shackles.' (Harper, 2012).

The examples given above relate to the eligibility of a horse and rider combination competing at the Olympic Games where there is no prize money available. However, in other competitions there are now substantial amounts of prize money on offer and this new economic influence is shaping equestrian sport. The highest level of prize money is currently associated with the sport of Showjumping. In 2014 the Longines Global Championship Tour (recognised by the FEI) offered a record US$2 million in prize money, over three days of competition and six CSI5*[2] classes. The fourth round of the Showjumping series, offered a prize fund of US$1.1million, with a US$363,000 going to the winner (Globalchampionshiptour, 2014).

Showjumping is a popular sport in China but strict quarantine regulations have previously prevented international horses entering the country. Indeed the equestrian events of the

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[2] Concours de Saut International (CSI) is a ranking system for Showjumping approved by the FEI. CSI events are broken down into a starring system, where more competitive events with more prize money have a higher number of stars. Starring goes from 1 to 5.

2008 Beijing Olympics had to take place in Hong Kong due to the Chinese quarantine regulations. However, in 2013 the European Commission and Chinese authorities signed off legislation that allowed for the temporary importation of horses to Shanghai. It will be interesting to note if the success of this event will influence Chinese quarantine regulations in the future. In more ways than one this event marks a new stage in the evolution of equestrian sports in Asia.

As we have seen so far, the economic influence in Showjumping is changing the playing field with regards to nations competing and hosting competitions. The competition circuit has expanded from regional / continental to global, as riders chase the increasing level of prize money. The global success of the Showjumping is however having an effect on the domestic and national development of the sport. At the 2012 Olympics Britain won the team Gold medal in Showjumping, in 2013 they won the European Championships but in 2014 they face relegation from the Premier League of the FEI Nations Cup. Despite still having two British riders in the top three, FEI World Ranking, the team is struggling in this league and Britain's Showjumping manager Rob Hoekstra blames the international calendar for wearing out horsepower (Cuckson, 2014). Between May and October there are eight top league Nations Cups and 14 Global Champions Tour events, Hoekstra explains 'there is a tremendous amount of money to be won, which is good for the sport, but we have to manage it better' (Cuckson, 2014). The World Equestrian Games (WEG) take place in 2014 and having lost 11 team prospects, Hoekstra explains his priority is not chasing the big money global tours but maintaining four sound horses to compete at WEG and secure Olympic qualification for Rio 2016 (Cuckson, 2014).

Whilst the sport of Para-Equestrian Dressage does not attract high sponsorship and prize money, the evolution of the sport is influencing the associated economics related to horse power. In order to help develop Para-Equestrian Dressage as a Paralympic sport, the selection and use of Paralympic horse power has changed as the sport has matured. Whilst many nations may be able to provide a Paralympian rider, or indeed a team of riders, not all nations are able to provide horses due to various logistical issues such as

transport across continents, welfare and quarantine concerns. Therefore for the first two Paralympic appearances in Atlanta (1996) and Sydney (2000), the Paralympian riders all used borrowed horses, this applied to all nations in order that a level playing field was maintained (de Haan and Winfield, 2008).

Borrowed horses were selected on their standard able bodied Dressage ability, the level that they compete at in Para-Equestrian classes is related to the Para-Equestrian Grade required; for instance a Grade I rider will perform their test in walk, therefore a horse must have an excellent walk for the duration of the test (approx 4 minutes), this often requires a horse that has excellent concentration and training and would be competing at advanced or international level (in able-bodied competition). A Grade IV rider will perform their standard test at the equivalent of Medium level Dressage, however in putting their kűr test (freestyle movements to music) together they often perform movements that are required in advanced level Dressage tests (Canter pirouettes, tempi-changes etc). General trends in horse power are that team riders within the UK will usually be competing on their own horses or horses that have been loaned to them with a view to competing for an agreed length of time, for example until the next Olympics, or WEG. This allows the riders to build up and establish a relationship with a horse and trainer over a period of time. The recent trend of riders using their own horse enables them to develop their competition skills in able-bodied classes as well as Para-Equestrian Dressage competitions and gives them the edge in Paralympic competition.

In the UK, the registered charity 'Para Dressage Training Trust' owns horses and loans them to Para-Equestrian Dressage riders. One of the Trust's horses 'Lambrusco' which it has owned since 2003 has been ridden by three different riders during their international careers, and has been ridden at a Paralympics, WEG and European Championship helping Team GB win a number of medals (PDTT, 2014).

Whilst it was predicted that 90% of the competitors at the Beijing Olympics would provide their own horses, this figure still indicates that 10% of competitors are able to experience this Paralympic sport without owning their own animal (de Haan and

Winfield, 2008). The support system of borrowed horses has clearly helped develop the international appeal of Para-Equestrian Dressage as numbers of competing countries continue to increase, whilst the trend towards 'own horse power' also indicates solid growth and commitment as countries become more established in the sport.

Horse ownership is not the only socio-cultural reference to equestrian sport and elitism. The relationship between the British Royal family and equestrian sport has been well documented throughout history. Both the Queen and the Queen Mother have had a significant presence in horse racing; many individual family members have been associated with fox hunting, and Prince Charles and his sons William and Harry regularly participate in the sport of polo.

Indeed, one member of the royal family, Prince Philip has even been recognised as the inspiration behind the development of the equestrian sport 'Mounted Games'. When Col. Sir Mike Ansell was Director of the Horse of the Year Show, Prince Philip asked if he could devise a competition for children who could not afford an expensive, well-bred pony, and in 1957, the Horse of the Year Show, staged the first Mounted Games Championship for the Prince Philip Cup. It was an immediate box office success and the sport has not only remained on the competition programme for the Horse of the Year show ever since, it is now also a sport participated in by young riders in several different countries. Prince Philip was also an excellent polo-player and took up Four-in-hand Driving when it became an FEI discipline in the early seventies. He competed at six World and three European Championships and placed sixth individually in the 1982 World Championships. He was a Member of the British gold medal team at 1980 World Championships and a member of the British bronze medal teams at the 1978, 1982 and 1984 World Championships (FEI, 2014b).

To date two members of the British Royal Family have been presidents of the FEI; HRH Prince Philip from 1964 to 1986 was followed by his daughter The Princess Royal from 1986 to 1994 (FEI, 2014b). The Princess Royal rode in her first Eventing competition in 1970. She was the European Eventing Champion in 1971 at Burghley on Doublet and

was a Member of the silver medal team and 2nd individually in the European Championships in 1975 (FEI, 2014b). She also competed in the 1973 European and the 1974 World Championships and in the 1976 Olympic Games. Her influence in equestrian sport continued as she became the Patron of Riding for the Disabled in 1970, and Patron of the World Breeding Federation of Sport Horses.

Princess Anne became president of the British Olympic Association in 1983, and a member of the International Olympic Committee in 1988. Princess Anne's daughter Zara Philips also competes in the same sport, Eventing, and won a silver team medal at the London 2012 Olympics. For both of these Olympians, it could be argued that their privileged background gives them access to the required sporting resources. Regardless of this advantaged position however, sport remains in many aspects, a great leveller. Princess Anne's title did not prevent her form experiencing a costly fall during competition. Indeed, the fact that she fell heavily and chose to carry on, demonstrated to the public and her peers her commitment, determination and ability as an athlete to perform under these circumstances. As previously discussed, horse power is an expensive yet required aspect of equestrian sport. In the framework of elitism and social status and power, it could be argued that a member of the royal family would have the necessary resources to acquire the most suitable of horses. However, despite consistently competing at the top level of Eventing for many years and proving her credentials through selection for the British team at Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, untimely injuries to her horse prior to the Games, meant that London was the first opportunity for Zara Phillips to compete at this level. The failure to compete due to injury (in the case of equestrian sport the horses fitness levels and ability to compete are as important as that of the human athlete) demonstrates that Royal status does not completely 'protect' an individual from the same pitfalls which may be experienced by any other athlete.

In 2006, Zara Philips became only the third Eventing rider to hold the World and European titles at the same time, a feat which earned her the accolade of the 'Sports Personality of the Year' title. Although this is an award voted for by the British public (Philips received 32.5% of the 680,000 votes cast), her victory divided opinion with some

supporters heralding a 'deserved triumph for a young woman who has worked hard to reach the top of her sport', whilst opponents slated 'a success for privilege, and style over substance in a lean year for British sport' (Keogh, 2006).

Perceptions of elitism and class are not only reserved for those outside of the sport looking in. There even appears to be class discrimination within equestrian sport. Whilst writing about the Para-Equestrian Dressage rider Lee Pearson, for The Independent Newspaper, reporter Emily Dugan writes:

> Unlike his plummy-voiced Olympian colleagues – who include Princess Anne's daughter Zara Phillips – Pearson defies the elitist image of equestrian sports. He has a broad Staffordshire accent and is kept grounded by his parents. Dave, his father, who is working on the farm when I arrive, is a lorry driver. His mum, Lynda, is a psychiatric nurse (Dugan, 2012).

It is important to note here that whilst there may be many individuals competing within the sport of equestrian who have had a private education and who speak with a public school accent, there are as many individuals like Pearson, who come from a less privileged background and who have a regional or working class accent. However through the construction of identity as shaped by the media, those who depart from the anticipated stereotype may well be given less prominence.

2.7 Governance and structure of Equestrian Sport

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, within the context of Olympic equestrian sport, Swedish influence in the early 1900s fundamentally influenced the governance of equestrian sport. In light of the 1912 Olympics being held in Sweden, the master of the Swedish royal stables, Clarence von Rosen, suggested at the IOC's meeting in Athens in 1905, that equestrian competition be included as regular sports in the Olympic Games (Hedenborg, 2009). As a result von Rosen was asked to prepare proposals for the framework of the competitions and regulations to be presented at an international conference in The Hague in 1907. Von Rosen's proposed rules and regulations were

implemented during the 1912 games, these were however rewritten several times until 1938 when a more complete set of rules was published.

The Federation Equestrian International (FEI), founded in 1921, is the international body governing equestrian sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee. The first National Federations to join the FEI in 1921 were: Belgium (BEL), Denmark (DEN), France (FRA), Italy (ITA), Japan (JAP), Norway (NOR), Sweden (SWE) and the United States of America (USA) (FEI, 2014c). The most recent members to join in 2007 were: Albania, Cambodia and Yemen, taking the number of National Federations up to 132 members (FEI, 2014c). Today, the FEI is the sole controlling authority for 8 equestrian disciplines including the three Olympic disciplines of Jumping, Dressage and Eventing and the Para-Olympic discipline of Para-Equestrian Dressage. The FEI is also responsible for establishing the regulations and programmes at Championships, Continental and Regional Games as well as the Olympic & Paralympic Games. The decision making process and direction of the FEI is determined by a combination of stakeholder groups and individuals, including the President, and the Bureau and Executive Board supported by a decision-making process which is guided by expertise and knowledge from the sport and members of the sporting industry with subject-specific Committees representing all the disciplines, the athletes, veterinary science, administration (audit and compliance and nominations) as well as FEI Solidarity (FEI, 2014a).

There have been 12 different presidents of the FEI serving 13 individual terms. The first 10 presidents were all male and of notable title apart from Magnus Rydman. The first female president in 1986 (five years after the appointment of the first female member of the IOC) was HRH The Princess Royal, she has since been followed by two more female presidents both of whom are of royal descent (Table 2.4). Princess Anne was also elected as an IOC member in 1988 becoming only the fifth woman to join that body. Flor Isava-Fonseca from Venezuela was also one of the first females to join the IOC, whilst she was never appointed to the FEI, she founded and directed the Equestrian Federation of Venezuela in 1947 (Remley, 1996).

Table 2.4: Presidents of the FEI

Name	Nationality	Date	Gender
Baron du Teil	French	1921-1927	Male
General Gerrit Johannes Maris	Dutch	1927-1929	Male
Major Jhkr Karl F. Quarles van Ufford	Dutch	1929-1931	Male
General Guy V. Henry	American	1931-1935	Male
Baron Max Von Holzing-Bertstett	German	1935-1936	Male
Major Jhkr Karl F. Quarles van Ufford	Dutch	1936-1939	Male
Magnus Rydman	Finish	1939-1946	Male
Baron Gaston de Trannoy	German	1946-1954	Male
HRH Bernard, Prince of the Netherlands	Dutch	1954-1964	Male
HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh	British	1964-1986	Male
HRH The Princess Royal	British	1986-1994	Female
HRH La Infanta Pilar, Duchess of Badajoz	Spanish	1994-2006	Female
HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein	Jordanian	2006-2014	Female

In 2006, Princess Haya was appointed the 13th President of the FEI, becoming the third consecutive female president and the first Arab President in the 102-year-history of the organisation. At age 13, HRH Princess Haya was the first female to represent Jordan internationally in the equestrian sport of Showjumping. She won an individual bronze medal in the Pan-Arab Equestrian Games in 1992, and is the only female ever to have won a Pan-Arab medal in equestrian sport. In 2000, she competed at the Sydney Olympic Games in Showjumping and two years later, competed for Jordan in the FEI WEG in Jerez, Spain, making her the first Arab woman to qualify for and compete in equestrian sport at Olympic, World and Continental championship level (FEI, 2014a). At age 31, she became the youngest president of any international sport federation. Princess Haya is credited with modernising the FEI with good governance, increased transparency and an independent judicial system (Wam, 2014). She has been a strong advocate for fair treatment of all regions of the world in the development of sport, creating the FEI Solidarity programme, patterned after a similar Olympic project, to support the global development of equestrian sport well beyond its traditional base in Europe. She also

launched the widely praised Clean Sport initiative. The apparent success of that effort was confirmed when there was not a single positive doping result at the 2012 London Games (Wam, 2014).

In August 2014, after two consecutive terms in office, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein announced that despite overwhelming support she would not stand for a third term (Goddard, 2014). When elected in 2006 Princess Haya herself set the term limit for presidency to two, four-year terms. In April 2014, FEI members voted overwhelmingly to change this status to allow the current president to stand for an additional third term, however in her statement announcing her decision to step down Princess Haya referred to her previous commitment: "I committed to a term limit, and that commitment still weighs heavily on me," (Goddard, 2014).

As previously mentioned the FEI is responsible for establishing the regulations and programmes at Championships, Continental and Regional Games as well as the Olympic & Paralympic Games. Whilst the Olympic and Paralympic Games may be seen as the pinnacle in sporting success, the World Equestrian Games (WEG) held every four years, is the largest equestrian competition. The FEI established the inaugural WEG in 1990 which for the first time bought together 37 countries competing across all six FEI disciplines in one competition (FEI, 2014f). Somewhat mirroring the historic development of equestrian sport within the Olympics, European influence prevailed in the evolution of WEG. The renowned Swedish influence in equestrian sport continued as the competition was held in and around Stockholm's 1912 Olympic Stadium and the following four Games were also held in Europe. However in 2010, the largest WEG to date, hosting 58 countries, moved to the USA and Para-Equestrian Dressage was included in the programme for the first time (FEI, 2014g).

Every two years, in between the Olympics and WEG competitions the FEI hosts European Championships in Eventing; Showjumping, Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage. Whilst in 2013 the Showjumping, Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage European Championships were all held in Herning, Denmark, these championships are

often separated in different countries. The FEI also runs various international series and leagues across these disciplines.

Finally under FEI regulation the only other multi-discipline competitions fall under the category of Continental and Regional Games (FEI, 2014e). There are twelve such competitions listed: All Africa Games, Asian Games, Bolivarian Games, Central American & Caribbean Games, Central American Games, Mediterranean Games, Pan American Games, Pan Arab Games, South American Games, and South East Asia Games. These competitions offer riders the only other opportunity to compete in a multi-sport environment outside of the Olympics. Para-Equestrian Dressage is not included in any of the Continental and Regional Games and the Olympic disciplines of Eventing, Showjumping and Dressage do not always appear on the competition programme. In a break from the European dominance of equestrian competition, within the twelve Continental and Regional Games listed only 14 European countries are invited to compete in the Mediterranean Games: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, and Spain (FEI, 2014e).

Below the structure of the FEI there are 132 recognised National Federations. The National Federation for Great Britain is the British Equestrian Federation (BEF). The BEF works on policy issues with the FEI and co-ordinates the British calendar of international events, disciplinary procedures, doping control and oversees the training of British international judges, stewards, vets and course designers. The BEF is also responsible for distributing Government funding to the equestrian sports. Funding from UK Sport, Sport England and Sport Scotland supports the BEF's work developing riders from grassroots to elite level. Working with the BEF, on a discipline specific level are three National Governing Bodies (NGB): British Eventing, British Showjumping and British Dressage which governs both Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage. The NGB's are responsible for regulating the sport at a national level and as such they formulate rules and regulations, organise competitions and are responsible for training volunteers, officials, riders, coaches and technical support staff.

Like other sports in the UK, the BEF, has developed strategic focus for the development of its athletes (considered to be both the horse and rider). With the support of UK Sport lottery funding, the BEF has developed the World Class Programme which has been designed to support a pathway to success for Eventing, Showjumping, Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage athletes both horse and human (BEF, 2014c). The World Class Programme has been in existence since just before the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Programme is not about 'support for all' but is about identifying the most talented riders and horses and working with them to ensure that they reach their maximum potential and deliver their best possible results at World level and Olympic / Paralympic Games (UKSport, 2014).

Unlike other sports, equestrian sports faces a unique challenge in that there is a need for both a World Class athlete (the rider) and a World Class horse. The sport therefore has had to develop a plan to cope with this multi-dimensional need introducing an Equine Pathway (in partnership with the BEF Olympic Member Bodies) during 2006 / 2007 to sit alongside the human development pathway in order to identify and support world class horses (BEF, 2014b). The purpose of the Pathway is to identify horses that have the potential to develop into medal winning horses, the World Class Programme then works with and support the riders and the owners of the horses in order to help them maximise the horses' potential. As we have previously stated, British riders must compete on British horses, it is hoped that the Equine Pathway will encourage owners to keep their horses with British riders, which will further enhance Equestrian Team GBR chances in major competitions (BEF, 2014b).

The World Class Programmes across all sports must focus their attention on three key areas. Firstly, identifying talent; secondly, developing talent and thirdly, producing performance on the World stage. The Equestrian World Class Programme is no different, although as previously outlined there is a need to do this not only with the rider but also with the horse. The World Class Programme therefore fits into three conjoined areas: the Equine Pathway, the Development Programme and the Performance Programme and it is

also split into areas of support such as coaching, equine health and research and development, including a support area for human health and fitness (BEF, 2014c).

In 2011, supported by UK Sport funding, the BEF extended the rider pathway to include the Excel Talent Programme. The Programme provides support to selected riders from the three Olympic and one Paralympic disciplines and provides selected riders with the opportunity to have access to top equestrian specialists including: coaches, physiotherapists, psychologists, vets and nutritionists via a series of rider performance camps. Riders remain on the programme for two years providing they achieve goals and targets set as part of the programme performance review process (BEF, 2014a). As part of the 2013-2017 BEF Excel funding, British Dressage and BEF introduced a new competition series of Para-Equestrian Dressage Competitions designed to break down perceived barriers and help riders to 'bridge the gap' between competing at Riding for the Disabled Dressage competitions and affiliated British Dressage competitions (BEF, 2014b).

In this section we have discussed the governance and structure of equestrian sport highlighting the key stakeholders. From the perspective of riders who may one day represent Great Britain at an Olympic or Paralympic level, Figure 2.1 provides a summary of the pathway that a Dressage rider may take from grassroots to elite level and highlights the stakeholders, pathways and funding involved.

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│   FEI – International Championships, Continental and Regional │
│   Games and the Olympic & Paralympic Games                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Rider pathway          ┌──────────────────────────────┐     │
│  supported by UK        │  BEF World Class Performance  │     │
│  Sport lottery          └──────────────────────────────┘     │
│  funding.               ┌──────────────────────────────┐     │
│  2009-2013              │  BEF World Class Development: │     │
│  £13,395,100            │  Start and Potential         │     │
│                         └──────────────────────────────┘     │
│                         ┌──────────────────────────────┐     │
│                         │  BEF Excel Talent Programme   │     │
│                         └──────────────────────────────┘     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

          ┌──────────────────────────────┐
          │    NGB – Regional Training    │
          └──────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ none NGB/RDA │  │ NGB - British    │  │ BEF – Introduction│
│ Competitions │  │ Dressage         │  │ to Para-Equestrian│
│              │  │ Competitions     │  │ Competitions      │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Grassroots – none NGB access - Community sport / Pony Club / │
│  Riding for the Disabled (RDA)                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2.1: Dressage rider pathway from grassroots to Olympic / Paralympic

2.8 Competition experience

In this penultimate section we look at the broader competition experience of elite riders in order to place their lived experience of the Games into the context of their wider career histories. As previously outlined, each of the disciplines has a domestic and international competition structure and the riders' progression and performance through this is supported by the BEF. As highlighted in Chapter 3, first person accounts of the competition experience for any sport, are surprisingly sparse. One medium through which athletes can share their competition experience is through their autobiographies. Of all the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, Eventing produces the highest number of

published autobiographies, followed by Showjumping and Dressage. Despite Great Britain's dominance of the sport, currently there are no autobiographies for British Para-Equestrian Dressage riders, in fact there is only one published autobiography for a Para-equestrian rider, written by the German rider Bettina Eistel, however to date it has only been published in German.

One of the earliest published autobiographies by an equestrian athlete was Pat Smythe's (1954) 'Jump for Joy'. The format of rider autobiographies has remained the same ever since, following a chronological narrative starting in childhood and including reference to iconic and influential horses and competitions and sporting highlights. What differentiates the autobiographies to some extent is the influence of the point in time at which they are written. Smythe's autobiography documents her experience as an equestrian athlete in a period refracted through the socio-cultural lens of the 1940s and 50s. Aspects of this era are discussed throughout the book, bringing to life the socio-cultural fabric of the time. Poignantly included in this account for example is a chapter entitled 'Riding through the War' (Smythe, 1954).

Smythe was involved in showjumping at a time when Great Britain was only just venturing onto the international playing field. In the following series of extracts we gain an insight into Symthe's first experience of international competition:

> At this time Britain had barely cut her milk, much less her wisdom, teeth in the fast-growing schools of competitive showjumping among the nations. Early in 1947 a team was sent abroad for the first time to compete in international events; first at Nice, then at Rome, we began learning how little we really knew (Smythe, 1954; p. 84).

> In the competitions, the team put up a credible display, and I was relieved that Finality [Smythe's horse] went well; indeed, she won her first international cup, which was not unsatisfactory in view of our experience at international shows (Smythe, 1954; p.85).

The previous quotes place into context Symthe's expectation and experience of the actual competition but in the next quote we get an insight into her experience beyond the competition itself and we see how the international experience influenced her in areas outside of sport:

> At Le Zoute we were all made extremely comfortable in a first-class hotel; there was a dance at night, and conversation with French partners renewed my determination to improve my School Certificate standard of languages; quite inexplicably, I remember making a mental note during a tango that whenever I might have children, they too would be encouraged, even forced, to become multi-lingual (Smythe, 1954; p. 85).

As previously discussed, Smythe's career took place predominantly in a period when women had yet to gain access to Olympic competition. However, despite this gendered bias of the sport at that time, Smythe does not refer to sex discrimination in her book, in fact she predominately refers to herself using the gender neutral term 'rider'. Smythe could therefore be described as using a non-feminist position in her narrative reconstruction (Henry (2001). This is not to say however that her autobiographical account is not devoid of gendered anecdotes. In the following quotes we see reference to the 'feminine' practice of wearing make-up and the cultural experience of competing on an all male team:

> Quickly I finished my champagne as the bell rang, borrowed a mirror from a pretty French waitress, gave myself a dab of lipstick and hurried away to collect Finality for the big event (Smythe, 1954: p.86).

In the following quote Smythe is referring to Colonel Harry Llewellyn a rider and patron of British Showjumping who is considered to have been one of the sports most influential figures:

My own experience of Harry runs on two levels: I know him as a masterly exponent of Showjumping, stern, silent, and determined in the arena; and as a good natured friend with unbounded energy, quick wit, a character full of fun, and a brilliant talker at all times. Teeny Llewellyn, his wife, has been a heaven-sent companion on some of our tours, since only with her have I been able to discuss the thousand and one topics and problems which men of any team find merely tiresome (Smythe, 1954: p.210).

Unlike Smythe, many of the riders who have published autobiographies have competed in the Olympics and theses riders tend to release an updated version with additional content following successful seasons (which may or may not include the Olympic cycle). For example Pippa Funnell's autobiography was first published in 2004, in the year which saw her compete in her second Olympics in Athens, just one year after she became the first, and to date only, rider to win the Eventing Grand Slam (consecutive wins at Kentucky, Badminton and Burghley). The book was then revised and updated the following year to included reference to her 2005 Badminton win. At this point, alongside having won the prestigious Grand Slam, Pippa had also competed in the Sydney and Athens Olympics and whilst there are separate chapters in her book referencing both of these events, it is the uniqueness of the Grand Slam win which takes precedence in the narrative.

Funnell accounts her record breaking Grand Slam victory as her career highlight and in the following series of quotes taken from the chapter entitled 'Grand Slam', we gain an insight into the many different aspects of competition experience for this rider as she recalls her involvement over the season in which she won the biggest prize in Eventing. In the first quote we get a feel for the complexity of simply deciding which horses to take to which competitions, a decision which will ultimately affect the competition experience for the rider. We also get a sense of how Funnell had to manage the owners of the horses within this decision making process:

The downside to having so many good rides is juggling with the schedule in order both to be fair to all the owners and to find time to give each horse a programme through which you can maximise their chance of success... All Eventing owners want to go to Badminton – just as all racehorse owners dream of getting to the Cheltenham Gold cup or the Derby – and if you have more than two potential rides there, someone has to be disappointed (Funnell, 2012: p.191).

It is interesting to note Funnell's observation that for owners the pinnacle competition to experience is Badminton, an annual event in the British Eventing calendar, not the Olympics or WEG. Indeed Funnell often refers to Badminton in comparison to other events, to the extent that it appears to be the benchmark against which others are measured.

In the season before winning the Grand Slam, Funnell competed for the first time at Kentucky and in the following extract we see how Funnell experienced her first competition in America and how she compared this to the more familiar British competition experience:

It was a good gang of us going out to Kentucky – William Fox-Pitt, Polly Stockton, Leslie and Rod – and, to give us a real championship feel, we had Yogi, Kenneth, Tracie and the vet Jenny Hall looking after us. I love foreign events because everyone pulls together and helps each other a lot more…Although the competition is technically of the same standard as Badminton and Burghley, Kentucky has a completely different feel from either of these very English events. It's in Bluegrass Country, the centre of American bloodstock breeding, and it takes place in an impressive park with white railings everywhere. The facilities for riders are fantastic and there's so much space (Funnell, 2012: p.194).

Having won Kentucky, Funnell again refers to her owners' experience of a competition, indicating that for this rider at least, the experience her owners' have of a competition is as important, if not more so, than her personal experience. In the following quote we also

see how the experience of one event falls into the experience of a complete season of competitions:

> I was overwhelmed with relief that the trip had been a success for Denise and Roger and that they'd had proper compensation for missing Badminton. Kentucky is a great event for owners, with a fantastic post-event party and lots of goodies; and from the rider's point of view, the advantage of being away from home with just one horse is that you have much more time to spend with the owners. As soon as it was over, though, I'd had to get straight off the horse and into a car to Cincinnati airport in order to get home in time to turn around for Badminton. It was pretty chaotic with all five of us trying to change in the car but, once on the plane, we got straight into the champagne. With four of us finishing in the top five, we had more than justified the Lottery money which had been spent on sending us out there, and it was a lovely triumphant feeling for the whole group (Funnell, 2012: p. 196).

In this season Funnell had won two of the three Grand Slam competitions and in the following extract she reflects on how close she came. Again here we see how the experience of one event falls into the experience of a complete season of competitions and even to some extent an entire career of experience:

> As the flight progressed and we all quietened down and tried to sleep, I dwelt on a bit more on my win. That was the moment it suddenly dawned on me that if only I'd gone a bit quicker across country on Kiri at Burghley last year, I would have won the Grand Slam… One of the most satisfying aspects of winning a four-star event is that while your victory may only be momentary as far as the public recognition is concerned, your fellow riders will know exactly what it has entailed. We know that only a small minority of horses and riders even compete in a four-star, let alone win one, because, as I know only too well, so much can go wrong on the way with horses. Many of today's best riders have never won a major title and, sadly, some of them never will. That's how elusive real success is

in our game. So I did, briefly, feel frustrated that I hadn't seized my moment at Burghley eight months before (Funnell, 2012: p.197).

By September 2003 Funnell had won Kentucky and Badminton and was heading to the third and final Grand Slam event Burghley. Funnell puts the concept of these wins into perspective of the wider competition standards in Eventing:

> Then the Burghley preview press release entitled 'Pippa in line for Grand Slam' was released. Suddenly 'Can Pippa do it?' headlines were all over the place and it hit me like a sledgehammer that I was expected to achieve something that was surely totally impossible. Not since the Grand Slam concept was launched in 1998, and Blyth followed a Burghley win with a frustratingly close second place at Kentucky in the spring of 1999, had there been any real interest in the prize. There was certainly not the remotest conviction that any rider would have sufficient horsepower and luck to win three consecutive 'majors'. To put the task in context, it had been fourteen years since Ginny Elliot had won Badminton and Burghley in the same year…(Funnell, 2012: p. 204).

However the Grand Slam was not the only title Funnell was chasing that season as it was also the year of the European Championships and Funnell was reining champion. In the following quote we again see how Funnell had to make strategic decisions regarding which horses to take to which competitions and we get an interesting insight into the hierarchy between experiencing patriotic or commercial success:

> There had to be endless discussions with owners and both my husband William and Yogi, as performance manager for the national team, were in on the debate from the start. Realistically we all accepted that in this scenario the Grand Slam had to take preference over the Europeans; I had a responsibility to the sport because here for once, was a chance to get some really powerful publicity. Normally, a championship would always be a rider's top priority. We all long to represent our country and be on a team – it's the greatest honour there is. But the

money on offer now represented mine and William's security… (Funnell, 2012: p.204-205).

Pressure to perform is inevitably part of any athletes' experience. In the final phase of the Grand Slam, Funnell recalls how she felt lying in second place going into the cross country part of the competition:

> When I woke up on Saturday morning, I just didn't want to get out of bed and face the world. I would have done anything to have been anywhere else. I wondered why on earth I was putting myself – and everyone close to me – through this awful ordeal – for that's what it was: an ordeal (Funnell, 2012: p.216).

Taken out of context it would be hard to believe that this was somebody talking about doing something they had loved since a child. Funnell has admitted that she is incredibly self critical. In the previous quote we see how she personalised the experience of the competition pressure but in the next quote, as she describes her feelings in the moments after she had won, her emotions are displaced onto her horses and the sport in general:

> Then it was all a total haze; I was awash with emotion, unable to take anything in properly, but still aware that this day was actually bigger than me – it was a momentous occasion for the sport of Eventing. When I eventually got myself together, my first thought was for the two horses who had done this for me, Kiri and Rocky. Kiri was only ten, yet he'd won two four-stars in a year. What fantastic horses to earn me this place in the sport's history. No matter what happens to me from now on, I will always have this day (Funnell, 2012: p. 218-219).

Mary King's autobiography follows a similar structure to Funnell's and having competed at five Olympics at the point of original publication in 2009 these are reflected on in chronological order, interwoven with other personal and sporting highlights. Although

King has never won an individual or team gold medal at the Olympics, she has won two team gold medals at WEGs, and four team European gold medals. However, it is her experience at winning her first Badminton in 1992 that she classes as her career highlight:

> I still feel that winning that first Badminton in 1992 was the best moment of my life; it was the event that I'd dreamt of as a child but felt was an impossibility. Winning Badminton is in a league of its own; it's like a jockey winning a Grand National – virtually everyone in the world has heard of this occasion, and it's your big famous moment (King, 2009: p. 77).

William Fox-Pitt's autobiography, originally published in 2007 was revised and updated following the Beijing Olympics, reference to which is found in the additional final chapter. Fox-Pitt has won an unprecedented six Burghley championships and in the following extracts we see what his first experience of winning at this level was like:

> I will never forget the pleasure and relief of winning my first four-star. It came at just the right time and was an antidote to bitter disappointments, the vindication of my training methods and the proof that pressure pays off. Even more importantly, it established me as a winner in my mind: I'd started out as Mr Consistently Average, but now I had delivered when it counted. If it never happened again, the pressure was off. A lot of good riders never win a four-star, I'd never won a three-star (Fox-Pitt, 2010: p.76).

It is interesting to note that Fox-Pitt makes the same reference to talented riders not winning at the top level of competition as Funnell, it is an awareness from the riders that talent in this sport does not always equate with the experience of winning. With reference to his experience of winning, in the following quote, again relating to his 1994 Burghley win, Fox-Pitt highlights that in this sport a win often comes as a result of somebody else's mistake and we see what a lonely experience this can be:

A monkey could have given out the awards for all I remember of the prize-giving ceremony, but my share of the winner's cheque was far above anything I'd received before. We celebrated at the horsebox, as always a rather isolating experience as one person's victory is everyone else's defeat. At least I'd won fair and square, leading from start to finish, rather than benefiting from someone else's misfortunes. Victory from the front is satisfying, but stressful: it can be easier to come from behind, when expectations are less, but then you have to rely on others mistakes (Fox-Pitt, 2010: p.77).

In the examples given so far we get a sense for the individual nature of competition experience within the career histories of established elite riders as recalled in their autobiographies. The formulaic structure to the autobiographies does to some extent detract from the individual personality of the leading character. However, within the prescribed chapters is a suitable mix of personal and professional narrative, which of course differentiates the individual's sporting experience. It is however important to note here that none of the riders whose autobiographies have been reviewed, have won individual or team gold at the Olympics, although they have all won individual or team medals in other major competitions. It is therefore important to consider the effect 'winning' has on the 'placement' of any competition for any one athlete. For example, reflecting on her Grand Slam win Funnell explains "I now know that the feeling of winning something so crucial lasts only a split second compared to the lifetime of striving for that moment" (Funnell, 2012: p.1).

Autobiographies are largely reconstructive narratives but by analysing the place of the Olympics within this narrative we can begin to deconstruct the place of the Olympics in the career histories of these athletes. Of course this has to be done within the framework of the genre that is autobiography and as previously mentioned the formulaic structure of this. Within the construct of an autobiography the Olympic experience is one of many punctuations on the career timeline of these athletes.

Outside of the formulaic structure of an autobiography are the mediums of websites or online blogs that provide a different framework through which to evaluate 'experience'. The majority of professional riders have personal websites, although the quality of content and production varies immensely. Most websites contain some biographical accounts of riders although these tend to be limited to sporting achievement and are fairly brief in nature. An example of this would be Nick Skelton's website. Skelton is a world-renowned Showjumper whose career has spanned nearly 38 years, he has ridden at six Olympic Games and at the London 2012 Olympics he helped team GB win the first Showjumping gold medal for 60 years. In the following extract we find reference to numerous career achievements, the Olympic gold medal taking up no more commentary than any of the other competition titles, although in the 'fact file' section he counts 'Winning Team Gold Medal at the London 2012 Olympics' as his 'best career moment':

> Nick holds the British equestrian high jump record, when he jumped over 7'7" on Lastic in London back in 1978 and has competed at six Olympic Games. He has won ten European Championship Medals, six World Championship Medals, a World Cup title and over 60 major Grand Prix' titles. Four times he has won the Du Maurier (latterly called the CN International) in Spruce Meadows, Calgary, a class which awards some of the highest prize money in Showjumping history. Nick won in 1985 riding St James, in 1993 riding Dollar Girl, in 1998 riding Hopes are High and in 2008 he teamed up with Arko III to scoop the first prize. Now riding for Team Beverley on horses belonging to Gary and Beverley Widdowson, Big Star and Carlo 273 and competing at the London 2012 Olympics on Big Star, where he was part of the Gold Medal winning team (Skelton, 2014).

Across all three Olympic equestrian disciplines very few riders who have experienced the Olympics present much more than biographical and competition data on their websites. Currently King is the only rider who has a 'blog' stream on her website, although several riders have Twitter accounts. In contrast however several of the Para-Equestrian Dressage riders regularly update their websites with diary updates or blogs. Natasha Baker, for example, who competed in her first Paralympics in London 2012, has one of

the most professional sites and through her 'About me' and 'Chat' sections we gain an insight into Para-Equestrian experience. In a similar structure to an autobiography although in a far more succinct manner, Baker outlines her riding experience from a child. She recalls the transition from Riding for the Disabled to the 2012 Olympics, which she describes as incredible:

> In 2012 I was selected to compete at the London 2012 Paralympic Games in London. I had the opportunity to make my dreams come true and win a Paralympic Gold medal, something I had dreamt about for 12 years. I went into the Games hoping for a medal of any colour; it never occurred to me that I would achieve 3 Personal Bests, 2 Paralympic Records and 2 Gold Medals. I can safely say that I had the most incredible three weeks of my life and nothing will ever come close (Baker, 2014).

On her website, Baker explains how she got involved in the sport. Despite the fact that she lives on her family farm and her mum has experience riding horses, it was thanks to her physiotherapist that she was introduced to the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). Natasha explains how she went to her local RDA for an assessment and then started weekly lessons before moving on to local and national competitions.

This introduction to the sport via the RDA is a common pathway for most British riders. Sophie Christiansen who at just 16 was the youngest member of the British team in Athens and who has since competed in the Beijing and London Paralympics winning a total of one bronze, one silver and five gold medals, was also introduced to the sport via the RDA at the age of six. Some of the riders had experience in mainstream riding and competition prior to accessing riding through the RDA. For example, Deborah Criddle, four-time Paralympian, returned to riding through her local RDA following an accident and Simon Laurens had previously competed in Showjumping before getting back into riding through the RDA following his diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis.

Whilst Sophie Wells was born with her Amniotic Band Syndrome, a condition which affected her hands and ankles and caused nerve damage in her lower legs, she didn't enter the sport via the RDA:

> I tried quite a lot of sports when I was young, and although I was allergic to horses then, I really wanted to learn to ride. I started riding at the local riding school when I was 7, and a few months later was the proud owner of my first pony, Crystal. I competed in all the usual Pony Club activities, but after a couple of bad falls whilst jumping, I took up able-bodied Dressage…In 2003, David Hamer, who is the World Class Development discipline co-ordinator for Para Dressage, spotted me at an Under 21 talent spotting competition for able-bodied Dressage riders. David urged me to go for classification and to try for the 'World Class Start' Para Dressage selection trials, and I was selected onto the programme in 2004. So now I had two show careers – able-bodied and Para Dressage! (Wells, 2012).

Wells is not the only rider to have had success in both able-bodied and Para-Equestrian Dressage. Lee Pearson counts his victory in an able-bodied national championship event at Hickstead as one of his career highlights, along with winning a Sports Personality award:

> That meant a lot to me, as did being voted BBC Midlands Sports Personality of the Year, because it's nice to take on and beat athletes without disabilities…What riding has given me is respect. When I compete in an able-bodied event, I'm not seen as an 'Aaaah, bless. . .' factor, I'm seen as an 'Oh, s***, why does he have to be in my class?'(Philip, 2004).

Van de Ven et al., (2005) suggest that disabled people are often perceived to be less capable and competent than able-bodied people and it can be difficult for disabled people to be taken seriously and not patronised in social situations. The above quotes from Sophie and Lee regarding their competition experience are great examples of how sport

breaks barriers. Specifically the clear integration, in Britain at least, of able-bodied and Para-Equestrian Dressage, is an example of how dismantling the binary definitions and segregation of able-bodied and disabled sport can help create valuable social capital.

Even before they were competing themselves, several riders recall the experience of watching equestrian competitions as inspiring. According to Philip (2004), Pearson, the 10 times Paralympic gold medallist, who also won a silver and bronze in London, only discovered the possibilities of disabled sport after coming across highlights of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics on television. At the time Pearson was working in a supermarket putting labels on products:

> If I hadn't discovered the possibilities of a full-time career in sport through watching the 1996 Paralympics in Atlanta, I'd have committed suicide. I hated the job so much I was on antidepressants. If I'd worked on the checkout at least I would have been meeting different people every day but I got to talk to nobody. It's the people who are stuck in jobs like that who deserve a bloody medal, not me (Philip, 2004).

Baker explains how she became inspired by watching television coverage of Para-Equestrian Dressage competition:

> In 2000 I watched the Sydney Olympics and Paralympics. It was the first time that Paralympic Dressage had been shown on the TV. I was completely mesmerised by what I saw, the horses were dancing and the harmony between the horse and rider was captivating. I wanted to do be a part of it; I wanted to be standing on the podium one day receiving my Gold medal! (Baker, 2014).

Two years later Natasha was 'spotted' for the World Class Programme in 2002. Simon Laurens recalls how his first experience of the sport also left him inspired:

> The first people I saw ride were Ricky Balshaw: Grade 1B, Nicola Tustain: grade
> 2 and Lee Pearson: grade 1B. This truly inspired me. The level of skill, ability and
> sheer determination was mind boggling (Laurens, 2012).

In this section we have looked at the broader competition experience of elite riders and by doing so we can begin to place their experience of the Games into the context of their wider career histories. Each of the riders featured in this section have competed at the elite level of their sport and whilst several have shared competition experiences, their careers are structured differently and are therefore an individual experience. It is important to note here that whilst we have made reference to autobiographical accounts, we are aware that this is not the same as autoethnographies, a point further discussed in Chapter 4. We are aware that autobiographies may be influenced by the intended reader and may therefore be constructed in a way that is publically interesting. Therefore, whilst extracts from autobiographical accounts have been used in this chapter as illustrative examples, we have looked beyond the hyperbole to particularly identify the underlying claims.

2.9 Conclusion

The focus of this thesis is on the nature of the Olympic experience and who has access to this. As has been discussed through the narrative presented so far, equestrian sport is somewhat different to other sports within the Olympic context due to the unique relationship between animal and human athlete, the gender equality with regards to access to competition at the Olympic level and the combined governance of both the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines by a single organisation. Yet despite the uniqueness of this sport it has received little attention to date from scholars and historians.

Within the context of equestrian sport, access to the Olympic experience has changed considerably over the years. The demise of the military dominance over the sport in the 1950s slowly opened up opportunities for women to compete although access for women to decision making positions in relation to the governance of the sport took a lot longer. The introduction of the Para-Equestrian Dressage in 1996 allowed Paralympic access

through equestrian sport and the international governing body, the FEI, has seen an increase in the number of nations competing on the international circuit alongside a dramatic increase in the last decade in the number of international competitions. Built into this account of access is an overview of the type of rider who has developed and also the political-economic and social forces that have shaped participation and power of decision making within the sport.

A wide range of resources have been used to source the information contained within this chapter. Primarily however the history presented is dominated by the realist epistemology of reconstructionism and as such it has been used to piece together a coherent account of the development of equestrian sport within the Olympic context. However there are aliments of construction here also in the sense that a concern with equity in relation to gender and disability have informed the writer's focus. Information pertaining to gender participation and consequent medal results is not readily available and with regards to the early history of Olympic competition, conflicting data is presented on the IOC and FEI websites. Access to accounts of individual experience is limited to autobiographic narratives of some Olympic riders and web-based accounts of the experiences of Paralympic riders, which have a different set of provenance problems from the evidence produced by face-to-face interviews with individual athletes. Autobiographies are for example written in part to sell books, and may involve ghost writers who will advise on what to reveal (and perhaps what not to reveal) in the autobiography, and how to do so (how to express and evoke the description). It is hoped that the critical interpretation of the information presented here provides a constructive account of equestrian sport at the Olympics and Paralympics, and a strong foundation from which to go on to explore the nature of the Olympic and Paralympic experience for these athletes.

CHAPTER 3: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Undertaking a review of literature is an integral part of any research project. Reviewing the literature on a particular topic of interest is an obligatory prelude to almost every researcher's report. The literature review process is a way for the researcher to get to know the literature disseminated about a particular topic, a chance to map the intellectual landscape and indentify any uncharted waters. In short the literature review has become a convention in which the researcher sets the scene by locating their original inquiry within the context of what has previously been studied, thereby supporting the authors proposed perspective and convincing the reader that this additional study is justifiable and that the results of the study will have relevance to some aspect of scientific advancement (Thorne et al., 2004).

Traditional literature reviews are often referred to as 'narrative' reviews and whilst this section of many research reports will come with the prefix 'critical', these literature reviews have come under criticism with regard to rigour, comprehensiveness and accountability (Tranfield et al., 2003). Indeed the focus of the traditional 'narrative' literature review is often left to the researcher's discretion. As such narrative reviews have been criticised for being singular descriptive accounts of a specific research field, prejudicially only reviewing the contributions chosen on the implicit biases of the reviewer. Noblit and Hare (1988) argue whilst a traditional narrative literature review provides an overview of the field, they rarely make sense of what the collection of studies reviewed has to say. Indeed Solesbury (2002) criticises research efforts in the social sciences for not fully utilising past research, a problem which Weed (2005a) feels may be due to the use of narrative rather than systematic reviews. Wood (2000: p.416) concludes that traditional reviews are a 'pseudo-synthesis' which, while not valueless, 'are really little better than annotated bibliographies'.

Issues of credibility linked to replicability are not surprisingly grounded in the positivistic sciences. Indeed, within the medical sciences the evidence-based movement has, since the late 1980s, drawn attention to the comparative lack of rigour in secondary research (Mulrow, 1994). Consequently within this field, over the last 20 years, there has been a re-evaluation of the way literature reviews are designed and conducted (Tranfield et al., 2003). Systematic reviews have increasingly replaced traditional narrative reviews as a way of summarising research evidence (Hemingway, 2009). Whilst research synthesis methods such as the systematic literature reviews are primarily evident in positivistic sciences, Weed (2005a) outlines that a number of social sciences are developing an interest in research synthesis as a primary research activity.

3.1.1 Systematic Literature Review – a clinical approach

Beyond the ontological and epistemological concerns are some very pragmatic concerns driving the development of systematic reviews. Higgins and Green (2008) explain that healthcare providers, consumers, researchers and policy makers are often inundated with unmanageable amounts of information that they may not have the time, skills or resources to find, appraise and interpret effectively. A systematic review attempts to collate all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific question. To some extent therefore, systematic reviews negate this problem by providing information that can establish whether scientific findings are consistent and can be generalised across populations, settings and treatment variations or if indeed findings vary across particular subsets (Mulrow, 1994). All reviews, both narrative and systematic are retrospective, observational research studies. Table 3.1 illustrates the different features between the two styles. According to Cook et al (1997) the desire to minimise bias summarises the disparity between these discrete approaches.

Table 3.1: Differences between Narrative Reviews and Systematic Reviews

Feature	Narrative Review	Systematic Review
Question	Often broad in scope	Often focused on clinical question
Sources and search	Not usually specified, potentially biased	Comprehensive sources and explicit search strategy
Selection	Not usually specified, potentially biased	Criterion-based selection, uniformly applied
Appraisal	Variable	Rigorous critical appraisal
Synthesis	Often a qualitative summary	Quantitative summary, can include meta-analysis
Inferences	Sometimes evidence-based	Usually evidence-based

Source: Adapted from Cook et al (1997)

Systematic reviews alleviate the problem of bias faced with traditional narrative reviews due to the use of explicit, methodical stages in application. This fundamental scientific activity of using explicit methods is seen by many as a way to improve reliability and accuracy of conclusions (Mulrow, 1994, Higgins and Green, 2008;, Hemingway, 2009, Cook et al., 1997;). Indeed, Cook et al (1997) go as far as to describe systematic reviews as scientific investigations in themselves. These reviews use explicit, reproducible criteria to select all potentially relevant articles for review, primary research designs and study characteristics are appraised, data are synthesised and results are interpreted. Whilst the synthesised data and analysed results may relate to both quantitative and qualitative evidence, systematic reviews have traditionally been applied in fields and disciplines privileging a positivist and quantitative tradition.

Referred to as the origin of systematic reviews, medical research enjoys considerable and extensive epistemological consensus, shared research ideologies and values. Within the field this results in studies addressing 'identical' problems, sharing research agendas and more often than not researchers asking questions in the same way / within the same

paradigm. This enables the pooling of results and the measurement of net effectiveness of interventions, doing for research synthesis what randomised controlled trials aspire to do for single studies (Tranfield et al., 2003).

3.1.2 Systematic Literature Review – across the convergent-divergent dimension

The use of systematic literature reviews has been tried and tested in positivistic sciences with the example of medical research used above, but what of its application in other disciplines such as management research? Tranfield and Starkey (1998) characterise management research as 'soft' rather than 'hard', 'applied' rather than 'pure', and 'divergent' rather than 'convergent'. When drawing comparisons between medical research and management research Tranfield et al (2003) discuss that whilst medical research enjoys considerable and extensive epistemological consensus, the same cannot be said of the relatively young field of management research. Tranfield et al (2003) go on to explain that from an ontological perspective the differences between management research and medical science concern the dimension 'convergent-divergent'. Table 3.2 outline further differences between these two fields of research.

As previously discussed the use of systematic reviews has been well documented in the field of medical science. Whilst narrative reviews have been traditionally used in other fields, there is a small but growing body of research outside of medicine which is beginning to utilise the more formal systematic review. This is not to say the application is an easy fit. Researchers from an interpretivist or phenomenological position may suggest that the positivistic tones of systematic reviews should not be adapted to the social sciences. Indeed the application of the method to social science research is unlikely to be successful due to the heterogeneous nature of the study data. In qualitative research the use of meta-analysis is replaced by alternative methods such as realist synthesis, meta-synthesis and meta-ethnography.

Table 3.2: Differences between medical research and management research

	Medicine	Management
Nature of the discipline	Convergent.	Divergent.
Research culture	Subjected to rigorous scientific evaluation.	Split between positivist & phenomenological perspectives.
Research questions	High consensus.	Low consensus.
Interventions	Can be measured through experiments.	Experimentation may or may not be feasible.
Research design	Based upon hierarchy of evidence.	Triangulation is recommended.
Theory	Concerned with what works.	Concerned with why something works.
Literature reviews	Systematic reviews and meta-analysis.	Largely narrative reviews.
The need for a review	Reviews of effectiveness are used by clinical practitioners.	To develop a research question and inform empirical research practice.
Preparation of the review	A brief scoping study is conducted to delimit the subject area. A review panel including practitioners guides the process.	Usually an informal / ad hoc process involving the researcher, peers and supervisor.
Review protocol	A plan prior to the review states the criterion for including and excluding studies, the search strategy, description of the methods to be used, coding strategies and the statistical procedures to be employed.	Level of formality and standardisation in designing / adopting protocols is usually low. Unacceptable to 'tightly' plan literature review, as this may inhibit the researcher's capacity to explore, discover and develop ideas.
Identifying research	A comprehensive, structured search is conducted using predetermined keywords and search strings.	Implicit idiosyncratic methods of data collection are used.
Selection of studies	Based on criteria expressed in protocol. Draw upon 'raw data' from 'whole studies'.	Studies selected that appear relevant or interesting based on researchers bias. Decisions not recorded precluding any audit trail. 'Raw data' is often not available.
Study quality assessment	Assessed against predetermined criteria. Internal validity of the study is judged. Assessing and including qualitative studies is problematic.	Based on fit between research methodology and research questions. Tend to rely on the quality rating of the journal, rather than applying assessment criteria to an individual article.
Data extraction	Data extraction forms are used which act as a historical record for the decisions made during the process.	Not formally guided or comprehensively recorded and monitored.
Data synthesis	Qualitative synthesis provides a tabulation of key characteristics and results. Meta-analysis pools data across studies to increase the power of statistical analysis.	Generally narrative and qualitative. Lacks explicit descriptive and thematic analysis. Higher levels of subjectivity associated with what is analysed and synthesised.
Reporting and disseminating	Standardised reporting structures used.	Non-standardised reporting structures.

Source: Adapted from Tranfield et al (2003)

In the UK during the late 1990's under Tony Blair's leadership of the Labour Party, the context of policy research changed to a more evidence-based movement. As previously mentioned, systematic reviews are seen as objective, replicable, systematic and comprehensive, therefore providing a suitable research synthesis method for evidence based policy research. Indeed, best evidence systematic review methodology has been utilised in research focussing on housing (Davies et al., 2002), social care (MacDonald, 1999), and criminal justice (Laycock, 2000), and within the field of sport policy, systematic reviews have been utilised in the following studies; Sport and Refugees and Asylum Seekers (Amara et al., 2005), Women and Sport Administration in China (Chin, 2005) and Negotiating Dual Career Paths in Elite Sport and University Education in Finland, France and the UK (Aquilina, 2009). Whilst also being used as a method to review developments of knowledge in the field of sports tourism (Weed, 2006). As Weed (2005b: p. 83) points out, it is not just in the area of policy that systematic reviews are useful, 'a systematic review is essentially a search strategy, it can be applied to any type of data or research, be in qualitative or quantitative, or underpinned by positivist or interpretivist epistemologies'.

3.2 Stages of a Systematic Literature Review

Due to the multi-disciplinary approach of the current study, the methodology outlined with regards to the systematic review, is guided by Tranfield et al (2003) (Figure 3.1). The following section outlines the methodological stages and subsequent results of this process.

Stage One: Planning the review

Phase 0: Identification for the need for the review
Phase 1: Preparation of the proposal for the review
Phase 2: Development of the review protocol

Stage Two: Conducting the review

Phase 3: Identification of research
Phase 4: Selection of studies
Phase 5: Study quality assessment
Phase 6: Data extraction and monitoring progress
Phase 7: Data synthesis

Stage Three: Reporting and dissemination

Phase 8: The report and recommendations
Phase 9: Getting evidence into practice

Figure 3.1: Stages of a systematic review

Source: Tranfield et al (2003)

3.2.1 Stage One: Planning the Review

As a prelude to actually beginning the review, a scoping study was carried out. This enabled the researcher to assess the relevance and size of the literature from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Within medical science the researcher would arrive at a definitive review question which is central to the process. At this stage of the current study a more flexible approach was warranted, one which would allow for a process of exploration and discovery. However, in order to avoid drifting into bias associated with narrative reviews, the researcher had to remain focussed on producing a protocol for the subsequent systematic review that would not compromise the integrity of a systematic review.

The scoping study highlighted the disparate nature of related literature, the clear bias towards Olympic rather than Paralympic research, and the clear absence of sport specific (equestrian athlete) related literature. Using 'equine' related search terms in databases as part of the scoping study only identified scientific literature focussing on 'veterinary' research rather than 'sport' research. A wider inductively based descriptive / narrative search however identified relevant descriptive literature focussing on equestrian sport and the Olympics. At this point the scoping study had identified the need to separate the search process (Figure 3.2).

```
                        ┌─────────────────┐
                        │  Scoping study  │
                        └─────────────────┘
                          ↙            ↘
         ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
         │ Equestrian Sport │      │  Olympic Experience  │
         └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
                  ↓                           ↓
         ┌────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐
         │ Descriptive Review │    │  Systematic Review   │
         └────────────────────┘    └──────────────────────┘
```
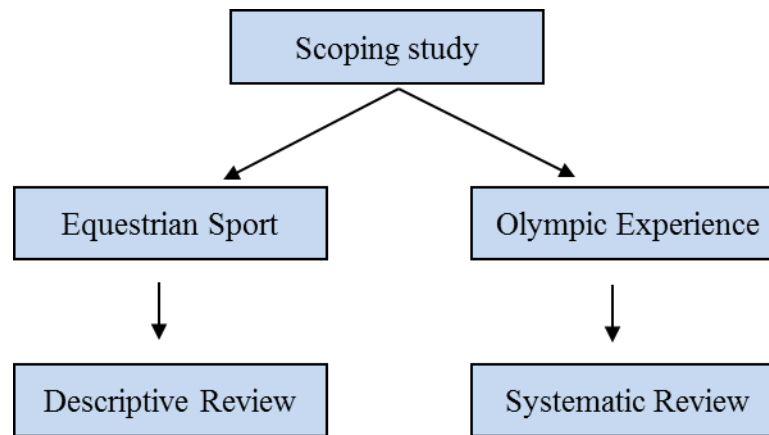
Figure 3.2: Initial outcome of scoping study

The initial scoping study also highlighted the cross disciplinary location of related research. Overall, the preliminary study provided a good approximation of the range of literature available and also gave a clear indication of the databases with the highest number of relevant articles and sources. Having compiled the data and carried out a brief review of the process, it was concluded that a systematic review was both a feasible and beneficial method to capture and analyse all relevant literature.

The first step in the systematic review process is to form a panel of experts with a broad range of knowledge in both the research topic and methodology. For the purpose of this study, the panel consisted of the director of studies, a library and information scientist and the researcher. The researcher conducted an adapted version of a nominal method, and a brain-storming session was held with each member of the panel. The feedback

received helped direct exploration of further field(s) and sub-field(s) within the research area and helped to identify suitable databases to facilitate appropriate searches.

The second fundamental stage of the systematic review process is creating the planned protocol which ensures objectivity on behalf of the researcher as it provides detailed descriptions of the decisions taken along the way (Tranfield et al., 2003). According to Kitchenham (2004) the components of a protocol include all the elements of the review plus some additional planning information:

- Background, the rationale for the survey.
- The research questions that the review is intended to answer.
- The strategy that will be used to search for primary studies including search terms and resources to be searched, resources include databases, specific journals, and conference proceedings. An initial scoping study can help determine an appropriate strategy.
- Study selection criteria and procedures. Study selection criteria determine criteria for including in, or excluding a study from, the systematic review. It is usually helpful to pilot the selection criteria on a subset of primary studies. The protocol should describe how the criteria will be applied e.g. how many assessors will evaluate each prospective primary study, and how disagreements among assessors will be resolved.
- Study quality assessment checklists and procedures. The researchers should develop quality checklists to assess the individual studies. The purpose of the quality assessment will guide the development of checklists.
- Data extraction strategy. This should define how the information required from each primary study would be obtained.
- Synthesis of the extracted data. This should define the synthesis strategy. This should clarify whether or not formal analysis is intended and what techniques will be used.
- Project timetable. This should define the review plan.

Davies and Crombie (1998) suggest that a review protocol should include:

i)   the specific questions addressed by the study;

ii)   the study focus in terms of population and sample; and;

iii)   the search strategy for identification of relevant studies.

Those conducting systematic reviews believe the existence of pre-determined protocol reduces the likelihood of bias from the investigator(s) during the selection process (Evans and Chang, 2000). The protocol used for this study is based on an amalgamation of the above guidelines. An overview of the protocol is outlined in Figure 3.3, with further detail presented in Table 3.3.
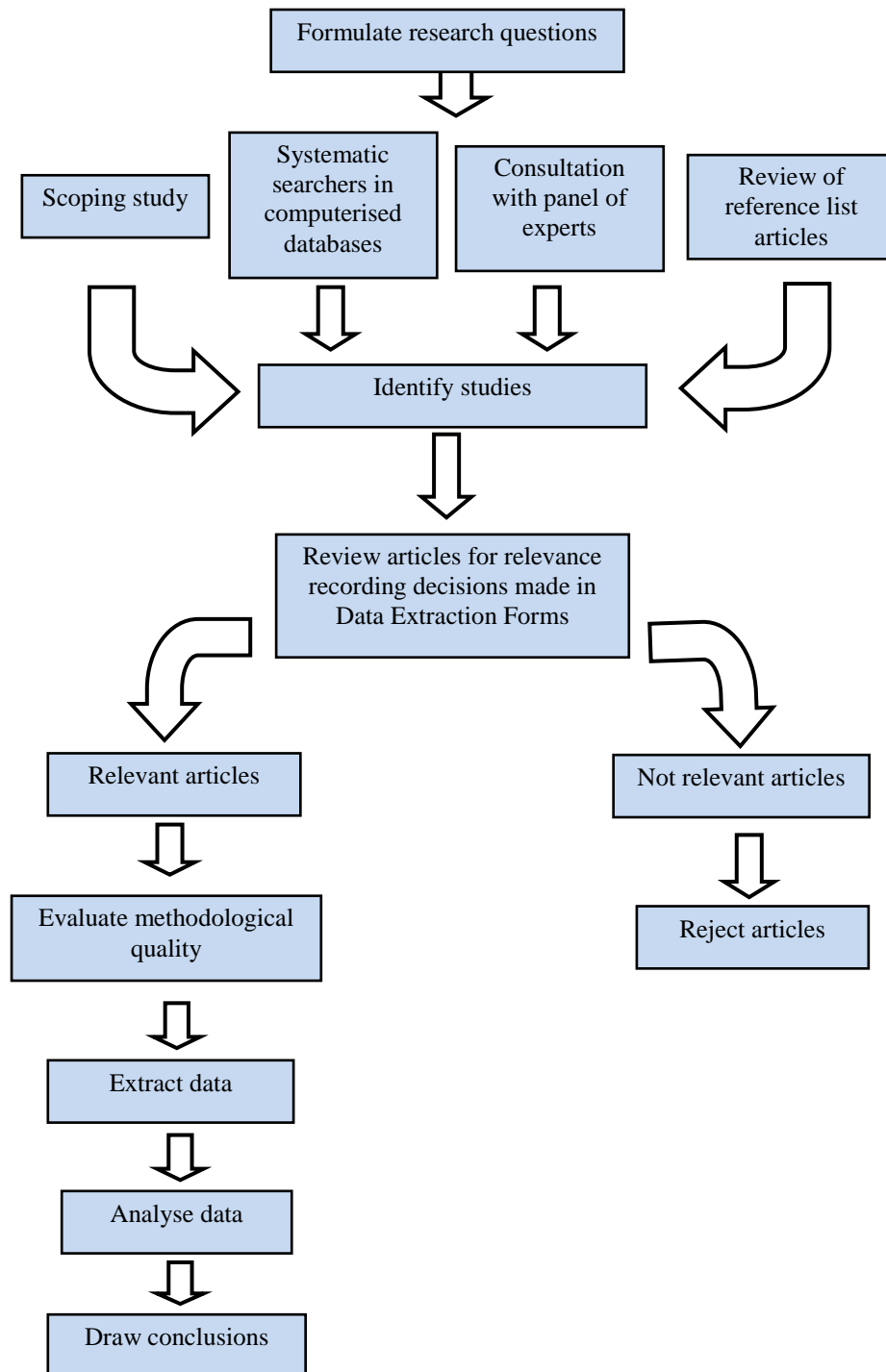
Figure 3.3: Documenting steps of a systematic review protocol

Source: Adapted from Aquilina (2009) original source, Papadopoulos & Rheeder (2000)

Table 3.3: Methodological protocol for systematic literature review

Methodological protocol	
Tranfield et al (2003)	Adapted for this study
Stage One: Planning the review	
Phase 0: Identification for the need for the review	Phase 0: Scoping study
Phase 1: Preparation of the proposal for the review	Phase 1: Formation of expert review panel & presentation of review proposal
Phase 2: Development of the review protocol	Phase 2: Production of review protocol
Stage Two: Conducting the review	
Phase 3: Identification of research	Phase 3: Systematic search of identified sources using identified keywords and search strings
Phase 4: Selection of studies	Phase 4: Inclusion or exclusion based on pre determined criteria
Phase 5: Study quality assessment	Phase 5: Evaluation of studies
Phase 6: Data extraction and monitoring process	Phase 6: Completion of data extraction forms and production of detailed monitoring process
Phase 7: Data synthesis	Phase 7: Meta-synthesis
Stage Three: Reporting and dissemination	
Phase 8: The report and recommendations	Phase 8: Produce report containing both descriptive and thematic analysis
Phase 9: Getting evidence into practice	Phase 9: Dissemination of systematic review findings and analysis

3.2.2 Stage two: Conducting the Review

A systematic search starts with the identification of keywords and search terms, identified as a result of the scoping study, the preliminary review of literature and discussions with the review panel (Tranfield et al., 2003). The search strategy has to be reported in enough detail to facilitate repeatability.

For the purpose of this particular study, searches were conducted primarily using bibliographic databases, although a descriptive review for the scoping study included autobiographies and grey literature which were also reviewed specifically with regards to policy and design. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion were discussed between the researcher, director of study and information scientist. For example whilst newspaper and other non-academic sources may provide useful information relating to the general

subject of the study we were not specifically interested in the nature or perspectives of authors in the media. This is not to say that they would not raise interesting and worthy points, rather it is important to note that we were specifically interested in claims for which some degree of academic provenance could be claimed in terms of judgement and evidence and thus limited our focus predominantly to journals which had been subjected to the peer review process. Provenance was thus in effect used as selection criteria.

Having agreed on the review protocol, the reviewer began the process of conducting the systematic review. The process was recorded in detail and stored in data extraction forms. These forms are intended to reduce human error and negate bias as much as possible and according to Clarke and Oxman (2001) they should contain;

   i)   general information (title, author, publication details);
   ii)   study features and specific information (details and methods); and;
   iii)   notes on emerging themes.

In medical sciences, the data extraction would result in meta-analysis, an alternative to research synthesis which is conducive to quantitative data. In the social sciences an interpretive or inductive approach is required, the most common being realist synthesis and meta-synthesis. For the purpose of this study a meta-synthesis approach was applied to identify theories, grand narratives, generalisations or interpretative translations produced from the integration of the identified studies.

3.2.3 Stage three: Reporting and Dissemination

Within social science research a two-stage report is usually produced (Tranfield et al., 2003). The first stage provides a full overview in the form of a 'descriptive analysis' based on the criteria collected and recorded on the extraction forms. As a result the researcher should be able to provide a broad ranging descriptive account of the field including specific exemplars and an audit trail justifying conclusions drawn (Tranfield et al., 2003). The second stage is to report 'thematic analysis'. Using an interpretive approach to analyse the data, the broad themes emerging from the literature are reviewed

and documented. At this stage researchers may wish to focus on the extent to which consensus is shared across various themes or they may want to identify emerging themes and research questions (Tranfield et al., 2003).

3.2.4 Summary of Systematic Literature Methodology as Applicable to this Study

Showing the methodological protocol adopted for this study, the following table (Table 3.4) is an adaptation of Tranfield et al., (2003) stages of the systematic review. This is followed by a detailed overview of the individual stages of the review methodology, specifically applicable to this study.

Table 3.4: A comprehensive overview of the individual stages of the systematic literature review methodology specifically applicable to this study

Stage One: Planning the review	
Phase 0: Scoping study	Defining and clarifying research aims and questions. Descriptive review of literature used to identify key words and help shaped review strategy.
Phase 1: Formation of expert review panel & presentation of review proposal	**Review Panel:** Donna de Haan (Researcher) Professor Ian Henry (Director of studies) Stephanie Allen and Rachel Johnson (Library and information scientists)
Phase 2: Production of review protocol	Discussion, definition and design of search strategy, study selection criteria, data extraction forms and project timetable.
Stage Two: Conducting the review	

Phase 3: Systematic search of identified sources using identified keywords and search strings	**Identified databases:**
	SPORTDiscuss
	Academic Search Complete
	Psyc INFO
	Web of Science
	Meta keywords:
	Olymp* + Biograph*
	     Phenomenol*
	     Ethnograph*
	     Life stor*
	     Life history*
	     Interpretive research
	     Autoethnograph*
	     Interview
	     Athlete + Identity
	     Athlete + Career
	Olympism
	Paralymp*

Phase 4: Inclusion or exclusion based on pre determined criteria	Defined criteria for inclusion: 1. Written in English 2. Academic relevance – referreed journals 3. Length – exclude abstracts only or less than 3 pages
Phase 5: Evaluation of studies	Exclusion based on lack of relevance to this study
Phase 6: Completion of data extraction forms and production of detailed monitoring process	For an example of these please refer to Appendix 1
Phase 7: Conducting data synthesis	Descriptive and thematic analysis
Stage Three: Reporting and dissemination	
Phase 8: Produce report containing both descriptive and thematic analysis	Introduction, stages of review methodology, results of key word searches, descriptive analysis, thematic analysis, and conclusion.
Phase 9: Informing research and practice	Dissemination of systematic review findings and analysis through thesis and publications

3.3 Results of Key Word Searches

The ability to conduct systematic reviews has only been made possible because of access to electronic databases. Members of the expert panel were consulted with regard to which databases to include in this study. Following the expert panel session, four databases were identified based on relevance to the fields of study (Social Sciences, specifically disciplines of Sport and Olympics). SPORTDiscuss, Academic Search Complete and Psyc INFO are aggregated databases accessed through EBSCO Host, whilst Web of Science is a citation only database. Consultation with the expert panel also resulted in the identification of 15 individual meta keywords, thus completing Phase 3: Systematic search of identified sources using identified keywords and search strings (Table 3.4).

A systematic approach to searching the databases using the keywords was then undertaken in March 2010. A preliminary search was conducted (Table 3.5) using no filters thereby making no reference to identified inclusion criteria (Phase 4: Inclusion or exclusion based on pre determined criteria, Table 3.4). Systematic searches were then carried out using the pre defined criteria for inclusion:

1. Written in English (Table 3.6)
2. Academic relevance – referred journals (Table 3.7)
3. Length – exclude abstracts only or less than 3 pages (Table 3.8)

Where available, database functionality was used to filter keyword hits based on the above criteria (Table 3.9). It is important to note at this stage that the figures presented in Tables 5-8 are only crude figures, some of the studies may pertain to more than one key word search and there may be repetition of studies across the identified databases. However, issues of repeatability are addressed later in this section (Table 3.10). Figure 3.4 illustrates the number of retrieved articles and the breakdown of studies excluded based on Phase 4: Inclusion or exclusion based on pre determined criteria shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.5: Number of keyword 'hits' per database, preliminary search with no filters

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + Biograph*	3645	252	5	10
Olymp* + Phenomenol*	15	3	10	3
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	19	10	7	7
Olymp* + Life Stor*	5	11	2	12
Olymp* + Life Histor*	2	15	1	36
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	0	0	0	2
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	2	1	0	0
Olymp* + Interview	1997	887	110	25
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	71	46	21	5
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	516	375	30	14
Olympism	835	38	5	29
Paralymp*	2390	821	30	155
Total	**9,497**	**2,459**	**221**	**298**

This preliminary search using no filters provided a total of 12,475 keyword hits across all four databases.

Table 3.6: Number of keyword 'hits' per database, based only on the filter 'Written in English'

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + Biograph*	3253	244	5	10
Olymp* + Phenomenol*	14	3	10	3
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	18	9	7	7
Olymp* + Life Stor*	4	11	2	11
Olymp* + Life Histor*	2	15	1	34
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	0	0	0	2
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	2	1	0	0
Olymp* + Interview	1799	708	88	25
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	63	45	19	4
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	474	313	29	12
Olympism	759	35	5	26
Paralymp*	2205	771	30	150
Total	**8,593**	**2,155**	**196**	**284**

This search using the filter 'Written in English' returned a total of 11,228 keyword hits across all six databases, thereby excluding 1,247 articles from the preliminary unfiltered search.

Table 3.7: Number of keyword 'hits' per database, using the filters 'Written in English' and 'Academic Relevance'

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + Biograph*	76	11	1	2
Olymp* + Phenomenol*	5	3	5	3
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	9	9	4	5
Olymp* + Life Stor*	1	1	0	5
Olymp* + Life Histor*	1	14	0	24
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	0	0	0	1
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	2	1	0	0
Olymp* + Interview	150	102	62	15
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	31	24	11	3
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	41	34	20	7
Olympism	103	25	2	18
Paralymp*	279	173	26	11
Total	**698**	**397**	**131**	**94**

This search using the filters 'Written in English' and 'academic relevance' returned a total of 1,320 keyword hits across all six databases, thereby excluding 11,155 articles from the preliminary unfiltered search.

Table 3.8: Number of keyword 'hits' per database, using the filters 'Written in English' and 'Academic Relevance' and 'Length – exclude abstracts only or less than 3 pages'

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + Biograph*	40	2	0	2
Olymp* + Phenomenol*	5	3	5	3
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	9	9	4	5
Olymp* + Life Stor*	0	0	0	5
Olymp* + Life Histor*	0	13	0	23
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	0	0	0	1
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	0	1	0	0
Olymp* + Interview	114	75	58	14
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	28	21	11	3
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	32	24	19	6
Olympism	76	20	2	17
Paralymp*	150	91	23	91
Total	**454**	**259**	**122**	**170**

This search using the filters 'Written in English' and 'academic relevance' and 'Length – exclude abstracts only or less than 3 pages' returned a total of 1,005 keyword hits across all six databases, thereby excluding 11,470 number of articles from the preliminary unfiltered search.

Where available, database functionality was used to filter hits based on the pre determined criteria for inclusion. Table 3.9 shows the available functions used within each database.

Table 3.9: Basic search criteria used for each database

Database	Search Criteria (Filters) Used
SPORTDiscuss	Language: English Peer Reviewed Key word search under: 'select a field (optional)' Length of article could be selected under advanced search
Academic Search Complete	Language: English Peer Reviewed Key word search under: 'select a field (optional)'
PsycINFO	Language: English Peer Reviewed Key word search under: 'select a field (optional)'
Web of Science	Language: English Document type: Article Key word search under: search term 'topic' Advance search – using 'TS=' under 'Field Tags' then combine sets

When reviewing the crude figures identified in Tables 3.5-3.8 it is important to take into consideration possible duplication of resources. Some of the studies may pertain to more than one keyword search and there may be repetition of studies across the identified databases.

To address issues of repetition a data extraction database was created in Excel and the following information (where available) was recorded:

- Search words
- Author(s)
- Date of Publication
- Title
- Key Words
- Abstract
- Journal
- Database
- Full Text Available

Excel has the ability to analyse and manipulate data (for example filter and pivot table functionality) which allowed for identification of repeated and / or duplicated data. To address issues of repeatability databases and search terms were given a ranked hierarchy (repeatability hierarchy) simply based on order presented. For example SPORTDiscuss was the first database searched, therefore if any articles were subsequently identified in any other database they were only included as a 'hit' for SPORTDisuss. All search terms are included and the hierarchy again based on order of search starting with 'Olymp* + biograph*' and ending with 'Paralymp*'. Table 3.10 shows the number of 'hits' adapted using the repeatability hierarchy.

Table 3.10: Adapted results from initial key word search using repeatability hierarchy

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + biograph*	40	2	0	2
Olymp* + Phenom*	5	2	3	1
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	7	5	1	1
Olymp* + Life Stor*	0	0	0	5
Olymp* + Life Histor*	0	13	0	16
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	0	0	0	0
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	0	0	0	0
Olymp* + Interview	96	40	21	2
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	25	13	3	0
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	24	6	2	2
Olympism	70	10	0	5
Paralymp*	129	34	6	32
Total	**396**	**125**	**36**	**66**
Total rejected / repeated	**58**	**134**	**86**	**104**

Table 3.11: Final results based on relevance to current study

Key Words	Databases			
	SPORT Discuss	Academic Search Complete	PsycINFO	Web of Science
Olymp* + biograph*	SD01 24	ASC01 0	Psyc01 0	WOS01 0
Olymp* + Phenom*	SD02 2	ASC02 1	Psyc02 0	WOS02 1
Olymp* + Ethnograph*	SD03 3	ASC03 2	Psyc03 0	WOS03 0
Olymp* + Life Stor*	SD04 0	ASC04 0	Psyc04 0	WOS04 0
Olymp* + Life Histor*	SD05 0	ASC05 0	Psyc05 0	WOS05 0
Olymp* + Interpretive Research	SD06 0	ASC06 0	Psyc06 0	WOS06 0
Olymp* + Autoethnograph*	SD07 0	ASC07 0	Psyc07 0	WOS07 0
Olymp* + Interview	SD08 52	ASC08 7	Psyc08 4	WOS08 1
Olymp* + Athlete + Identity	SD09 16	ASC09 10	Psyc09 1	WOS09 0
Olymp* + Athlete + Career	SD10 14	ASC10 2	Psyc10 1	WOS10 1
Olympism	SD11 43	ASC11 8	Psyc11 0	WOS11 3
Paralymp*	SD12 47	ASC12 5	Psyc12 2	WOS12 3
Total	**201**	**35**	**8**	**9**
Total rejected not relevant to study	**195**	**90**	**28**	**57**

Figure 3.4 illustrates the number of retrieved articles and the breakdown of studies excluded based on Phase 4: Inclusion or exclusion based on pre determined criteria (Table 3.4), the number of studies excluded based on repeatability and finally the number of studies excluded based on 'not relevant' criteria Phase 5: Evaluation of studies based on lack of relevance to this study (Table 3.11). This resulted in 370 studies being rejected at this point based on the criteria of not being relevant to this study. In order to scrutinise the rigour and validity of the search function for each database, the percentage of studies rejected from each database (before repeatability) was calculated (Table 3.12). Results indicate a similar 'rejection' percentage across all databases.

The use of truncation within the search terms may provide a rational for the seemingly 'random' studies identified using the search criteria (Appendix 1: Example of data extraction forms for rejected studies). Olymp* will return all studies with the search term beginning with this combination of letters such as 'Olympism' 'Olympic' 'Olympus' 'Olympia' but will also return studies with search terms containing these letters anywhere with a word.

Table 3.12: Analysis of studies rejected across databases

Database	Results before repeatability (Table 3.8)	Total rejected not relevant to the study (Table 3.11) (No)	Total rejected not relevant to the study (%)
SPORT Discuss	454	195	43%
Academic Search Complete	259	90	35%
PsycINFO	122	28	23%
Web of Science	170	57	33%
Total	1005	370	37%

The number of studies remaining in the final review of literature totals 253. Data extraction forms (Phase 6) were used to record the final stage of inclusion and exclusion.
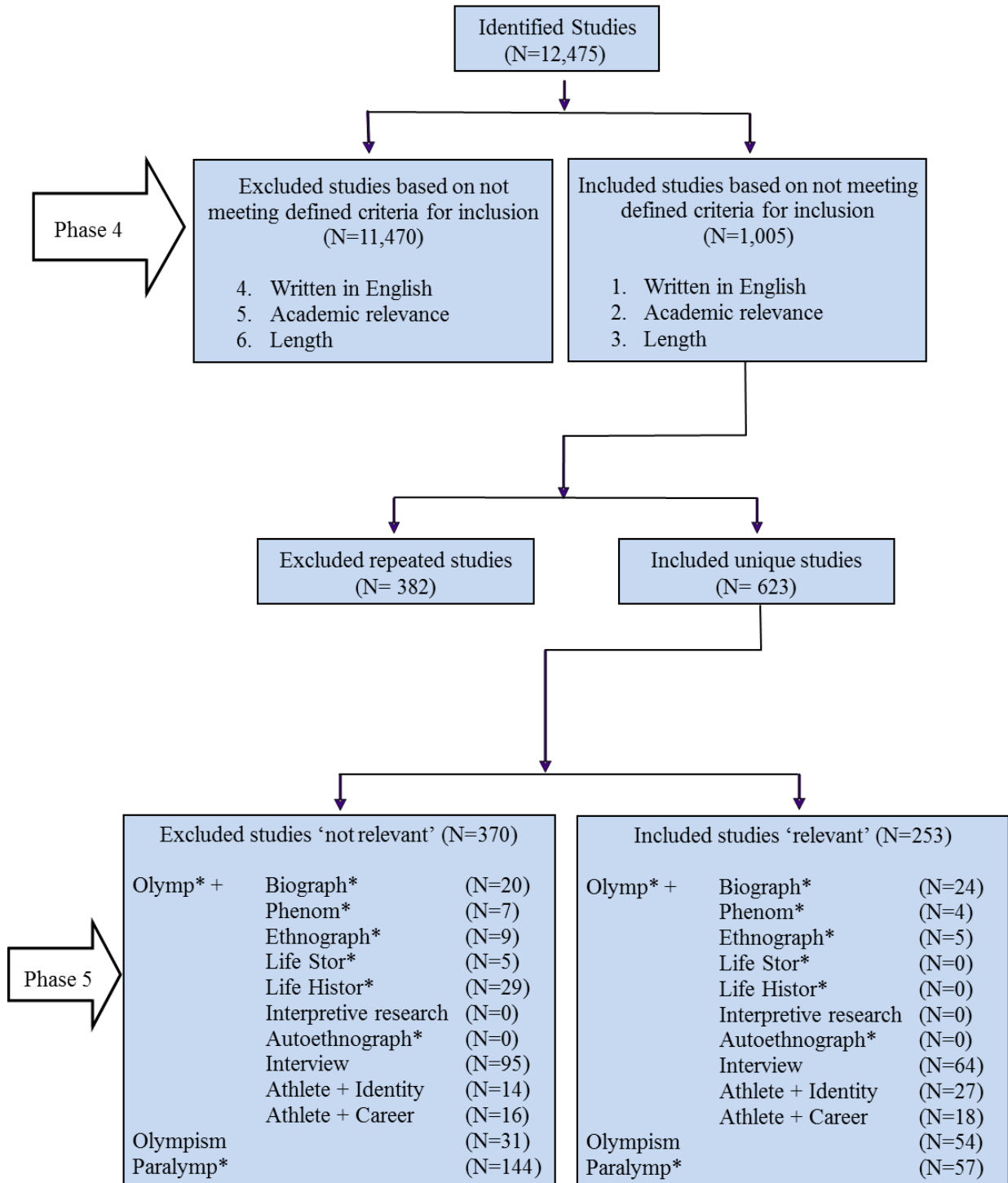
Figure 3.4: Number of retrieved articles and the breakdown of studies excluded and included

3.4 Descriptive Analysis

The final part of Stage Two: Conducting the review is Phase 7: conducting data synthesis, which involves both descriptive and thematic analysis. For the purpose of this study the identified relevant 253 articles were reviewed using a meta-synthesis approach which was applied to identify theories, grand narratives, generalisations or interpretive translations produced from the integration of the identified studies. The descriptive analysis begins with the identification of first order themes.

3.5 Identification and Analysis of First Order Themes

At this stage of the analysis the key search terms were set aside and the 253 articles were analysed with a view to identifying first order themes. For example, 'gender' was not specifically used as a search term but 32 articles carried this theme through the narrative of the paper. Combination of first order themes are also identified with relation to single papers, for example, Levy et al., (1999) paper discuss both gender and biography. Descriptive analysis of the 253 articles identified ten first order themes: biography, gender, career (sporting), relationships, sport development, sporting culture (socio-historical), Olympism, psychology / performance, media and disability sport.

3.5.1 Biography

It is interesting to note that 'biography' is one of only two key word search terms, to also have been identified as a first order theme, the other being 'Olympism'. The first category of 'biography' comprised of 31 studies. Nineteen focus on a male individual, twelve on a female individual. Twenty two articles primarily focus on athletes and nine on other influential Olympic characters such as de Coubertin. It is however important to note that many of the athletes also go on to hold influential positions in sport administration, the biographical discourse therefore continues on to post athletic career experiences. In relation to biographies focussing on athletes, all but one (Kumar, 2002) were associated with the Summer Olympics. Kumer (2002) reviews the gendered, sexualised and racialised portrayal of Catriona LeMay Doan, a Canadian speed skating gold medallist.

With regard to the systematic literature review process, publication date was not a criterion for inclusion. The earliest publication date recorded across the entire process was 1970 (Kortzfleisch, 1970, Weber, 1970). Publication dates for the first order theme biography range from this early date of 1970 (Weber, 1970) until 2009 (Lee et al., 2009, Phillips and Osmond, 2009, McNeil, 2009) but the biographical focus of these papers is much earlier, covering a timeline from the late 1800s to the mid 2000s. It is interesting to note that there have been no specific biographical studies (as identified through this systematic literature search using the search term Biograph*) pertaining to the period after the turn of the 21st Century. However, four papers contained reference to the biographies of modern sportsmen, Burdsey (2007) discusses the construction and representation of Amir Khan as a role model for multiethnic Britain, and Lee et al., (2009) include biographical detail of Sir Clive Woodward, although the focus of this paper is not on Woodward's own athletic career but his reflections of his time as England Rugby Coach. Both of these papers were found using the search term 'Interview'. McNeil (2009) also includes biographical detail of Lennox Lewis and Kumar (2002) includes biographical detail as she reviews the media portrayal of Catriona LeMay Doan. Both of these papers were found using the search terms 'Athlete and Identity'.

One reason for the lack of representation of modern sportsmen and women may be due to the fact that the biographical discourse and indeed the subject of sport, is not positioned in isolation within the narratives. The focus of several of the papers is not in fact sport, or the sporting achievement of an individual, rather sport is used as a lens through which the socio-historical issues are focussed upon. Fair (1987) for example uses semiotics to draw parallels between characteristics of weightlifting and the spirit of a confident and muscular America at the beginning of the 20th century. This biographical account of Bob Hoffman, described as the father of American weightlifting, also draws parallels between Hoffman's training practices and the broader issue of socialization of American immigrants during the 1930s (Fair, 1987).

Socio-cultural and political issues are pertinent across 16 articles, at times to the point that the biography of the individual is a secondary concern; Gori (2001) is a prime

example of this. The identified female character in this paper is the Italian athletics champion Trebisonda Valla, yet details of her personal biography account for less than ten percent of the discussion, with the remaining narrative focussing on masculine hegemony and fascism of Italy in the early 1900s. Whilst socio-cultural and political issues are obviously still pertinent to the 21st Century, the biographies of individuals included in this study are identified or referred to by the authors as 'pioneering'; Levy et al., (1999: p.392) present Fanny Rosenfeld as "not only one of the most consummate female athletes of the 20th century, but also the greatest Canadian Jewish athlete of the modern Olympic movement". Votre and Mourao (2001) describe how Brazilian women have earned the title of icons of feminine emancipation and Henniker and Jobling (1989: p.12) describe Richard Coombes as "the father of Australian amateur athletics, as well as the father of Empire sport".

Nine sports are identified and discussed across the theme of 'biography' including, swimming (Votre and Mourao, 2001, Phillips and Osmond, 2009, Borish, 2004, Osmond et al., 2006), athletics (Leigh and Bonin, 1977, Lucas, 1977, Gregory, 1979, Brichford, 1998, Gori, 2001, Levy et al., 1999, Bass, 2002, Erard, 2008, White, 2008, Llewellyn, 2008); weightlifting (Fair, 1999, Fair, 1987), boxing (McNeil, 2009, Burdsey, 2007); speed skating (Kumar, 2002), rugby (Lee et al., 2009) fencing (Torres, 2002), gymnastics (Krane et al., 1997), and archery (Vealey and Walter, 1994). Individual sporting achievement, access to and the development of these sports is discussed, again placed within a socio-cultural and political context.

Across the identified theme of biography surprisingly little content was solely allocated to issues of family background, childhood, and education, especially when compared to wider biographical and autobiographical literature identified in Chapter 5. When reviewing biographies or autobiographies of riders, at least one or two chapters of such books tend to detail early childhood and family influence on the individual and their sporting career. When reviewing peer reviewed articles, proportionately less of the narrative pertains to such topics. This may be due to stylistic restrictions relating to the publication such as word count etc, the chosen construct of the biographical narrative

(deliberate inclusion and exclusion of material in order to provide a focus for the discussion) or the authors access to relevant information, especially considering the retrospective historical timeframe involved in the majority of the identified articles. Only one article gave reference to methodological considerations and whilst ten articles included quotes from the lead character only two articles used primary interview data. Within the context of the articles, the voice of the biographical subject is often lost due to the use of secondary sources, this is not the case in books however where further detail relating to family history etc may be gained from the primary source. In conclusion, within the first order theme of biography, there is a surprising lack of material which relates to the 'lived experience' of the Olympian at the Games.

3.5.2 Gender

The first order theme 'gender' is comprised of 32 studies. The single theme of 'gender' was only identified across four studies (Davenport, 1996, Young and White, 1995, Burton et al., 2006, Reeser, 2005), two themes (gender plus another) were identified across 15 studies, but the majority of studies carried three or four separate themes. Interestingly, the only theme not found in association with any of these 32 studies, was the first order theme 'Olympism'.

The first single themed paper provides an overview of female representation within the International Olympic Committee (Davenport, 1996). The second is an exploratory study which investigated the parallel meanings of violence, pain, and injury for elite male and female athletes (Young and White, 1995). The third single themed paper was a phenomenological study which examined the talent identification process of US female Olympians (Burton et al., 2006). The final single themed paper examines gender identity issues in competitive sports, focusing on the evolution of policies relating to female gender verification and transsexual participation in sport (Reeser, 2005). Whilst the first paper is informative it is predominantly descriptive in nature. Both Young and White (1995) and Burton et al., (2006) draw on theoretical questions regarding possible ambiguities in sport-related emancipation for women and therefore engage in wider gender related discourse.

As identified within the previous first order theme of 'biography', twelve articles focussed on female athletes. Each paper focuses on a single female character, often referred to as exemplary or pioneering. For example White (2008) reviews the career of Cathy Freeman, specifically focussing on the timeline between 1994 and 2000. White (2008: p. 1) refers to Freeman as "an iconic sporting and cultural ambassador for her country… Freeman came to personify the hopes and dreams for reconciliation between black and white Australia". Within the paper White (2008) refers to additional available resources such as biographical and auto-biographical texts, yet the paper lacks quotes from Freeman herself and instead presents discourse focussing on an icon or symbol rather than presenting any individual voice. Gender discourse is also somewhat invisible with the emphasis focussing on ethnic / indigenous identity and the cultural symbolic significance of this. Borish (2004: p. 197) presents a similar story when writing about Charlotte Epstein, referring to her as "an advocate of women's swimming… Epstein altered the sporting landscape for women nationally and internationally by battling the United States Olympic Committee to allow girls from the swim club she founded in 1917, to compete in the 1920 Olympics…" Within the title of the paper and throughout the text, Epstein is referred to as both female and Jewish and the socio-ethnic context and significance of this is continued throughout the discussion. This combined focus on gender and ethnicity is also presented in Levy et al (1999: p. 392) who reviewed the career of Fanny 'Bobby' Rosenfeld, who "…may be described not only as one of the most consummate female athletes of the 20th century, but also as the greatest Canadian Jewish athlete of the modern Olympic movement." Again, whilst these two papers discuss the gendered issues pertaining to the careers of these women, wider feminist issues are not discussed.

Seven of the twelve studies within the combined themes of 'gender' and 'biography', also focussed on the careers of the individual female athletes. Four studies only focussed on the sporting careers of the women, ending the discussion at the point where the women's sporting careers ended (Kumar, 2002, Phillips and Osmond, 2009, White, 2008, Levy et al., 1999, Krane et al., 1997). Gregory (1979) however, not only discusses the sporting career of Elfrida Berzins, who represented Latvia in numerous track and field events at

the Women's Olympics from the mid 1920s to the early 1930s, but goes on to discuss her career as a physical educator. Gregory (1979: p. 2) also refers to Berzins as being internationally renowned not only as an Olympic competitor and world record holder, but also as a "lyric-soprano singer, ballet dancer, radio and concert performer, author and humanist." Erard (2008) discusses the dual career of Micheline Ostermeyer a French triple Olympic medallist in the high jump, shot put and discus at the 1948 Olympic Games and a virtuoso pianist. Erard (2008) outlines the career developments and highlights of these two distinct fields, fundamentally focussing on the two distinct cultural and social domains of sport (popular culture) and music (piano music specifically associated with high culture). Uniquely, this study includes direct quotes from Ostermeyer herself and whilst issues of family relationships, education, training and wider social issues such as class are discussed; the fact that Ostermeyer is female appears to be insignificant, at least it is not overtly presented in the discourse.

Staying within the theme of gender and biography, only three papers refer to wider issues of gender ideologies (Votre and Mourao, 2001, Gori, 2001, Kumar, 2002). Within these papers issues pertaining to access to sport, differences between male and female participation, images of athletic masculinity and general masculine hegemony and female emancipatory trends and wider feminist movements of the time are discussed. Across these papers, as seen in the previous first order theme of 'biography', the wider socio-historic issues provide the structure to the discourse, with very little space given to biographical detail in its own right.

The second largest co-themed group within 'gender' is the combination of the first order themes 'gender' and 'media' which was identified across ten studies. The genres of media analysed and discussed were limited to television coverage and print based media, with no reference to new, social or e-media. Four of the ten papers were published in the journal *International Review for the Sociology of Sport'* (Wensing and Bruce, 2003, King, 2007, Billings and Eastman, 2002, Capranica and Aversa, 2002). Two papers published in the same 2002 issue specifically reviewed the television media coverage of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Billings and Eastman (2002) focused on selective

representation of gender, ethnicity, and nationality in American television coverage, and Capranica and Aversa (2002) focused on Italian television coverage.   Both papers make reference to various methods used to measure and analyse gendered televised media coverage.   Capranica and Aversa (2002), also conclude that the proportion of Italian television airtime for female athletes at the Sydney Olympics was only 29% of the total sport coverage, they argue however, that this figure was close to the proportion of the Italian female participation in the Games (International 38%, Italian 28%).

Beyond the quantitative figures presented in these studies, is the issue of what these figures represent. It could be argued that a network's selection, narration and description of events may ultimately shape viewers' perceptions of characteristics such as gender. The argument as to whether the audience's understandings about gender imaging can be altered through television's somewhat biased presentation of gender or whether this simply represents wider social attitudes to gender.

It is important to note that the Olympic Games are not typical of mediated sport programming for several gender-related reasons.   The television audience for the Olympic Games is much less gender-divided than for other televised sports, in fact female viewership often exceeds male viewership.   Compared to the majority of mainstream sport media, the Olympics focus on a mix of sports and include a variety of female sports. Finally, by virtue of being a continuously running event with two weeks of regular broadcasts, the Olympics mirrors the scheduling pattern of a drama or soap opera rather than a typical one off sport event.

Staying within the specific medium of televised coverage of sport, Daddario (1997) reviews the coverage of the 1992 Summer Olympics from a distinctively feminist perspective. Daddario (1997) does not solely focus on the gender of the athletes, rather she examines the 'gendering' of sports programming, specifically examining NBC's deviation from what she defines as 'straight reportage' synonymous with male-centred sports programming, to the female narrative form, typically associated with melodramatic genres such as soap operas. Daddario (1997) argues that scheduling decisions to focus on

'women's' spectator sports such as gymnastics, swimming and diving in the first week of telecast combined with a style of reporting which highlighted the 'human drama' was an attempt by NBC to reach, attract, and sustain female viewership.

Daddario (1997) suggests that the adaptation of female narrative techniques in relation to sport programming can facilitate a more gender-egalitarian audience as it encourages female viewers to find a sense of place in sport spectatorship. Daddario (1997) also argues that the traditional and stereotypical descriptors used in sport programming to describe female athletes by their 'other' identifying roles such as wife, mother and daughter, trivialize female athletes, however, when the same descriptors are used within feminine narrative, they can invite oppositional reading. "Such descriptors invite audience identification with female athletes, thus helping to secure a sense of place in sport spectatorship for female viewers" (Daddario, 1997: p. 114).

Knight et al., (2007) and Wensing and Bruce (2003) both discuss the media portrayal of Cathy Freeman. Wensing and Bruce (2003) argue that in relation to media coverage of Cathy Freeman, gender lost its place as the primary media framing device during the Sydney 2000 Olympics because of Freeman's importance as a symbol of national reconciliation. Knight et al., (2007) also refer to Freeman's political identity and conclude that the media coverage of this specific athlete at these specific Games negates individual identity and rather presents a symbolic agent of change: in Freeman's Olympic narrative sport and politics were allowed to mix in a relatively unproblematic way.

Continuing with the notion of multiple identities and stereotypes, Schell and Rodriguez (2001) explore how a female athlete with a disability may claim subjectivity through sport, thereby subverting the stereotypic concepts of gender and disability. Specifically reviewing CBS' network television depiction of wheelchair tennis player, Hope Lewellen during the 1996 Paralympic Games, Schell and Rodriguez (2001) conclude that the coverage often works to subvert Lewellen's empowered voice in order to depict the disabled athletic body as one that can transcend, or overcome, the female body.

Ashton-Shaeffer et al., (2001) also present a paper on female disabled athletes, although not related to the first order theme of 'media'; this is the only other paper to combine the themes of 'gender' and 'disability sport'. Ten Paralympic wheelchair basketball players aged 18-32 years were interviewed about their experiences in elite-level sport. The paper specifically focuses on the women's empowerment and resistance through wheelchair sport. Whilst reference is made to the resistance to stereotyped expectation associated with disability and both physical and mental empowerment, there is little focus or reference in this paper to the issue of gender.

Ten papers carried the combined themes of 'gender' and 'sporting culture'. Seven of these papers are also combined with other themes and are therefore discussed in alternative sections. Only three of the ten papers carried this combination in isolation. Foldesi (1984) reviewed the marriage chances and social status of top female Olympic athletes in Hungary who had participated in Games between 1948 and 1976. During the period of their sports careers and indeed following retirement, fewer females got married compared to male athletes. The number of single female athletes was also higher compared to non-athlete female population. The rate of divorced Olympians was also higher in the case of females than males. However, Foldesi (1984) concluded that top female Hungarian athletes who did marry, married above the social status of non-athlete women probably due to their higher income and to their more favourable chances of obtaining an apartment.

The final two papers, which address 'gender' and 'sporting culture', both refer to nationalism and the role of female athletes in crafting national identities through what is traditionally perceived as the male domain of sport. Dyreson (2003) discusses the role of American female Olympians from the 1920s until recent times, highlighting that their role in the construction of American culture continues to serve as both symbols of emancipation and coveted sexual commodities. Brownell (2005) compares sport in the US and China and its relationship to nationalism and gender in the century prior to the Beijing Games. In support of Dyreson (2003) reference to American female athletes being portrayed as sexual symbols, Brownell (2005) explains that US sport has been

characterised by a sexualisation of female athletes that has never subsumed nationalism. In contrast, Brownell (2005) outlines that in China, the pursuit of national victories contributed to the support of women's sports and the subsuming of gender issues by issues of nationalism. The role of women in the sporting culture of these two countries is different, Brownell (2005) argues that this is based on the fact that the US is an established superpower and China is a nation still seeking superpower status. In both cases the place, role and identity of females in sport is seen as different from those of their male counterparts.

The combination of first order themes 'gender' and 'career' was identified across seven papers. These papers carried several combinations of themes but all had biography as a common third theme and have therefore been discussed in the previous section. Two of the seven papers also carried the theme 'relationships'. Surprisingly of the 31 'gender' themed papers, these are the only two that carried significant content pertaining to personal relationships to warrant this first order theme. As Daddario (1997) discussed in the context of sport programming, female athletes are often described using 'other' identifying roles such as wife and mother which may trivialise or distract from the individual's identity as an athlete. However, the overall absence within the literature of discourse pertaining to relationships, be that personal or indeed sporting, for example a relationship with a coach, results in the overall impression that the women discussed in the papers are symbolic or representatives of gender rather than individuals. Combined with the general absence of the female first person voice, the first order theme 'gender' lacks the depth associated with phenomenology or ethnographic studies.

Not surprisingly the papers in this section refer to the male dominated landscape of sport. The majority of the papers focus on one individual female athlete and in most cases, present an historic narrative of the individuals sporting career. Whilst methodological issues will be discussed later in the construct analysis section, it is important to note here the general lack of feminist discourse across these 31 papers. With regards to the sport specific focus of this PhD, it is also interesting to note that of all the sports represented in

this section no mixed gender sports or 'gender neutral' sports, such as equestrianism were included.

3.5.3 Career (sporting)

The first order theme 'career' was identified across 26 papers. As previously discussed seven papers focussed on the careers of female athletes, therefore 19 papers focus on the sporting careers of men only or a combination of male and female athletes. Only two papers carry the theme in isolation (Werthner and Orlick, 1986, Conzelmann and Nagel, 2003). Werthner and Orlick (1986) discuss the retirement experiences of successful Olympic athletes and Conzelmann and Nagel (2003) review the professional careers of German Olympic athletes.

Five papers discuss the careers of individuals either from the point of transition or post athletic career. Baillie and Danish (1992) explain that athletes are often poorly prepared for the off-time associated with leaving sports and that traditional theories of retirement may not be suitable for this population. Ungerleider (1997) states that research has supported the need for strategies to assist elite athletes with the transition from sport to the work place and that early intervention with coaches' and peers' support programmes have mediated the problems associated with the termination of athletic careers. Four of the papers published in the 1980s and 1990s all discuss the lack of research pertaining to this specific subject. However, the most recent of the five articles, Torregrosa et al., (2004a), discusses the fact that in the context of modern sport, some athletes have become 'media-athletes', which can increase their social significance. "The adaptation problems of some of them have created in some countries a 'public opinion' that retiring from elite sports can be easily related to adjustment problems to everyday life" (Belda, 1999, cited in Torregrosa et al., 2004: p. 36). Torregrosa et al., (2004a), report that this is of concern for professionals, managers and institutions and has consequently resulted in a considerable amount of research on athlete retirement from different countries with different theoretical perspectives and methods but with comparable results.

All five papers present empirical data relating to the retirement of elite athletes but only Ungerleider (1997) specifies the specific sports the athletes were associated with, (57 individual athletes across twelve different sports). The point of natural retirement from active sport participation, outside of an early career ending injury, is to some extent determined by the nature of the sport and the potential or at least average life span of active participation at elite level. Whilst the five papers presented do not provide comprehensive coverage of the topic, it is surprising to note that sport specific issues are not discussed. Baillie and Danish (1992) outline that career transition for elite athletes may be especially difficult and disruptive due to their age, income and ego involvement of the individuals. All of these factors are to some extent sport specific. With regards to equestrian sport, there is no clear age of retirement from elite level competition. Indeed at the Beijing Olympic Games the age of individuals within the British Showjumping Team ranged from 25 years to 65 years.

Thirteen papers combined the first order themes of 'career' and 'biography'. The individuals discussed in these papers are all athletes and each paper focuses on one individual with one exception. Torres (2002) discusses the sporting success of Francisco Carmelo and Carmelo Felix Camet, father and son Olympic fencers. The first order theme 'sporting culture' is also closely linked to two of the thirteen papers. McNeil (2009) writes about Lennox Lewis's career and Paul Gilroy's work on a Black Atlantic. Using themes of nationalism, double (or poly) consciousness, Americocentricity, and Black masculinity, McNeil (2009) discusses Lewis's career culminating in the legitimacy of Lewis's place in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. As discussed in more depth in the overview of the first order theme 'biography', Burdsey (2007) presents discourse surrounding the career of Amir Khan and discusses his place as a role model for multiethnic Britain.

Dionigi (2006) discusses older adults and their relationship with competitive sport, specifically rejecting stereotypical passive sports associated with this population, such as lawn bowls and focussing more on physically demanding sports such as track and field, basketball, swimming etc. Dionigi (2006) provides a comprehensive review of wider

literature pertaining to this subject alongside empirical qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations. It is interesting to note that 'older adult athletes' are generally categorised as Masters from as young as 30 years old. According to Dionigi (2006) most studies focus on individuals within the age range of 40-50 years. Again it is interesting to note that within equestrian sport there is no age differentiation or competition classification at elite level for 'older' athletes.

3.5.4 Relationships

The first order theme 'relationships' was identified across 13 papers. The theme occurred in isolation across five papers (Ronglan, 2007, Philippe and Seiler, 2006, Jowett and Cockerill, 2003, Becker, 2009, Gould et al., 2002b). Ronglan (2007) examined efficacy building processes from within a women's handball team during a one year period. The author acted as a participant observer due to also carrying out the role of assistant coach. However, the focus of this paper is the relationships amongst the individual members of a team. The other four papers however focus on the relationship between athletes and their coaches. Philippe and Seiler (2006) and Jowett and Cockerill (2003) both utilise the interpersonal constructs of closeness, co-ordination, and complementarity (the three Cs) to investigate the nature and significance of the athlete-coach relationship. Both papers only use athletes as participants therefore omitting the coach perspective. Philippe and Seiler (2006) use five male Swish International swimmers as participants and Jowett and Cockerill (2003) utilise twelve Olympic medallists (three female, nine male) across a variety of sports. Whilst Philippe and Seiler (2006) reported that the type of relationship played a central part in improving performance, from a conceptual point of view the conclusion was inconclusive. Similarly, Jowett and Cockerill (2003) also concluded that the interpersonal relationship formed between athletes and their coaches is an important factor that contributes to the athletes' development. Whilst the authors reportedly uncovered potential associations between the three Cs, the direction of causality and what the most influential direction between the constructs was not discerned. Again this leaves the paper lacking somewhat in a clear conceptual conclusion.

Becker (2009) also looked at the athlete-coach relationship, again only from the athlete perspective. According to Becker (2009) the primary purpose of the study was to explore athlete experiences of great coaching. The author begins by critiquing the definition of 'greatness' "In general, society identifies coaches as 'great' based on two criteria: win/loss records and media attention. This narrow definition limits the study of coaching greatness in two ways. First, the media focuses its coverage on high visibility sports and on coaches participating at only the highest levels of competition…Relying solely on wins and losses to identify great coaches is also limiting. A winning record may indicate that the coach is effective, but may not necessarily mean that the coach is great." (Becker, 2009: p. 93-94). Frustratingly however, Becker (2009) fails to provide a more suitable definition of 'greatness' and continues to use the term concluding that a more insightful way of determining 'greatness' is to examine the athletes' experience.

The final single themed paper provides a more comprehensive discussion pertaining to the athlete-coach relationship. As part of a larger study, Gould et al., (2002b) examine variables perceived to influence performance in Olympic competition (Atlanta and Nagano) utilising triangulation of both coach and athlete perceptions. The study was commissioned by the U.S. Olympic Committee to help address the issue as to why some individuals or teams rise to the occasion and exhibit peak performances at the Olympic Games, whereas others with the same preparation falter. Gould et al., (2002b) conclude that coaches perceived that numerous variables influenced their athletes' performance as well as their own coaching effectiveness. The role of psychological variables was perceived as especially salient and according to Gould et al., (2002b), reinforces the need for psychological training and support services for both athletes and coaches.

As part of the wider study outlined above, Greenleaf et al., (2001) present interviews with the athletes who participated in the Atlanta and Nagano Olympics. Fifteen athletes were interviewed (eight from Atlanta and seven from Nagano) and the participants were split into two groups, those that met or exceeded expectation and those that did not. The aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the factors perceived to have influenced Olympic athlete performance. The two groups differed on only a few positive

performance factors, including attitude towards the games, Olympic housing, and team unity, and the negative factors that differed between the groups included team selection, coaching, lack of support, and team issues (Greenleaf et al., 2001). It is interesting to note that 'team' appears in both the positive and negative factors, but from the information presented in the paper it is not possible to determine the parameters or dynamics of said 'team'. The individual athletes and their sports are not identified. Within an Olympic Games setting there are many different types of 'teams', traditionally we may think of a set number of individual athletes that make up a sports team, such as a Hockey team, but there is also the wider support team and indeed the National team of athletes, such as the US Olympic Team. In both Olympic and Paralympic equestrian sports, the riders are put in a unique position of competing both as individuals and as part of a team. The combination of individual and team competition is unique to the major events such as the Olympics, the World Championships and the Europeans. However, in this case it is still simply a combination of individuals who are bought together to contribute to a team score, rather than the traditional model of team sports.

The remaining five papers in this theme are all unique in the fact that the 'relationship' aspect is not central to the studies and yet each paper carries within the text discourse pertaining to different types of relationships. As previously discussed, Phillips and Osmond (2009) review several films and documentaries of Australian swimmer Dawn Fraser. Published in the *International Journal of the History of Sport,* this paper provides a unique biographical account of the athlete presented in a narrative yet critical style. Fraser's character and personal relationships are discussed, including those with family members, and partners of both sexes. Her relationship with her coach is also discussed but this goes beyond the traditional sporting relationship and includes reference to how her coach opened up her world-view through his love of art and expensive restaurants and how he introduced her to a wider social network.

Whilst Uchida et al., (2009) discuss relationships, the focus of their study is the concept of emotions and specially the cultural variation in lay theories of emotion expression and inference. Culturally Uchida et al., (2009 : p. 1427) explain that if asked from where

emotion comes from an American is likely to say "from inside me, pointing to their bodies-hearts, heads, or stomachs. In contrast, Japanese students will often make a circular hand motion and gesture away from the body pointing to themselves and responding, it comes from outside."

The authors reviewed television interviews of Olympic athletes and report four keys findings. Firstly, when asked about their relationships, Japanese athletes used significantly more emotion words than American athletes, although the difference was not significant when athletes were directly asked questions about their feelings (Uchida et al., 2009). Secondly, when describing an athlete's emotional reaction to winning, Japanese participants implicated others more often than American participants (Uchida et al., 2009). The first two studies show that in the Japanese context people are more likely to mention emotions when discussing relationships, in the American context people are more likely to mention relationships when discussing emotions. To further investigate the theory that Japanese emotions are understood to involve relationships between people, the authors produced two descriptions of reactions to an Olympic win. The first was a relationship focussed script and the second a self-focussed script. After reading the scripts, Japanese participants inferred more emotions when the athlete mentioned relationships, whereas American participants inferred more emotions when the athlete focussed solely on themselves (Uchida et al., 2009). Finally when viewing images of athletes, Japanese participants inferred more emotions for athletes pictured with teammates, whereas American athletes inferred more emotions for athletes pictured alone (Uchida et al., 2009). The paper highlights the complexity between emotion and relationships and the significance of cultural context. It is important to note therefore when reviewing literature concerning relationships to consider the cultural context as this is not always explicit in the discourse.

Crossman and Lappage (1992) discuss the unique scenario of an Olympic boycott. In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 48 randomly selected members of the 1980 Canadian Olympic Team to determine the impact of the Moscow Olympic boycott upon their lives and athletic careers. In general the boycott had a negative impact upon

the lives of the athletes but the effect depended not surprisingly on several variables including the participants' age at the time of the boycott, which sport they competed in, the stage of his or her career, and the athletes' performance expectations (Crossman and Lappage, 1992). Pertinent to the first order theme of 'relationship', the athletes' ability to cope and his or her support structure was also identified as a relevant variable.

The athletes were asked how they were initially informed that the Canadian Olympic Association (COA) and the Canadian government had decided to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics. A total of 37% of participants were informed personally, either by a coach (23%), significant other (6%), teammate (4%) or a head official with the sports federation (4%), the remaining 63% found out through the informal medium of the media (Crossman and Lappage, 1992). Unfortunately the relevance of the personal or none personal delivery of the information is not discussed. It would have been interesting to note if the nature of the relationship between the athlete and the messenger made a difference to the individual's reaction to the news.

With regards to relationships, the athletes were asked about the reaction of their family and friends to the boycott, the predominant response was one of disappointment. "Sympathy, support, and concern were words often used to describe the reaction of parents, spouse or siblings. One interviewee described how his family and friends had a party for him after the boycott had been announced, with the purpose of helping him to forget it" (Crossman and Lappage, 1992: p. 365). One athlete felt the boycott negatively affected his personal relationship and could have been a contributing factor to his subsequent divorce (Crossman and Lappage, 1992). Whilst the paper presents unique data relating to the athletes experience of this unique event, it is unfortunate, for the purpose of this discussion that the data is predominately presented quantitatively. There is only one direct quote presented in the text, leaving the discourse lacking the emotional richness associated with the lived experience of phenomenological research.

The final two papers in this first order theme of 'relationships' do include direct quotes from the participants. Both papers are case study based and focus on one individual

participant. Lee et al., (2009) as previously discussed in the 'biography' section, present an interview with Clive Woodward, director of Olympic performance with the British Olympic Association, with the aim of exploring the notions of the 'champion', of winning and the nature of success cultures. It is at the beginning of the paper when the authors ask Woodward to talk about his upbringing, that we get an insight into the personal relationships that he believes are important in terms of developing himself as a person and a coach. It is interesting to note that there is no reference to any personal family relationship, rather sir Woodward refers to inspirational individuals such as lecturers at Loughborough University where he studied and Sebastian Coe, a fellow student at the time.

The final paper presents a motivational case study of an elite gymnast using a social cognitive approach to achievement motivation to understand and explain the behaviour of the gymnast, her coaches and her parents. Whilst only the voice of the athlete herself is presented in the text using direct quotes, her relationship with the sport, food, training, injury and rehabilitation, her coaches and parents are evocatively presented. Whilst not necessarily the focus of the study, the paper eloquently portrays the complex nature of relationships within the context of sport.

3.5.5 Sport Development

Nineteen papers were identified relating to the first order theme of 'sport development'. Of these, only two papers were dedicated solely to this theme (Chambliss, 1989, Collins and Buller, 2003). Chambliss (1989) produced an ethnographic report on stratification and Olympic swimmers. The general approach to the paper derives from symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. Within the context of sport development, Chambliss (1989) focuses on the production of excellence. Chambliss (1989) argues that because success in swimming is so definable and the stratification system with regard to performance is relatively unambiguous, it enables a researcher to clearly chart the individual development of an athlete in terms of performance. The second single themed paper is a case study approach examining social exclusion in high performance youth sport, specifically in Nottinghamshire, England. Collins and Buller (2003) discuss the

funding conflict between sport for all and elite sport, and provide a policy and literature overview on the topic. Collins and Buller (2003) focussed the empirical element of their investigation on a specific county sport development initiative and whilst the programme was deemed a success with regards to improving children's sports performance, the results conclude that the majority of participants were from middle class and relatively affluent households. The authors therefore called for more direct social marketing in association with future projects to help reduce social exclusion associated with this type of sport development initiative.

Five of the nineteen papers combined the theme of 'sport development' with the theme of 'disability sport'. Continuing with the policy aspect of sport development Sorensen and Kahrs (2006) discuss the integration of disability sport in Norwegian sport organisations. De Pauw (2001), Gold and Gold (2007) and Legg et al., (2009) concurrently provide an historic review of the development of the Paralympic Games and an evaluation of the inclusion of wheelchair exhibition events at the Olympic Games. De Pauw's (2001) contribution, whilst informative offers little critique and fails to move beyond a descriptive discourse. Gold and Gold (2007) provide an historical review which also includes brief critiques of significant past Games, and based on the date of publication, looks towards the London 2012 Games. The authors conclude by highlighting what they believe to be important challenges for the future of the Paralympic Games. With regards to the development of disability sport, they discuss the fact that not all sports are regarded equally either within the Paralympic movement or by society in general and they also discuss the potential integration of the Paralympic programme into the Olympic Games. Legg et al., (2009) provide a review of prior research pertaining to the inclusion of athletes with a disability into mainstream sport and an historical review of how athletes with a disability have been included within the Olympic Games under the auspices of exhibition events from the 1984 Winter and Summer Olympic Games to the 2004 Athens Olympics.

All the papers reviewed so far within the first order theme of 'sport development' have discussed the development *of* sport rather than development *through* sport. The next

paper reviewed, Crawford and Stodolska (2008) continues in this vein combining the first order themes of 'sport development' and 'disability sport' but also includes the first order theme 'sporting culture'. The authors investigate the constraints to the development of elite sport for people with disabilities in Kenya. Using a grounded theory research design the authors identify issues beyond policy, including negative attitudes toward people with disabilities, ethnic favouritism, coaching, equipment, facilities, transportation and lack of financial resources (Crawford and Stodolska, 2008).

Nine further papers combined the themes of 'sport development' and 'sporting culture', three of which have already been reviewed as they also carried the first order theme of 'biography' (Votre and Mourao, 2001, Torres, 2002, Fair, 1987). Of the remaining six papers, three were published in the *International Journal of the History of Sport* (Mol, 2000, Niehaus, 2006, Collins, 2007), and two were published in *Sport in Society* (Bolsmann and Brewster, 2009, Guest, 2009). Mol (2000) discusses the role Amsterdam City Council played in the development of sport in The Netherlands in the inter-war years. Collins (2007) and Niehaus (2006) both examine the development of sport within Japanese culture. The development of baseball in Japan is the focus of the Collins (2007) paper, and Niehaus (2006) reflects on the inclusion of Judo as an Olympic sport. Whilst the development of these sports are paramount to both of these papers, the dominant theme is 'sporting culture', and these papers will therefore be discussed in more detail in the following section. Bolsmann and Brewster (2009) use a case study approach of two mega events, the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico and the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa to discuss developmental rhetoric associated with event legacy. Guest (2009) 'The diffusion of development-through-sport: analysing the history and practice of the Olympic Movement's grassroots outreach to Africa', is the only paper within this theme to address sport development by placing emphasis on social objectives and sport as a tool for human development, all the other papers within this theme have primarily focussed on the value of sport for its own sake. Finally within the combined themes of 'sport development' and 'sporting culture' Cashman et al., (2004) evaluate the outcomes of four mega sporting events in Australia between 2000-2006. Whilst utilising four unique case studies, the subservient yet concurrent theme throughout the paper is the

Australian sporting culture and the almost addictive desire to host mega sporting events regardless of the social, economic or indeed sporting legacy of such endeavours.

The final paper to be reviewed is Dionigi (2006) who uniquely combines the first order themes of 'sport development' and 'career'. As previously discussed the study attempts to make sense of older adults and their relationship with competitive sport. Having reviewed the traditional quantitative research approach to this topic, the authors use qualitative analysis to explore participants' stories about their motives and experiences and as such reproduced dominant discourses within the immediate and broader social contexts.

3.5.6 Sporting Culture (socio-historical)

This is the largest first order theme, with a total of 83 papers. However, only nine papers carry 'sporting culture' as an individual theme. The most common associated themes with 16 papers each are 'biography' and 'Olympism', 'gender' and 'sport development' both occur across ten papers, with 'career' appearing on nine papers, 'media' occurs seven times, followed by 'disability sport' in four papers and finally 'relationships' and 'psychology / performance' appear only once.

From the nine single themed papers, Jobling (1988) and Magdalinski (2000) both discuss the Australian reverence for the Olympics. In 'The making of a nation through sport: Australia and the Olympic Games from Athens to Berlin, 1898-1916' Jobling (1988) provides a narrative historical account of Australia's affinity to sport during a time when the country transitioned from a collection of self-governing colonies to a federation of states. The contention of the paper is that Australia's affinity to sport and involvement in the Olympics during this time, led to expressions of independent nationalism which were in direct conflict to loyalty to Great Britain and the Empire, this in itself, Jobling (1988) argues, had a nation-building effect. Typical of work in the genre of Olympic history, Jobling (1988) utilises primary sources, in this case newspaper articles, to reconstruct the story of what happened during this time. The discourse between the development of the national culture against the backdrop of the rising sporting culture, provides a useful

framework for this historical narrative. Retaining the theme of the Olympics and its relationship with national identity, Magdalinski (2000) discusses the reinvention of Australia for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Again the paper presents an historical account laden with socio-cultural nuances. The author articulates how nostalgia helps to construct a cultural narrative and reflects on how the Sydney Olympic bid and consequent games provided an opportunity to reconstruct the nation's identity at a time of social, political and economic flux.

Continuing with the single theme of 'sporting culture' Kennedy et al (2006) also discuss an Olympic bid, this time the more recent London 2012 bid campaign. The authors use discourse analysis and autoethnographic research to explore the meanings attached to the bid campaign. As such, the paper outlines the campaign's use of images and cultural references that were located in particular historical and geographical contexts. Using Foucaultian theory, the authors argue that the campaign was structured in a postmodern fashion to mirror the postmodern consciousness of sport and cultural consumers (Kennedy et al., 2006). Working within the cycle of observation, recording, theorisation and re-theorisation, that is the hallmark of critical (auto) ethnography, the authors conclude that the bid did indeed draw on discourses of race, gender and class through the postmodern construction of the city and nation, through which Londoners could experience their own cultural and social identities. In this paper, equestrian sport is associated with the monarchy and the upper classes. The authors refer to one of the 'postcards' used in the campaign that depicts a rider and horse jumping over Buckingham Palace. The authors argue that the discursive framing of the advertisement is straightforward but the image's intelligibility depends on the re-stabilising of gender, racial and class differences. For example, the rider is "white skinned, and not dark skinned because this framing would be too obviously 'staged'. To present an Asian, or Black skinned body in this image would draw attention to the racial exclusivity of this sport and thus be 'false' or 'misrepresentative'. The image presents itself as an authentic representation of Britishness while not challenging the exclusions that are necessary to form this identity." (Kennedy et al., 2006: p. 11).

Yamamoto (2000) discusses the cultural identity and conflict felt by first and second generation Japanese American's during the 1930s. Focussing on the 1934 Los Angeles Olympics, the author reflects how this sport event evoked ethnic pride and international friendship within the Japanese American community, specifically enabling first generation Japanese Americans to celebrate their loyalty to Japan without demonstrating conflict with American interests. Yamamoto (2000: p. 410) explains that "through sport, the ethnic nationalism of Japanese Americans demanded not separate nationhood but full admission to mainstream American society". However, the Olympic inspired Japanese American nationalism was short lived due to the outbreak of World War II.

Windhausen and Tsypkina (1995) discuss the national identity and the emergence of the sports movement in late imperial Russia. In this paper, Olympic performance is discussed in the context of nation building and sporting cultural comparisons are drawn between Russia, England and America. National identity is also discussed in Jackson's (2004) paper 'Exorcising the ghost: Donovan Bailey, Ben Johnson and the politics of Canadian identity.' Within the context of Canada's sporting culture, racial and ethnic identity is also discussed alongside national identity.

Dyreson and Llewellyn (2008) presents an historic review of the practice of dipping (or not) the American flag at the Olympics since 1936. The symbolism of a country's flag combined with the global platform of the Olympics creates a unique platform to discuss what appears to be a conflict between national and Olympic cultures. Within the historical discourse, Dyreson and Llewellyn (2008) interweaves national, international and Olympic politics whilst also discussing the collective social formation of memory. Dyreson and Llewellyn (2008) therefore concludes that the sporting culture of not dipping the flag is now the dominant ideology replacing the historical justification which prompted the act in the first place.

From a marketing perspective, Majid et al (2007) discuss sporting culture in the context of the growing popularity of the Winter Olympics, specifically in non-traditional markets such as Mexico, Brazil and South Africa. They report that the concept of sporting heroes

and myths associated with the Olympics help strengthen the brand power. Even though culturally these countries are not traditionally associated with winter sports, there is a consumer demand for consumption of the brand, demonstrated by the increased expenditure on television rights within these countries. Sporting culture is not simply about participation but also spectatorship. Whilst this paper discusses the emergence and development of new consumer markets, it falls short on the anthropological justification.

In the final paper within the single theme of 'sporting culture', Foldesi (2004) discusses the social status and mobility of Hungarian elite athletes. Published in the *International Journal of the History of Sport* the article is not surprisingly couched in terms of socio, economic and political historic references. Focussing on the decades of state socialism, Foldesi (2004) explores the concept of semi-amateur and semi-professional sports models and the influence of post-war Olympic-focussed sport policy and the influence this had on the athletes of that time.

Across 24 papers 'sporting culture' appears with at least two other themes. The content of these papers has been discussed in previous sections or will be discussed in the remaining five first order theme sections. In this case 'sporting culture' predominately provides the socio-historic setting in which the content of the paper is discussed and indeed from which other themes arise. The following section however, provides an analysis of a selection of papers which, whilst combining two themes, most articulately highlights the very essence of 'sporting culture'.

Whilst analysing the award-winning documentary *Fists of Freedom,* Bass (2002) outlines the socio-political unrest of the late 1960s America. The narrative of the article closely mirrors that of the film which contextualised the 'black power' action of Tommie Smith and John Carlos during the 1968 Olympics. This succinct paper neatly highlights the multi-faceted and complex nature of 'Sporting Culture' through the iconic actions of these two athletes. Not only does Bass (2002) critique the content of the documentary, she also critiques the missing political and sporting content such as reference to the Cold

War and gender inequalities of the time. This is a clear example of how 'sporting culture' is at times a platform of representation for the wider socio-historic discourse.

Similarly, Brownell's (2005) paper entitled 'Challenged America: China and America – Women and Sport, Past, Present and Future' also highlights wider socio-historic issues through the 'sporting culture' lens. This comparative paper discusses the relationship between sport and the construction of national identity. In this case the wider political, economic and cultural landscape of these two super nations provides the setting for the sport narrative in which the leading concepts are gender and nationalism.

Finally, two papers published in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, discuss Japanese cultural identity in the context of 'Sporting Culture' and 'Sport Development'. Niehuas (2006: p. 1183) explains that the acceptance of Judo as an Olympic sport in 1960 was "symbolically tantamount both to the fundamental rehabilitation of Japan as a nation and to the reintegration of the Axis powers into the 'Olympics family' that began in 1952." From a 'sporting culture' perspective it is the inclusion of the first non-European sport into the Olympic programme which is of significance. Whilst discussing Japanese cultural identity in global sport, Collins (2007) focuses on the sport of baseball and draws comparisons with American sport development. Through the previous analysis of the theme 'sporting culture', sport has been shown as a platform or mirror of wider socio-cultural expression, in this paper however, Collins (2007: p.359) identifies cultural nuances specific to sport "Sport is an apt prism through which to explore a more complex reflection of Japanese nationalism in the global arena. At different times in its modern history, Japan has attempted to define its national cultural identity through global sport, most notably in its numerous campaigns to host the Olympic Games".

Not surprisingly the theme of 'sporting culture' intricately combined sub themes of history, sociology, economics and politics, and mirrored the dominant Western / Eurocentric culture of the Olympic movement. At times the sporting culture provides the background or the context in which other themes emerge, other times it is the culture

itself which is discussed. However, even when the sporting culture of 'others' is discussed it is always in comparison to the dominant and traditional 'sporting cultures'.

3.5.7 Olympism

As previously mentioned, 'Olympism' is one of only two key word search terms, to also have been identified as a first order theme. Within this theme, 47 papers were identified, 27 as a single theme. As outlined in the previous section, 16 papers combined the themes of 'Olympism' and 'sporting cultures', four with 'media', three with 'biography', and the combination of 'Olympism' and 'disability sport', 'sport development', and 'psychology / performance' were each found in one paper. 'gender', 'career', and 'relationships' are all themes not identified with 'Olympism'.

A large range of publications are associated with this theme, although four stand out as publishing several papers. One of the journals most prolific in its publication of articles relating to the single theme of 'Olympism' was *Research Yearbook* with five papers, one of which also combined the 'sporting culture' theme. Close observation of publication date and volume number would indicate that all these papers (Bayios, 2006, Bronikowski, 2006, Lipiec, 2006, Pawłucki, 2006, Platonov, 2006) were part of the same issue. Within this publication, Pawlucki (2006) discusses the internal complexity of education, as exemplified by Olympic sport. Part two of this study (Pawłucki, 2007) then goes on to discuss the notion that Olympic sport is a social movement for peace. The *International Journal of the History of Sport* also published five papers, although the first order theme 'Olympism' was always identified with at least one other theme. All six papers (Mol, 2000, Torres, 2001, Novak, 2006, Park, 2007, Maguire et al., 2008b, Maguire et al., 2008a) use Olympism and the associated values, as a position against which to discuss sport development. Three papers are centred on nation specific discourse (Argentina, Netherlands and Rhodesia) the narratives of which are positioned through the lens of reconstruction. The final two papers discuss the juxtaposition of 'Modern Olympism' (Park, 2007; Maguire et al., 2008). *Quest* a journal published by the 'National Association for Physical Education in Higher Education' also published five

single themed papers and the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* published three single themed papers.

Two of the papers published in *Quest* focus on 'Olympism' and sport as a form of education. Arnold (1996) begins by providing a brief yet informative summary of Olympism which has, somewhat surprisingly, been absent in the papers reviewed thus far. Sport is then described by Arnold (1996) as an inherently worthwhile practice, and the place of sport in relation to education and the curriculum is discussed before the author evaluates the relationship between Olympism and sport as a form of education. In '''Olympism'' Revisited as Context for Global Education: Implications for Physical Education' Binder (2001) concludes that whilst the goals of Olympism are by-products of 19th Century humanism, the Eurocentric ideals may still support the development of useful international curriculum resources if allowed to reflect contemporary educational priorities and interpreted within local cultural contexts. Donnelly (1996) makes reference to the numerous descriptions of Olympism, a movement he describes as developed from Victorian codes of sportsmanship and fair play, exclusive amateurism and muscular Christianity, but argues that there is little evidence that the original ideals of Victorian and Olympic sport still exist in the Olympic movement. Whilst acknowledging that 'Professionalism' is not a distinct philosophy in the same sense as Olympism, Donnelly (1996) goes on to discuss these two dominant sport ideologies and examines the monoculture of Prolympism. Finally, MacAloon (1996) explores the theoretical and practical political problems associated with being an Olympic anthropologist during which he critiques the universalist claims of Olympism and Czula (1975) provides an historical review of de Coubertin's Olympic philosophy.

Not surprisingly the three articles published in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* focus on the social philosophical principles of Olympism. Indeed, DaCosta (2006) addresses whether Olympism is biased toward non-philosophical discursive exchange, concluding that there never was a fixed Olympic philosophy and that Olympism is therefore just a process philosophy. Parry (2006) reviews Olympism in the context of globalisation, liberalism and multiculturalism focussing on the status of Olympism as a

social, political and educational ideology. Finally, Olympism, Eurocentricity and transcultural virtues are discussed by McNamee (2006). Focussing on the virtue ethics of Olympism, McNamee (2006) discusses the concept of a role model and purports that this should transcend athletes alone to incorporate sports administrators, coaches and officials, sport scientists and medics, and that the associated discourse should be sensitive to the tension between the local and global.

The range and diversity of topics discussed above in association with 'Olympism' are mirrored in the critical review of the remaining single themed papers. Whilst loose sub themes of 'philosophy', and 'history' can be identified, there is a distinct absence of a universal definition of Olympism, although this is not surprising, as for many Olympism is either culturally or content specific. Indeed, whilst discussing the role that results should have in Olympic contests, Torres (2006: p. 242) points out that "In spite of the fact that Olympism occupied a privileged position and was a recurring theme in his extensive writings, Coubertin never articulated a concise and clear definition [of Olympism]." Torres (2006) goes on to explain that due to a lack of specificity, conceptual lacunas and inconsistencies in the interpretation of Olympism, understanding and implementation of the Olympic ideologies are somewhat difficult.

Some authors such as Torres (2006) and Segrave (2000b) overtly discuss the ideological foundation of Olympism. Patsantaras (2008) for example critiques the relationship between Olympic ideology and Olympic social responsibility, concluding that the original messages advocated by the 19th Century Olympic movement, are no longer reproduced in today's societies which are dominated by economic priorities and values, commercialisation and consumerism. However for others reference is made to the Olympic ideology as an almost tick box exercise or as a framework against which to critique 'issues'. Takacs (1992) for example debates the philosophical conflict between the Olympic ideals of maximum performance and the principle that it is not winning, but participation that is important. And Black and Bezanson (2004) use Olympism as a framework to discuss human rights and democratisation, specifically comparing the Seoul and Beijing Olympics.

Finally, Czula (1978) reviews the relationship between an athlete's sport and his /her expression of Olympic idealism. Interestingly this is the only study found to consider an individuals relationship with Olympism, specifically athletes from five United States Olympic teams (basketball, men's gymnastics, wrestling, men's swimming and diving and track and field). Unfortunately, the paper is based on secondary analysis of data collected seventeen years previously by a secondary researcher. Czula (1978) does discuss several caveats associated with the methodology used and highlights the influential social changes which took place between data collection and analysis, namely women's and black's liberation movements. Unfortunately the paper raises more questions than answers.

Concluding this section is somewhat difficult. As discussed previously, the lack of a consistent definition of Olympism has resulted in varied interpretations of de Coubertin's work. Thematic analysis of this theme therefore is like trying to shed light on a topic through an ever moving prism, the result of which is the dispersion of light without focus or clarity.

3.5.8 Psychology / Performance

This theme was identified across 37 papers, with 24 papers carrying only this theme. Additional first order themes identified with 'psychology / performance' include 'career' in association with seven papers, 'relationship' across four papers, and the themes 'sporting culture' and 'disability sport' were each found in one paper.

Within this theme it is interesting to note that one author Daniel Gould is associated with eight papers published over a ten year period from 1992 to 2002. The author's earlier work (Gould et al., 1992a, Gould et al., 1992b, Gould et al., 1993a, Eklund et al., 1993) focussed on the US Olympic Wrestling Team's performance in the Seoul Olympics. In-depth telephone interviews were carried out with 20 members of the team (athletes) within 6 to 12 months after the Olympics. In a series of articles centred upon the initial study, the authors focus on mental preparation of the athletes and precompetitive cognition and affect (Gould et al., 1992a), competitive cognition and affect (Gould et al.,

1992b) and coping strategies used by the athletes to deal with the specific Olympic experience (Gould et al., 1993).

Departing from Olympic athletes and the sport of wrestling, Gould moved on to the sport of figure skating with the aim of understanding the positive and negative aspects of being a national champion (Gould et al., 1993b). Again in-depth telephone interviews were carried out with 17 United States champion figure skaters. The authors discussed the role expectations and pressures the athletes identified as being associated with winning a major title. Gould et al., (1993b pg. 373) conclude that "To help prepare future elite skaters, and possibly other elite athletes, to cope with the demands of trying to either attain or maintain a national championship, one step that can be taken is to increase the awareness of athlete, coach, and sport science and medicine specialist relative to the amounts and types of stress experience…" In relation to this study, it is interesting to note that whilst sport science support, in the shape of veterinary support, has been utilised within equestrian sport predominantly since the mid 1990s (de Haan and Johnson, 2010) the acceptance of sport science support for the human athlete, the rider, is a relatively new phenomenon.

The final study associated with Gould, was a commissioned large-scale project supported by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) examining positive and negative factors that influenced Olympic athletes and coach performances in the Atlanta and Nagano Olympics. Potential physical, psychological, environmental and social factors of influences were examined via surveys administered to 296 US athletes who participated in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, and 83 US athletes who participated in the 1998 Nagano Olympics (Gould et al., 2002a). The same issues where investigated via focus group interviews with Atlanta athletes and individual interviews with Atlanta coaches (Gould et al., 2002b) and via in-depth telephone interviews with eight athletes from the Atlanta Games and seven from the Nagano Games who either failed, met or exceeded performance expectations (Greenleaf et al., 2001).

Whilst the research is grounded in the discipline of psychology, and as such identifies typical performance related issues such coach-athlete relationships, this research also identifies Olympic specific variables which athletes felt effected performance such as social support and the ability to get tickets for friends and family, and environmental concerns such as venue transportation difficulties and Olympic village distractions (Gould et al., 2002a). Furthermore, results from the interviews showed the two groups, those who met or exceeded expectations and those who did not, differed on only a few positive performance factors, including attitude towards the games, Olympic housing and team unity.

Another author consistent with this theme is Terry Orlick who is identified in association with six papers (Orlick and Partington, 1988, Orlick and Partington, 1987, Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick, 1993, Werthner and Orlick, 1986, Partington and Orlick, 1987a, Partington and Orlick, 1987b). Orlick's work published slightly earlier than Gould's and predominantly looking at Canadian athletes Olympic experience at the Sarajevo and Los Angeles Games, carries many similarities to the work discussed above. Orlick's work however tends to favour quantitative analysis whereby Gould primarily uses qualitative analysis.

Following on from Gould and Orlick's work on athletes' Olympic experience, several other authors directly focus on psychological / performance issues during games time. Samulski and Lopes (2008) discuss the Brazilian Olympic Committee's (COB) decision to bring in a sports psychologist to provide psychological counselling to their athletes during the 2004 Athens Olympics, concluding that as a result of the positive feedback on the psychological support during the Games from both athletes and coaches, the COB where planning a long-term preparation program in the build up to the 2008 Beijing Games.

The experience of Norwegian athletes at the 1994 Lillehammer Games was a focus of two papers within this theme (Pensgaard et al., 1999, Pensgaard and Ursin, 1998). The authors predominantly focussed on motivational factors, dimensions of stress experience

and coping strategies. Interestingly, in one paper the authors compared the experience of Paralympic and Olympic athletes, with the aim of determining whether these athletes perceive different motivational climates. The authors explain that "to the best of our knowledge, no previous study has used a qualitative approach to compare elite athletes with and without disabilities" (Pensgaard et al., 1999: p. 240). Indeed, this type of comparative study is unique to this systematic literature review. The authors conclude that the immense differences in public and media attention, how the sports are organised and the financial support available to the athletes, all contribute to the appearance of Olympic and Paralympic sports functioning in two different worlds, but despite this, within the field of their research and specifically with regards to motivation, the athletes showed more similarities than differences. It is interesting to note Pensgaard et al (1999) identified gap in the literature / knowledge regarding research that focuses on comparative experience and to note that despite this identified absence at the end of the 1990s, this particular systematic literature review failed to identify additional studies in this area. With regards to the present study, it will be interesting to compare similarities and differences across both the British Equestrian Olympic and Paralympic teams' experiences, thereby adding to this missing knowledge.

Finally, within the context of Olympic experience during the games, Thorpe (2009) discusses the experience of snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis at the 2006 Turin Olympics. Jacobellis was publicly criticised for risking what was a certain gold medal by performing a showy stunt in the final stages of the competition. The mass media asked psychologists to explain why an athlete would behave in this way, some sport psychologists responded by describing the incident as a classical case of distraction and loss of attention. Thorpe (2009) however argues that these types of comments, which were widely circulated via various media outlets, simply show ignorance to the distinctive cultural values held by snowboarders, and calls for sport psychologist to take the broader socio-cultural context more seriously. As a result Thorpe (2009) offers a multi-level contextual approach as a potentially useful strategy for investigating the dynamic interplay of individual and social factors in traditional and alternative sports.

Such contextual considerations could also be applied to equestrian sport which, as discussed in Chapter 2 has several distinctive socio-cultural characteristics.

Moving on from reviewing athlete experience during games time but retaining a focus on athletes who have performed at Olympic Games, Vernacchia et al., (2000) present the psychosocial characteristics of 15 US Olympic track and field athletes and Durhand-Bush and Salmela (2002) examine the factors that contributed to the development and maintenance of athletic performance as a result of interviews with ten World and Olympic Champions.

Two further sub themes were identified within this first order theme, 'coach-athlete relationships' and 'career transition'. Within the theme 'psychology / performance' it is not surprising to identify papers which discuss 'coach-athlete relationships', it is however somewhat surprising to find this as the sole focus in only two papers (Philippe and Seiler, 2006, Jowett and Cockerill, 2003). In contrast, the sub theme of 'career transition' was identified across seven papers (Denison, 1996, Torregrosa et al., 2004b, Cecić Erpič et al., 2004, Ungerleider, 1997, Petitpas et al., 1992, Baillie and Danish, 1992, Stephan et al., 2003). In an interesting departure from 'traditional' methods employed to evaluate sports retirement Denison (1996) negates a theory centred approach, instead opting to present the findings of interviews with 12 retired elite athletes in the form of three short stories, each exploring a different stage of adjustment. The work focuses on the central question: How is retirement from highly competitive sports lived into existence and experienced? Whilst the content of the stories is related to the topic of sport retirement, the conclusion or epilogue of the paper critiques the use and validity of sport narrative as a form of enquiry available to the field of social science.

3.5.9 Media

Twenty-three papers were identified with the theme 'media'. All other themes were found in association with this theme, with the most common co-theme being 'gender' across ten papers and 'disability sport' across six papers. The theme was found in isolation in two papers (Darnell and Sparks, 2005, Rothenbuhler, 1988). Analysis of the

23 papers resulted in the emergence of several general sub-themes, predominantly 'which Games', 'national perspective of analysis', 'gender', 'individual athlete coverage' and 'type of media'.

Eight Olympic Games, five Summer Games (Los Angeles 1984, Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004), three Winter Games (Calgary 1988, Salt Lake City 2002, Turin 2006) and three Paralympic Games (Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2002, Athens 2004) were discussed within this theme (please note the systematic literature review search was conducted in 2010). Sydney 2000 was the most prolifically researched games being the focus of six separate studies (Gardiner, 2003, Knight et al., 2007, Wensing and Bruce, 2003, Darnell and Sparks, 2005, Capranica and Aversa, 2002, Billings and Eastman, 2002). Sub-themes associated with these particular studies include, gender (Billings and Eastman, 2002, Capranica and Aversa, 2002, Wensing and Bruce, 2003) and ethnicity (Knight et al., 2007, Gardiner, 2003, Billings and Eastman, 2002). Gardiner (2003) for example, analysed mainstream print based Australian media in the period of the 27th Olympiad, including and during the games themselves. Viewing media texts as a form of narration, the author used critical textual and pictorial analysis to review the media's representation of indigenous athletes and hence the construction of indigeneity during this time. Gardiner's (2003) discussion focuses on the media discourse surrounding two indigenous athletes, Nova Peris-Kneebone and Cathy Freeman, specifically concentrating on issues of race and racial representation, and the depiction of indigenous running. The author concludes by stating that although there were significant developments in the amount and content of media coverage of indigenous athletes during this time, issues of indigenous identity continued to be presented within, and confined by the discourse of national identity.

Several different nations press coverage of the Games were identified including coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games by a South Korean national newspaper (Ik Young and Crossman, 2009), Italian television coverage of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (Capranica and Aversa, 2002), French and German press coverage of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games (Schantz and Gilbert, 2001), Australian

print media coverage of the 2000 Sydney Olympics (Wensing and Bruce, 2003, Gardiner, 2003), British national newspaper coverage of the Olympic Games since 1948 (King, 2007) and British newspaper coverage of the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games (Thomas and Smith, 2003). Three papers reviewed Canada's media coverage. Mac Neill (1996) present an ethnographic study of the Canadian Television Network's (CTV) production of the ice hockey tournament at the 1988 Calgary Olympics, Knight et al., (2007) compare French- and English-language Canadian television coverage of Cathy Freeman during the 2000 Sydney Olympics, and Darnell and Sparks (2005) discuss the Canadian media construction of Sydney Olympic Triathlete Simon Whitfield.

Finally six papers critique media coverage of the Olympics from an American perspective. In order of the Olympics they are associated with, Rothenbuhler (1988) looked at the television viewing behaviour of Americans during coverage of the 1984 Los Angeles Games, concluding that the event evoked 'living room celebrations' as families and friends gathered to enjoy the drama and ritual of the games. Daddario (1997) reviewed the NBC network's coverage of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, specifically examining how the network used rhetorical construction, such as pre-recorded video profiles and personal interviews, to mimic characteristics of feminine narrative, often seen in soap operas, to attract female audiences. Schell and Rodriguez (2001) reviewed CBS' coverage of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games, focussing on the coverage of wheelchair tennis player, Hope Lewellen. Through the analysis of this specific coverage, they explore "how the intersection of gender and disability complicates existing paradigms of sport, femininity, and corporeality" (Schell and Rodriguez, 2001: p. 127). Billings and Eastman discuss the differential selective representation of gender, ethnicity and nationality of the American television coverage of the 2000 Sydney Olympics (2002) and the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics (2003). Following on from this work, Billings et al., (2008) review the NBC's coverage of the 2006 Torino Games, again focussing on representation of gender, ethnicity and nationality.

The degree of focus regarding nationality discourse varies across the studies. For example, despite the fact that Schantz and Gilbert (2001) compare French and German

newspaper coverage of the Atlanta Paralympic Games, the paper does not discus issues of nationality or characteristics of the press specific to either country. Capranica and Aversa (2002: p. 337) discus Italian television coverage of the Sydney Olympics, the parameters of the discourse are nation-specific, for example "the proportion of television airtime coverage of female athletes was close to the proportion of the Italian female participation in the Games". The emphasis of this study is gender and whilst the cultural positioning of women in sport in general and in Italy is discussed, the cultural positioning of the press is not. Knight et al., (2007) do however discus the national and cultural positioning of the press in their analysis of English- and French-language Canadian television coverage of Cathy Freeman during the Sydney Olympics. It would appear that for some studies, the nationality of the press is simply a convenient variable, inevitably linked to the nationality or country of residence of the authors.

However, in some studies, nationality becomes a variable of analysis. The 'Billings' studies are examples of the latter. Across a series of three papers, for which Billings is the lead author, issues of 'gender, ethnic and national parity' are discussed across three different Olympic Games, Sydney, Salt Lake and Torino (Billings et al., 2008, Billings and Eastman, 2002, Billings and Eastman, 2003). In each of the papers a short review of nationality in televised sport is presented and the findings are in the context of the US network provider NBC. With regards to nationality, the Sydney study concludes there was a bias of nationalism found in that the most-mentioned athletes and half of all athletes mentioned were American participants. Whilst these were a successful games for American athletes, comparative analysis of the quantities of name mentions, show consistent bias in this measure of identity, where in reality only 11% of the medal winners were from the United States (Billings and Eastman, 2002). Somewhat surprisingly, non-American athletes were mentioned more frequently than American athletes during the Salt Lake Olympic coverage (Billings and Eastman, 2003). And in relation to the Torino Games coverage, non-American athletes were more likely to be depicted as succeeding because of athletic skill or strength, while American athletes were more likely to be depicted as having superior concentration and composure (Billings et al., 2008).

The issue of 'gender' is discussed in ten papers. In general, analysis of gender coverage within sport media is based on content analysis and is presented via quantitative analysis of airtime or column inches and qualitative content analysis. For example, Billings and Eastman (2002) report that in terms of clock time (television coverage) during the Sydney Olympics, women had significantly less overall coverage then men and female athletes were viewed as having less athletic skill and less commitment to their sports than male athletes. Similarly, King's (2007) text and picture analysis of British newspaper coverage of track and field events during the Olympic Games since 1948, found that media coverage in general trivialized and marginalized sportswomen. Furthermore, King (2007) concludes that some studies found that images of female athletes bordered on soft pornography, thus undermining their achievements by associating women more with appearance than performance. An exception to this approach is Daddario's (1997) study which focuses on the production of sport media and argues for the adoption of feminine narrative techniques to facilitate a more gender-egalitarian audience, encouraging female viewers to find a sense of place in sports spectatorship.

Finally, the significance of gender in comparison to other characteristics of identity is discussed in two separate papers. Through the example of Paralympian Hope Lewellen, Schell and Rodriguez (2001) explored how a woman athlete with a disability could claim subjectivity through sport. Schell and Rodriguez (2001: p. 133) conclude that "Hope Lewellen represents one example of a female athlete with a disability who claims subjectivity and challenges existing sexist and ableist stereotypes… Yet, at the same time, CBS often works to subvert Lewellen's empowered voice in order to depict the disabled athletic body as one that can transcend, or overcome, the female body." Wensing and Bruce (2003) reviewed media coverage of Cathy Freeman during the Sydney 2000 Olympics and found in this instance gender lost its place as the primary media framing device because of Freeman's importance as a symbol of national reconciliation.

Seven studies focussed on the media coverage of individual athletes, or in one case two athletes (Gardiner, 2003). Five of the seven studies featured female athletes; three

studies focussed on Cathy Freeman (Gardiner, 2003, Knight et al., 2007, Wensing and Bruce, 2003), as previously discussed, Hope Lewellen was the focus of the Schell and Rodriguez (2001) paper, and, Catriona LeMay Doan was the focus of Kumar's (2002) study. In relation to the two male athletes, gender is not discussed. Canadian Simon Whitfield, who won the gold medal in the first ever Olympic Men's Triathlon at the Sydney Olympics, is the focus of Darnell and Sparks (2005) study. Here the focus is on the Canadian media's construction of the athlete within the context of the promotional chain.

Finally, Denham (2004) examines press coverage of track and field athlete Carl Lewis amid reports in 2003 that he tested positive for banned stimulants prior to US Olympic trails in 1988. Denham (2004) presents a complex narrative in which he compares national and international press coverage of the Lewis story set against a backdrop of discourse relating to the United States military assault on Iraq. Denham (2004) describes Lewis, as an arrogant athlete with a propensity to judge the morality of others, characteristics, which in light of anti-American sentiment, made him the perfect target for international criticism. The study concludes that American national journalists portrayed the Lewis story quite differently from those covering the story for international press. The international press portrayed Lewis and the USOC as sanctimonious and hypocritical whereby the US press, possibly as a result of collective nationalism following the 9/11 attacks, largely dismissed the story. The study thus demonstrates how journalists working in one country can differ markedly from others in how they report a story and that even 'sport' stories do not occur in a vacuum, but can and do mirror wider socio-political issues.

The final sub category or theme identified within the first order theme of media was 'type of media'. It is interesting to note that despite the commonality of new and social media in association with sports coverage today, only television and newspaper coverage was analysed in the papers reviewed in this study. As mentioned above, even the review of the relatively recent Torino Games in 2006, only focussed on a single networks (NBC)

television coverage (Billings et al., 2008). New media and social media coverage and analysis being predominantly associated with the London 2012 Games.

3.5.10 Disability Sport

The first order theme 'disability sport' was identified across 21 papers, only one paper carried the theme in isolation (Hums et al., 2003) and all other first order themes except 'biography' and 'relationships' were found in combination. As discussed in the previous section, 'media' was associated with this theme across six different papers (Goggin and Newell, 2000, Thomas and Smith, 2003, Schantz and Gilbert, 2001, Smith and Thomas, 2005, Schell and Rodriguez, 2001, Ik Young and Crossman, 2009). 'Disability sport' was associated with 'sport development' across four papers (Gold and Gold, 2007, Legg et al., 2009, DePauw, 2001, Crawford and Stodolska, 2008), as was 'sporting culture' (Fung, 1992, Darcy, 2003, Crawford and Stodolska, 2008, Peers, 2009). 'Gender' was found in combination with 'disability sport' across three papers (Schell and Rodriguez, 2001, Olenik et al., 1995, Ashton-Shaeffer et al., 2001) while 'psychology / performance' (Pensgaard et al., 1999), 'career' (Edwards, 2008) and 'Olympism' (Goggin and Newell, 2000) were each found in only one paper in association with 'disability sport'.

Issues associated with gender and representations in the media have previously been discussed in this review. However, new sub themes have been identified specific to the first order theme of 'disability sport' and these are 'legacy', 'history', and 'governance'. Darcy (2003) discusses the legacy hosting a Paralympic Games brings in relation to accessible infrastructure and a raised level of disability awareness, focussing specifically on the Sydney 2000 Paralympics.

Darcy (2003) concludes that the games may have increased the speed of social change for accessible infrastructure, but argues that these successes were borne through a combination of the games legacy and the potential offered by the human rights frameworks. Whether the Paralympics raised the level of disability awareness in the community and lead to an improved position in society for people with disabilities remained unanswered through this study. Three papers refer to the 'history' of the

Paralympic Games. Gold and Gold (2007) provides a straight forward historic review of the development of the Paralympic Games, DePauw (2001) provides an overview of the Paralympic movement as positioned within the wider context of disability sport, and Legg et al., (2009) examines the inclusion of wheelchair exhibition events within the Olympic Games from 1984-2004. And finally three papers refer to the 'governance' of disability sport. Hums et al., (2003) discusses the legal and policy implications for integration of athletes with disabilities into the United States Olympic Committee and National Governing Bodies as a result of the passage of the Stevens Amendment of 1998, Edwards (2008) refers to sport governance in relation to the case of Oscar Pistorius attempts to compete in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and Crawford and Stodolska (2008) discusses sport governance in relation to access issues for elite athletes with disabilities in Kenya.

3.6 Second Order Thematic Analysis

The next stage of data synthesis is the thematic analysis. This stage of analysis aims to elicit the themes that run through the discussions across the identified first order themes. This level of cross analysis provides a clearer picture of the research that has already been conducted in this field and helps the researcher position the current study strategically within the context of previous literature.

To some extent a level of cross analysis has already been conducted through the first stage of descriptive analysis due to the fact that very few of the first order themes were identified in isolation.   For example the theme of gender runs through many of the papers and was found in association with all other first order themes apart from 'Olympism'. The first order theme of 'gender' has been carried forward for further analysis in this section, alongside newly identified second order themes of 'identity', 'experience', 'history', 'challenges' and 'values'.

3.6.1 Gender

The application of gender as a theme has been discussed in section 3.5.2. However, here we move beyond the descriptive analysis of gender and provide a more in-depth thematic

analysis which primarily focuses on notions of gender (gender ideologies), sexuality and female emancipation. Following on from the first order analysis, it is evident that notions of gender and gender ideologies are most prominent in studies associated with media and sport. This is not surprising considering that sport is overwhelmingly constructed in the mass media as a male domain. Sport, is after all predominantly separated into same sex competition (unless physiological differences between men and women offer no competitive advantage or disadvantage – as is the case with equestrian sport), with male sports taking the dominant default position.

Kumar's (2002) critique of the media representation of Canadian athlete LeMay Doan, specifically focussing on the binary portrayal of either a 'feminine' woman or a 'masculine' athlete, provides an insightful analysis of notions of gender. Whilst critiquing one specific article, Kumar (2002) notes the overt separation of language which places Doan in a gendered framework of either a 'powerhouse' athlete or a 'lovely' woman but never an exceptional athlete who just happens to be a woman. "LeMay Doan represents both *essential* masculine and famine characteristics, thus she is a living contradiction to hegemonic gender ideologies, and therefore, a threat to the *natural* (i.e. patriarchal) order of things. However, because this is contradiction and threat, it is problematic and must be eliminated, or at least glazed over, DiManno (the author of the piece) resolves this in the article through emphasizing LeMay Doan's feminine qualities and characteristics, while downplaying, trivializing, and in some cases, erasing her athletic (and typically masculine) abilities and achievements." (Kumar, 2002: p.84-85).

The above example of gender framing is often referred to as 'ambivalence', where positive descriptions and images of women athletes are juxtaposed with descriptions and images that undermine and trivialise women's efforts and successes (Billings and Eastman, 2003, Billings and Eastman, 2002, Wensing and Bruce, 2003). Wensing and Bruce (2003) explain that whilst ambivalence is often considered an improvement on stereotyped coverage, it still denies female athletes appropriate recognition and prestige. Interestingly in papers which refer to the historic / biographic profile of individual female

athletes such as Gori's (2001) depiction of Trebisonda Valla, or Erard's (2008) narrative of Micheline Ostermeyer, notions of gender remain stereotypical. Here notions of 'compulsory heterosexuality' are evident as reference is often made to the heterosexual role of these athletes such as mother/wife/girlfriend.

Notions of gender or gender ideologies are viewed through a cultural lens by both Wensing and Bruce (2003) and Brownell (2005). Interestingly the addition of nationalism to gender, results in a hierarchical thematic positioning of nationalism above gender. For example Brownell (2005: p.1173) explains that "in China the pursuit of national victories contributed to the support of women's sports and the subsuming of gender issues by issues of nationalism", and Wensing and Bruce (2003: p.387) explain that the media coverage of Cathy Freeman during the Sydney 2000 Olympics "points to an instance in which gender lost its place as the primary media framing device because of Freeman's importance as a symbol of national reconciliation".

Continuing with the notion of a hierarchical relationship between gender ideologies and other forms of identification, Schell and Rodriguez's (2001) concluding argument in their paper 'Subverting bodies / ambivalent representations: media analysis of Paralympian, Hope Lewellen', is that the disabled athletic body is one that can transcend, or overcome the female body. In their study of CBS's 1996 Paralympic Games coverage, Schell and Rodriguez (2001: p.133) explain that whilst individually Lewellen challenges the media image of the (hetero)sexualised, non-disabled, female athlete, CBS "defuses such disruptive images by its silent inattention to those displays of her identity". This paper bridges the thematic discourse of notions of gender and sexuality and is a good example of how multifaceted the theme of gender is.

Sexuality is most overtly discussed in Phillips and Osmond's (2009) paper which reviews the filmic sports history of Swimmer Dawn Fraser. However, as discussed in the first order analysis reference to Fraser's sexuality is not necessarily in the context of her sport or sporting career. In fact throughout the sourced literature there is a distinct lack of studies which address sexuality. Whilst discussing issues of gender, the default position

has been to discuss the 'other' as female, for example issues of masculinity and femininity are positioned within the discourse surrounding gender ideologies and representation of women in sport. Yet it is also relevant here to note that within the sourced literature there is also a lack of discourse surrounding masculinity. The lack of binary sex segregation in equestrian sport produces a unique framework in which to discuss notions of gender and issues of sexuality. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, a study by Dashper (2012) concludes that whilst equestrian sport is shown to offer an unusually tolerant environment for gay men in which men of all ages demonstrate low levels of homophobia, this more tolerant attitude is purchased at the expense of a subordinated feminine 'Other', thereby still perpetuating the dominance of men within competitive sport.

Regarding sexuality and sport and in the context of the sourced literature, there is a noted absence of discourse relating to the sexualised image or objectification of female athletes. Dyreson (2003 p.435) provides a review of the representation of female athletes during the 1920s in America and poses the question "Did the new women athletes who became national heroines and were incorporated into the indispensible medium 'for the transmission of ideology and identity' during the 'Jazz Age' serve American culture as icons of liberty, or are they better understood as objects of desire?". Dyreson (2003 p.459) concludes that "In the American popular culture of the 1920s, members of this 'third sex' served the nation as both icons of liberty and objects of desire. The coverage of the American women's victory in the 1999 World Cup football tournament, particularly the attention given to Brandi Chastain's celebratory strip of her jersey… demonstrates that women athletes in American culture continue to serve as both symbols of emancipation and coveted sexual commodities". There are numerous scholars producing work on the media's portrayal of sportswomen and how these images emphasize femininity / heterosexuality rather than athletic competence and as such trivialise women's sports, yet there was an absence of such papers sourced through this particular literature review methodology.

The final sub theme in this section, emancipation, is to some extent unequivocally linked to the theoretical approach of feminism(s) which will be discussed in the third order analysis. As discussed so far, gender neutrality is absent in the domain of sport. The resulting inequality leads to the identification of a disenfranchised group, in this case female athletes, and the fight to redress this balance spans both feminist and other forms of emancipatory theory. Whilst reference to these movements and ideologies are present in the identified literature, associated theoretical frameworks are not as dominant as one might have expected.

In the context of thematic analysis, in papers framed on the notions of female emancipation, the predominant style of discourse is to focus on one leading protagonist. Votre and Mourao (2001) discuss the contribution Brazilian swimmer Maria Lenk made to feminine emancipation during the first half of this century. The narrative of Lenk's sporting achievement is interwoven with wider social and political discourse resulting in the authors referring to Lenk as an icon and an inspirational agent of change. As seen in the following quote, in this paper female emancipation is used in its widest form incorporating social and cultural issues beyond sport "She, and others, challenged the attitudes and behaviour of a male-dominated society. She, and others, helped dismantle the means and mechanisms by which that patriarchy maintained its dominance over women. She, and others, opened the doors to female emancipation – culturally, socially *and* in the world of sport." (Votre and Mourao, 2001: p.212).

Borish (2004) also refers to one leading female protagonist, Jewish American Charlotte Epstein, who incidentally was also a swimmer. Again the narrative of Epstein's sporting achievement is interwoven with wider social and political discourse but as the following quote shows, the framework of emancipation here are the parallels drawn between physical mobility and political power "The physical freedom of women's bodies in swimming went together with the political freedom of seeking the vote for women in the 1910s, articulated by Epstein… Epstein's endorsement of suffrage visibly linked women's swimming and physical mobility with political power" (Borish, 2004 p. 207).

In Gori's (2001) paper on fascist femininity, Trebisonda Valla, the first Italian woman to win a gold medal at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, provides the sporting reference, in what is essentially a political paper. Gori (2001) outlines that at the time of Valla's sporting success most Italian women had had to 'put aside their emancipatory aspirations' in order to adapt themselves to Mussolini's political requirements of gender roles. As seen in the following quote, in the context of fascist femininity, we see how sport was 'used' to effectively control and design the desirable female form of the time. "After the fabulous Valla's Olympic victory, and the superb performance of the female athletic team at the Berlin Olympics, the competitive Fascist state began to consider women's sport as an important way of displaying to the world the fact that Italian women, as a whole, were neither inferior to, nor weaker than, foreign women. Then in a dramatic volte-face, in the face of modern scientific evidence, the regime realised that women's sport could improve the quality and number of their children." (Gori, 2001 p. 191). This early example of the 'use' of sport is far from emancipatory but rather an example of male control over the 'use' of women.

Young and White (1995) move away from the solo protagonist style of enquiry and discuss the experience of elite women athletes in the context of sport, physical danger and injury. Using the notion that for some men, the cultural meanings of physical danger and living with injury resonate with broader ideological issues of gender and power, the authors investigate the parallel meanings of violence, pain and injury for male and female athletes. The authors conclude that their findings raise important theoretical questions regarding possible ambiguities in sports-related emancipation for women as the following quote demonstrates, "On one hand, women are participating in, even colonising, traditionally male-exclusive spaces in sport. On the other hand, many such spaces are being occupied by women athletes who, rather than participating in a transformation of the meaning of sport, appear to be contributing to a male-defined sports process replete with its violent, macho, and health-compromising aspects." (Young and White, 1995 p.45).

With regards to the current study, the lack of binary sex segregation in equestrian sport produces a unique framework in which to discuss notions of gender, issues of sexuality and female emancipation. The lack of literature pertinent to the themes of masculinity and sexuality is of particular interest to the current study which is focussed on a gender neutral sport. As previously identified the move from stereotypical to ambivalent discourse in relation to female sport participation does not support female emancipation. Gender neutrality should therefore be investigated further in the context of equestrian sport and within the confines of the current study.

3.6.2 Identity

Whilst the noun 'Identity' was used as a search term it is analysed as a second order theme due to the fact it failed to appear in isolation but rather it was present across all other first order themes (except 'Olympism').

Whilst reading the literature, I focussed on the subject / nature of the 'identity' being discussed, concluding that the papers either discuss singular athlete identities or the collective identity of many. Only two papers discuss what might be described as 'singular self' identity, by this I mean the authors who refer to their own identity. Howe (2008b), himself a Paralympian and journalist, uses ethnographic data to explore the notion of body culture and the classification system experienced by athletes with disabilities. Howe's (2008b) diary extract from his own classification experience in Seoul 1988, is evocative and insightful. He explains how the classification process not only provides parameters associated with his athletic ability; it also places his 'body' in a 'pigeonhole' and is used for non-sport related issues such as room allocation. Whilst the diary extract is of course written from a first person perspective, the narrative of the experience evokes a feeling of detachment from a sense of self, as eloquently portrayed in the following extract which refers to the individuals involved in the classification process, "None of these individuals are particularly friendly, in part due to the drawn out nature of the process, but they also appear to have treated me as a specimen pickled in formaldehyde and placed on the shelf in a biology classroom. My body has been

processed – classified – as an object of medical science where my disembodied identity does not seem to matter." (Howe, 2008b: p. 503).

Interestingly, the second paper to use 'singular self' identity in the discussion was also written by a Paralympian, Danielle Peers (Peers, 2009). Peers (2009) critically reviews discourses which focus on Paralympic history and Paralympic empowerment, specifically critiquing two publications, *'Paralympics: where heroes come'* and *'Athlete first: a history of the Paralympic movement.'* Again, the personal narrative section is as insightful and evocative as that of Howe's (2008b). In the context of identity, Peers (2009: p. 654) uses several common nouns to define herself "I read the newspaper articles and press releases that others have written about me. I read my own grant applications, speeches and business cards. I read myself defined, in each of these, by one word: not crip, queer, athlete, activist, student, woman or lesbian, but Paralympian. I read my life story transformed into that of *The Paralympian*." In both of these examples, the personal narrative comes at the beginning of the paper in distinct and separate sections almost as a disclosure, 'I am qualified to talk about this because I have first hand experience'. However, neither author really returns to their personal experience / identity when discussing the broader context of the papers.

Twelve further papers focussed on a singular identity but these were written by a third party (author) and I refer to these as 'singular other'. Whilst each of these papers focuses on a sportsman or sportswoman, the sport/athletic identity is never the sole focus of the narrative. For example, as discussed in previous sections, Knight et al., (2007) and White (2008) discuss Cathy Freeman's cultural identity during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Cultural / ethnic identity is also discussed in Llewellyn's (2008) account of the North American professional marathon craze of the early 1900s. Llewellyn (2008) explains that the performances of Dorando Pietri during the 1908 Olympic Games in London helped the nascent Italian communities in America take pride in their own ethnic identity in their new cultural setting of America. McNeil (2009) uses the boxer Lennox Lewis as the main protagonist in a narrative wrapped up in issues of Americocentricity, and Black

identity and masculinity. Similarly, Amir Kahn's identity as a British Asian boxer and his subsequent identity as a role model is the subject of Burdsey's (2007) paper.

Canadian national identity is discussed in reference to the controversy surrounding sprinter Ben Johnson in both Jackson (2004) and Stelzl et al., (2008) and in Hall's (2001) paper which discusses the role of Alexandrine Gibb and the development of girls sport in Canada. Indeed, in Hall's (2001) biographical account, multiple identities are discussed, as Gibb is described as an athlete, a pioneering leader and administrator of women's sport, manager of several international athletic teams and sports journalist. In the context of this narrative, gender is the predominant identity. Similarly in Philips and Osmond's (2009) engaging paper on Australian Swimmer Dawn Fraser, numerous identities are discussed including gender, sexuality and national identity. Gender and religion are the main identities discussed in Borish's (2004) paper on the American swimmer Charlotte Epstein. As previously mentioned, the sporting identity at times feels lost or indeed absent in these papers, Osmond et al., (2006) however is the exception. The dominant sporting identity discussed in this paper is surfing, although this in itself is interwoven with the cultural identity of Hawaii and that of the individual 'father of international surfing' Duke Paoa Kahanamoku.

The final sub category to be discussed is that of 'multiple other', by this I mean an identity shared by many is discussed by a third party (the author). Ten papers were associated with this sub theme. As with the sub theme 'singular other' nationality (Billings and Eastman, 2003, Windhausen and Tsypkina, 1995, Pawlak, 1984), ethnicity (Gardiner, 2003, Billings and Eastman, 2003), and gender (Billings and Eastman, 2003, Reeser, 2005, Wensing and Bruce, 2003) are all forms of identity discussed. However, unlike in 'singular other', in 'multiple other' physical and athletic identity are also acknowledged and discussed (Park, 2007, Stephan and Brewer, 2007, Groff and Zabriskie, 2006, Huang and Brittain, 2006). It is within these final papers that the actual notion of identity construction, in the context of sport, is discussed. Huang and Brittain (2006: p. 353) refer to the Foucauldian perspective of identity formation (external or internal construction) to discuss the relationship between identity and sport, explaining

that 'sport is one of the arenas in which the social struggle for control of the physical body occurs, processes of individual identity testing and formation are conducted, and multiple notions of identity are embodied'. As a result of 21 in-depth semi-structured interviews with British and Taiwanese elite disabled athletes, the authors conclude that notion of multiple identities existed within their participants' narratives. Specifically, they report that the athletes "adopt different identities depending on the specific situation in which they find themselves rather than simply basing them on the disabled-non-disabled dualism, thus confirming that identities are diverse and fluid, shifting and changing with time, context, and interaction with others" (Huang and Brittain, 2006: p. 372).

Multiple 'identities' have been identified across the literature from the perspective of the individual, to broader themes of nationality, race, culture, ethnicity and gender. As discussed however, in this context there is a distinct lack of personal narrative. Whilst all literature sourced for this review is in association with the genre of sport, there is an identified gap in the literature to studies that thematically link identity and specific sports. For example, if we define identity as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group, what are the individual or indeed shared characteristics of any particular sport? In the previous chapter on Equestrian Sports, certain sport specific characteristics were identified such as gender neutral competition, issues of class, elitism, military heritage, alongside issues of masculinity and sexuality to name but a few. It will be interesting to note, within the confines of this study, if there are distinctive characteristics belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of the sport and across Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

3.6.3 Experience

The second order theme of 'experience' was primarily found in association with the first order theme of 'psychology / performance'. However, 'experience' was also identified as a transient theme, faintly interwoven in the discussion across several first order themes. For example within the first order theme of 'gender', Ashton-Shaeffer et al., (2001)

discuss the elite level sport experience of female Paralympic wheelchair basketball players; in the theme of 'career', Werthner and Orlick (1986) discuss the retirement experiences of successful Olympic athletes; while in the theme 'relationships', Becker (2009) looked at the athlete-coach relationship, from the athlete perspective, with the aim of exploring athlete experiences of great coaching. Studies such as Gould et al., (1993b), Pensgaard et al., (1999) and Samulski and Lopes (2008) all investigate coping strategies used by the athletes to deal with the specific Olympic experience.

However, despite the range of papers investigating 'experience', there is a lack of literature relating to the 'lived experience' and a distinct absence of a 'first person' voice. As discussed in the previous section both Howe (2008a) and Peers (2009) use autoethnographic data to provide insight into their own sporting experience. Only a further four papers, each of which focus on very different topics, have been identified as examples of research which refer to the 'lived experience' of athletes.

Denison (1996) presents the findings of interviews with 12 retired elite athletes in the form of three short stories, each exploring a different stage of athlete retirement and adjustment. The work focuses on the central question: How is retirement from highly competitive sports lived into existence and experienced? Whilst the content of the stories is related to the topic of sport retirement, the conclusion or epilogue of the paper critiques the use and validity of sport narrative as a form of enquiry available to the field of social science.

Becker (2009) uses in-depth phenomenological interviews with 18 athletes in order to explore the athlete experiences of great coaching. The author argues that the majority of coaching research has focused on the behavioural and the ordinary (effectiveness) rather than the experiential and the extraordinary (greatness) and therefore presents the study as a way to begin to address the gaps in literature by examining athlete experiences of great coaching.   Six major dimensions are identified including: coach attributes, the environment, the system, relationships, coaching actions and influences.

Burton et al., (2006) uses a phenomenological approach to examine the unique experiences of US female Olympians in the process of talent development. The authors explain that the aim of the study was to better understand how women experienced their development of their athletic talent to reach the Olympic level. "By sharing in the journeys these women describe, we can better understand how they made meaning of these experiences, and how those experiences contributed to the development of their athletic talent" (Burton et al., 2006 p. 125). With regard to the chosen method for this study, the authors explain that in phenomenological research, language is the key construct that allows people to make meaning of their experiences, "By allowing the participants to explore those experiences, to begin to understand and make meaning of them, we are given a more complete understanding of the nature of what it means to be an Olympian,…" (Burton et al., 2006 p.127).

Finally Olenik et al., (1995) discusses the lived experience of women athletes with a disability. "The purpose of this research was to permit the voice of women athletes with a disability who participate in elite sport to be heard. By illuminating the issues and experiences of the female athlete, we can begin to reveal her view of reality within sport and the context within which she participates" (Olenik et al., 1995p. 54). The authors interviewed five female athletes who had competed in the 1994 Lillehammer winter Paralympics and the interview framework comprised of four open-ended questions related to initiation, participation, and involvement in elite sport. Seven major themes were identified; sport appeal, participatory and competitive opportunities, sustaining participation, acceptance of self, acceptance by society, interpersonal support and institutional support. The authors go on to discuss these themes in detail and conclude that "Based on the experiences of these authors and informants, the factors of likely importance include: sheer lack of numbers of female athlete and administrators (less voice); few avenues of expression for the female athlete with a disability; societal assumptions relative to disability and sport; and, finally, inertia from the effect of traditional expectations of being both disabled and female" (Olenik et al., 1995 p.56).

Whilst many studies investigate issues relating to Olympic experience, very few actually discuss what this means. Gould et al.,(1999 p. 372) refer to the unique experience of the Olympics "The Olympic environment is thought to be an important factor influencing the performance of Olympic athletes and coaches. Following the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta, coaches and athletes were consistent in saying that the Olympics differ from all other competitions." Unfortunately however, Gould et al., (1999) do not explicitly define the 'differences'. Greenleaf et al., (2001 p.154) explain that whilst certain aspects of the Olympic Games are similar to other major competitions, the Games provide a unique competitive environment, defining this as "the world's focus on the Games, increased importance and pressure". When reviewing factors influencing Olympic performance, Greenleaf et al., (2001 p.166) identify 'attitude towards Games' as a contributing factor, in this context they provide the following quote from one gold medal winning athlete "I like the Olympics because…there is so much at stake. The more at stake the better".

Crossman and Lappage (1992) reviewed Canadian athletes' perceptions of the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics and concluded that the boycott generally had a negative impact on the 48 athletes interviewed. Several variables were identified to have influenced the experience, variables pertinent to this discussion include: which sport, stage of career and importance athletes placed on the Olympics. Two equestrian athletes were included in this study (one male and one female). One of the conclusions drawn from this study was that for athletes in sports that allow the possibility of competing in several Olympics, such as equestrian events and shooting, the boycott generally affected them less negatively than those in sports in which athletes' peak for only one or two Games. In the context of the current study, I have sought to be able to provide deeper and richer discourse pertaining to the notion of 'Olympic and Paralympic experience' and it is interesting to note how this experience is framed in the career histories of athletes, considering possible differences across numerous Games.

Finally in the theme of 'experience', the findings of both Burton et al., (2006) and Olenik et al., (1995) have potential to move the discourse from experience to application. These papers raise the question 'How can the lived experience of athletes influence decision

making (policy) in sport?' With regards to the theme of experience in the context of this study, it is interesting to review similarities and differences between Olympic and Paralympic athletes and between the genders.

3.6.4 History

'History' was identified as an emergent theme, further sub-divided into general history and sport history. Crossing first order themes of 'biography', 'gender', 'sporting culture', and 'career', history often provides a contextual framework for the main narrative as is the case in the account by Knight et al., (2007) of Aboriginality and reconciliation around the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Alternatively history is the narrative itself, as is the case in Leigh and Bonin's (1977) account of the pioneering role of the French athlete Madame Alice Milliat.

With regards to the identified sub-theme of 'general history' discourses pertaining to historic issues which influenced sport at the time were present across numerous papers at differing levels. For example, wider socio-historic issues were raised in several papers which talked about particular sporting events at a particular moment in time such as the analysis by Bass (2002) of the 'black power' action of Tommie Smith and John Carlos during the 1968 Olympics or Fair's (1987) biographical account of Bob Hoffman, which draws on the broader issues of socialization of American immigrants during the 1930s.

With regard to the identified sub-theme of 'sport history' Jobling (1988) can be seen as a typical example of work in the genre of Olympic history. Jobling (1988) utilises primary sources, in this case newspaper articles, to reconstruct the story of what happened during this time. The discourse between developments of the national culture against the backdrop of the rising sporting culture provides a useful framework for this historical narrative. Whilst theoretical issues will be discussed in the third order analysis, at this point we can note that the thematic analysis of 'history', is dominated by the realist epistemology of reconstructionism, whereby knowledge is derived from empirical evidence and forensic research utilising primary sources to reconstruct 'what really happened' (Booth, 2004).

Due to the fact that relatively little has been written on the subject of equestrian sport, for this study I will also be reliant on individuals within the system and the national and international governing bodies to provide detail and background information. Invariably these will produce selective accounts which reflect their interests as they reconstruct the history of the sport. However, within the context of this thesis I have sought to develop critical discourse which will enable me to move beyond the reconstructive to the constructive narrative as defined by Booth (2004), and where appropriate to engage in aspects of deconstruction.

3.6.5 Challenges

The challenges faced by athletes who compete at an elite level was an emergent theme identified across the literature. In the literature relating to Olympic performance, challenges are seen as issues which negatively effect performance at the Games such as too much media attention (Gould et al., 2002a, Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) issues with coach-athlete relationship (Gould et al., 2002a, Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999, Jowett and Cockerill, 2003) team issues (Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) getting tickets for friends and family (Gould et al., 2002a, Gould et al., 1999) travel to venues (Gould et al., 2002a, Gould et al., 1999) issues with housing or the village (Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) issues with training / preparation (Gould et al., 2002a, Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999, Orlick and Partington, 1988) departure from normal routine (Greenleaf et al., 2001) injury (Greenleaf et al., 2001) and stress during competition (Pensgaard and Ursin, 1998, Gould et al., 1993a).

Some of the above factors were also identified in terms of broader competition / career. For example Philippe and Seiler (2006) discuss the influence of the coach-athlete relationship in the preparation period leading up to the Olympics. Whilst reviewing psychosocial characteristics of 15 Olympic track and field athletes Vernacchia et al., (2000) discuss 'obstacles' faced by these athletes including socially related obstacles such as financial, sex-role stereotyping, death of a parent, legal issues and accusations of taking performance enhancing drugs. Six athletes interviewed in this study pointed to injury as a key obstacle they had to overcome in their athletic careers. Here it is

interesting to note that within equestrian sport it is not simply the rider who may be subject to injury. For example, despite selection for the team and an excellent competition record leading up to the 2008 Olympics, including the title of World Eventing Champion, British Eventing rider Zara Philips missed out on selection for Beijing as her horse Toytown was injured.

Challenges at different stages of an athlete's career is an interesting angle on this emergent theme. For example challenges relating to access at the start of a career and representation and equality during the athlete's career were salient themes associated with female athletes and athletes with a disability. The challenge of maintaining success (Gould et al., 1993b, Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick, 1993, Mallett and Harrahan, 2004) and challenges pertinent to retirement were non-gender specific but only raised in relation to able-bodied athletes (Baillie and Danish, 1992, Baillie, 1993, Ungerleider, 1997, Cecić Erpič et al., 2004, Torregrosa et al., 2004b, Werthner and Orlick, 1986).

In this current study I sought to identify the challenges faced by both Olympic and Paralympic riders and to evaluate these challenges in the context of not only the Olympics or Paralympics but within the wider framework of their career histories.

3.6.6 Values

Finally we consider a gap in the literature, a missing theme, 'values'. Despite numerous papers within the literature sourced discussing either the Olympics or Paralympics there are no direct references to either the Olympic Values of respect, excellence and friendship, or the Paralympic Values of courage, determination, inspiration or equality. To some extent one could argue that 'excellence' is linked to the emergent themes of experience and challenges, and 'equality' is linked to emergent themes of gender, identity and challenges. But surely these values are in part at least, what differentiates the Olympic or Paralympic experience from other competition experiences. I seek therefore within the context of this current study, to contextualise these and other identified values within the framework of athlete experience.

3.7 Third Order Construct Analysis

The final stage of the data synthesis consists of a construct analysis. In this section the literature has been reviewed with specific consideration for the methodological constructs used. A general summary of methodological and theoretical approaches is presented but the primarily focus of this section is on the methodological constructs which have specific resonance with the research questions of this particular study. The aim of this phase of the analysis is to elicit 'what is the nature of this phenomenon' and thus inform both the methodological and empirical work of the subsequent stages of the research process.

Despite Edwards and Skinner's (2010) suggestion that quantitative approaches to sport management research continue to dominate the discipline; the literature sourced in this review more closely reflects those used in the social sciences and was overwhelmingly qualitative in nature. In fact 92% of the 253 studies sourced in the refined literature search, used a qualitative method of inquiry, with only 5% using a purely quantitative method and only 3% utilising mixed methods. Across these studies, the dominant method of data collection was interviews. Smith and Caddick (2012) explains that interview-based research is commonplace in social sciences as it offers a depth of information that permits the detailed exploration of particular issues in a way which is not possible with many other forms of data collection.

A total of 48 studies used interviews as a form of data collection, 31 utilised semi-structured interviews, 9 structured and 8 unstructured. The majority of studies utilised face-to-face data collection although two conducted interviews over the phone (Rothenbuhler, 1988, Crossman and Lappage, 1992). Although most of the studies used interviews as the only form of data collection, some studies combined interviews with other methods such as questionnaires or surveys (Rothenbuhler, 1988, Pensgaard et al., 1999, Stephan et al., 2003, Orlick and Partington, 1988, Sanchez et al., 2009, Young and White, 1995, Stephan and Brewer, 2007) focus groups (Gould et al., 1999, Jones et al.,

2007), participant observation (Ronglan, 2007) and case studies (Collins and Buller, 2003, Darnell and Sparks, 2005, Bolsmann and Brewster, 2009).

In-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews were predominantly used in studies aimed at exploring feelings and perspectives on a subject. For example whilst researching the phenomenon of retirement from elite level sport Werthner and Orlick (1986 p.341) used an in-depth, open-ended interview schedule consisting of 32 questions, designed to "elicit qualitative information about each athlete's life, from their own perspective… investigating the athlete's specific feelings and behaviour during the stage as an elite athlete, the reasons and mechanisms for retirement, the transition phase, and post-competitive life". However, in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews can also used to verify or revise information from other sources. For example when examining factors that contributed to the development and maintenance of athletic performance, Durand-Bush and Salmela (2002 p.157) used in-depth, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews to "elicit the athletes' perceptions of factors involved in the development and maintenance of their expert performance, and to verify, revise, or extend information obtained from other participants in the study or from sources such as biographies and internet reports".

The use of a semi structured format and open-ended questions allows the interview to take on a conversational style and gives the respondent the freedom to answer questions using their own words. Indeed in Lee et al., (2009), a paper which explores the notions of 'champion', the entire reflexive conservation with Sir Clive Woodward is presented, supplemented with the authors post-conversation reflections. The use of open-ended questions was also employed by Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick (1993) to explore the effects of success on athletes who had reached the top in their sport. The authors explain that this type of interview format "allowed for open searching and personal exploration required to explore this topic and increase the likelihood of high profile athletes participating in the study. It also allowed us to acquire detailed information, ask clarifying questions, and ultimately gain an in-depth understanding of each athlete's perspective."(Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick, 1993 p.33).

Finally Huang and Brittain (2006) use in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore the multiplicity and complexity of identity construction for elite disabled athletes. During the interview process the authors used a focussed life history approach. "The life history approach aims to capture the first hand subjective accounts of the actual experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. It allows for individual voices to be heard and at the same time allows groups of individual voices to be compared in order to highlight both the individual and communal issues raised by the participants in a particular study." (Huang and Brittain, 2006 p.357). This discovery-orientated method which allows for the recognition of the individuality of each participant in the research process is most conducive to the nature of this particular study and the main research question of 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their life careers?'

Another popular method of data collection found in association with 24 studies, was content analysis. Content analysis or textual analysis, emerged relatively early in the 20th century in the human sciences, primarily as a way of studying the content of communication in studies that aimed at describing the messages conveyed in the mass media. It has however undergone considerable development over time so that it came to be defined by Krippendorf (2004) as an approach to the study of the entire range of communicative and symbolic media, including verbal dialogues, films, advertisements, cartoon, theatre, poetry and political speeches. Historically, content analysis was viewed as a way of obtaining a quantitative description of the content of a form of communication. The assumption here is that words and phrases mentioned most often are those reflecting important concerns with regards to the communication. Therefore, quantitative content analysis starts with word frequencies, space measurements (column centimetres/inches in the case of newspapers), time counts (for radio and television time) and keyword frequencies. Indeed several of the studies sourced in this literature review, in association with the first order theme of media, used quantitative content analysis. For example Ik, Young and Crossman (2009) used quantitative content analysis to compare the amount and size of the coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympic and Paralympic

Games by the South Korean national newspaper, the Chosun Llbo. The majority of studies however utilise a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

Qualitatively, content analysis can involve any kind of analysis where communication content (speech, written text, interviews, images etc) is categorised and classified. It typically refers to the relatively detached systematic analysis and deconstruction of written and / or verbal text. Thomas and Smith (2003) for example use quantitative content analysis to identify the frequency and size of the articles included in their study, combined with qualitative analysis to examine the rich contextual detail of each article. Edwards and Skinner (2010) argue that the greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and non-reactive, it can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way, and the researcher determines where the emphasis lies after the data have been gathered. In Gardiner's (2003) analysis of Australian mainstream print media, the emphasis was on construction of indigeneity. "In mapping and delineating the media discourses surrounding indigenous athletes, the study specifically engages with critical textual analysis (including pictorial analysis) of print media representations of indigenous athletes and issues. As such, the study deploys a qualitative methodology; one that situates and identifies media texts as forms of narration, which deploy discursive strategies in their construction of indigeneity" (Gardiner, 2003: p.234).

As previously explained, qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings. As such beyond the analysis of media sources, content analysis was also used to explore and categorise interview data. For example a qualitative research design which employed content analysis methodology was used in several studies to derive general and emergent themes as a result of interviews with athletes (Ungerleider, 1997, Vernacchia et al., 2000, Philippe and Seiler, 2006, Stephan and Brewer, 2007, Torregrosa et al., 2004b).

Finally within the methodological construct of content analysis, two papers stand out as being of particular interest with regards to the research focus of this study. The papers in

question are Phillips and Osmond's (2009) analysis of filmic history related to swimmer Dawn Fraser and Chatziefstathiou's (2007) examination of Coubertin as a social marketer of his time, using Ethnographic Content Analysis. Both of these papers use types of content analysis which provide rich and multi-layered reconstructions of events and / or experiences, conducive to the research question of 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their life careers?'

The application of content analysis to the biographical material presented in two films about Dawn Fraser's life enabled Phillips and Osmond (2009) to identify themes such as larrikinism, class culture and sexuality which they then used to construct a narrative of Fraser beyond her identity as a swimmer. As mentioned previously the notion of construction and reconstruction is pertinent to this study as my aim is to develop critical discourse which will enable me to move beyond the reconstructive narrative to the constructive narrative as defined by Booth (2004), and where appropriate to engage in aspects of deconstruction.

Chatziefstathiou's (2007) utilised Ethnographic Content Analysis to reconstruct Coubertin's world view as a social marketer of Olympism and explained that the method was a particularly useful approach in a study which was largely 'inductive' and 'discovery' focused. Ethnographic Content Analysis as developed by Altheide (1996) uses a categorisation process for investigating underlying themes. It implies understanding of the views of the subject from the subject's own perspective and via his or her personal linguistic constructs. As Chatziefstathiou (2007: p.61) describes the aim of Ethnographic Content Analysis "is to be systematic and analytical but not rigid. Categories and variables initially guide the study, including an orientation to constant comparison of relevant situation, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances."

Documents which can be used in Ethnographic Content Analysis as defined by Altheide (1996) include primary (interview transcripts, field notes) and secondary sources as well as auxiliary documents (emails, notes about interviewees' dress, etc.). The application of Ethnographic Content Analysis to these types of documents enables what Altheide (1996)

calls an 'emergence of meaning', in which he refers to the gradual shaping of meaning through the interpretation of documents. This method of analysis allows for reflexive movement between concept development, document sampling, data collection, coding and analysis/interpretation required in retroductive analysis with a focus on actors' perceptions within the constraints of their own context and structures. Specifically this form of content analysis would appear to offer the most insightful interpretation of data associated with this study.

Qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyse text data. Other methods include discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and historical research, all of which were identified in the literature sourced as part of this review. It is not surprising however, given the range of first and second order themes identified across all 253 papers that not one of these emerged as a dominant methodology.

Several authors used discourse analysis to examine how language constructs a particular phenomenon (Kennedy et al., 2006, Burdsey, 2007, Jackson, 2004, Peers, 2009, Knight et al., 2007). Kennedy et al., (2006) for example, applied discourse analysis to the promotional materials from the London 2012 Olympic bid campaign. As part of the analysis, under the subheading of 'Make Britain Proud', the authors refer to the image of a 'white skinned' rider and a horse jumping over Buckingham Palace and argue that any other skin tone would draw attention to the racial exclusivity of the sport. Here the construct of race and class is formed in the image of the sport and the association with the monarchy. Kennedy et al., (2006) go on to explain that in general the meanings of monarchy are discursively framed in elaborate often controversial terms in British mainstream media. Yet in the context of the bid campaign, the monarchy is used to construct a nominally positive relationship between Londoners, British citizens, sport and the Olympic bid. "It also obliterates the exclusionary class-based nature of equestrianism as a sport but because we have been asked to 'Make Britain Proud', the discursive space for critiquing the Olympics, Equestrianism or the monarchy is suppressed and marginalised" (Kennedy et al., 2006 p. 12).

Kennedy et al., (2006) also utilised autoethnography, the only study in the identified literature to do so. Other studies which employ ethnographic methodologies include Chambliss' (1989) ethnographic report on stratification and Olympic swimmers, Guest's (2009) ethnographic analysis of development-through-sport programmes descended from the Olympic movement, MacNeill's (1996) ethnographic study of the Canadian Television coverage of the 1988 Winter Olympic ice-hockey tournament, Howe's (2008b) use of ethnographic data to explore athletics classification, MacAloon's (2008) exploration of legacy discourse through ethnography of Olympic speech, and finally Thorpe's (2009) ethnographic approach to understanding the experiences of alternative sport participants.

Considering the number of studies which utilised content analysis methodology to analyse interview data, only two studies were identified as using grounded theory methodology. Crawford and Stodolska's (2008) unique study investigating the constraints to the development of elite sport for athletes with disabilities in Kenya was approached using a grounded theory research design to utilise and analyse data collected by means of personal in-depth interviews. Torregrosa et al., (2004b) used a grounded theory approach to study the phenomenon of athlete retirement. Whilst several other studies have investigated this issue, none of the other studies used this approach. This lack of consistency to methodological approaches to similar topics of investigation (such as the phenomenon of athlete retirement) is a common feature identified in the third order analysis.

Within the field of psychology and athletic performance, several studies utilised qualitative research methodologies in order to gain a phenomenological and idiographic perspective on the subject (Vernacchia et al., 2000, Kreiner-Phillips and Orlick, 1993, Orlick and Partington, 1988). Again however, this was not the sole methodology used to investigate this subject. Other studies to use a phenomenological approach included Becker's (2009) use of phenomenological interviews and existential interpretation to explore athlete – coach experiences, and Burton et al's (2006) use of hermeneutic phenomenology to examine the talent development process of US female Olympians.

Finally within the research methods used to analyse text data is the qualitative method of historical analysis. Historical analysis is a method of discovering what has happened using records and accounts and is often used to establish a baseline or background prior to participant observation or interviewing (Edwards and Skinner, 2010). Both primary and secondary sources associated with the topic being investigated can be utilised. Primary sources are those that are directly associated with the topic (such as oral testimonies from eyewitnesses) and secondary sources are usually written by others who were not directly associated with the original event. Wiggins and Mason (2006) explain that the two most commonly cited designs in sport history are termed descriptive and analytical history. "Descriptive history is primarily concerned with what happened in sport while analytical history is more interested in the complexity of relationships and drawing connections to determine how and why sport developed the way it did and what role it served in the lives of participants and spectators alike" (Wiggins and Mason, 2006: p. 52). As has been discussed in both the first and second analysis, numerous papers have presented either descriptive or analytical historical analyses.

Staying in the context of historical analysis, from a theoretical perspective, two analytical paradigms were identified across the literature; structural-functionalism, and Marxism. It is important to note however, that these theoretical frameworks have been identified as a result of the third order analysis rather than overt theoretical discourse in the papers themselves.

The final methodological and theoretical approach identified within the literature is Feminist Methodology. Whilst the origins of feminist theory and the evolution of the three waves of feminism is well documented, in general it is difficult to define a single feminist epistemology or methodological approach due to the many branches of feminism. Feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience. It is not surprising therefore that in the context of sport, which is accepted as a predominately male domain, studies associated with female sport participation would lend themselves to a feminist methodology.

As discussed in the first and second order analysis, several studies which focussed on female athletes and their experience in sport conducted research within a feminist framework. For example, Krane et al's., (1997) work with an elite female gymnast was grounded in a feminist view of sport. Daddario's (1997) review of NBC's coverage of the 1992 Olympics was approached from a feminist perspective and Ashton-Shaeffer et al., (2001) and Olenik et al., (1995) used a feminist strategy to analyse the experience of female disabled athletes. Specifically Ashton-Shaeffer et al., (2001) used a poststructual feminist framework that incorporated Foucault's concept of resistance. Working within this perspective Ashton-Shaeffer et al., (2001) explain that women are viewed as active rather than passive individuals, that they have the power to negotiate and resist oppressive forces and in the space that sport provides, men and women have the power to deconstruct, negotiate, and resist power structures in a broader society.

In the context of the research for this thesis, and with the focus on equestrian sport, it is important to note that feminist methodologies are not simply applicable to research solely focussing on female sport participation. Young and White (1995) use a feminist framework to discuss both male and female participation in sport, specifically focussing on notions of masculinity and femininity. Notions of gender, masculinity and femininity have particular resonance to this study as we investigate a sport where binary sex segregation is redundant.

3.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the Olympic and Paralympic experiences of elite riders and to place this experience within the context of their career histories. As previously alluded to, the scoping study highlighted that very little had been written about Olympic / Paralympic experience and very little had been written about elite riders. In order to provide a full review of available literature relevant to this thesis and indeed to identify gaps in the literature, a systematic literature review methodology was undertaken. The preliminary search using 15 individual meta keywords but with no filters provided a total of 12,475 keyword hits across four databases. However, further analysis using exclusionary criteria resulted in the identification of 253 unique articles

which were reviewed using a meta-synthesis approach applied to identify theories, grand narratives, generalisations or interpretive translations produced from the integration of the identified studies. A descriptive and thematic analysis of the literature retrieved was carried out to identify emergent themes that have been deemed key to understanding the Olympic and Paralympic experience of elite equestrian athletes.

The operational structure identified in Chapter 1. (Figure 1.1) provided a starting point for the initial scoping study (reproduced here as Figure 3.1 for ease of reference for the reader). Having conducted the systematic literature review we are able to develop this model further.
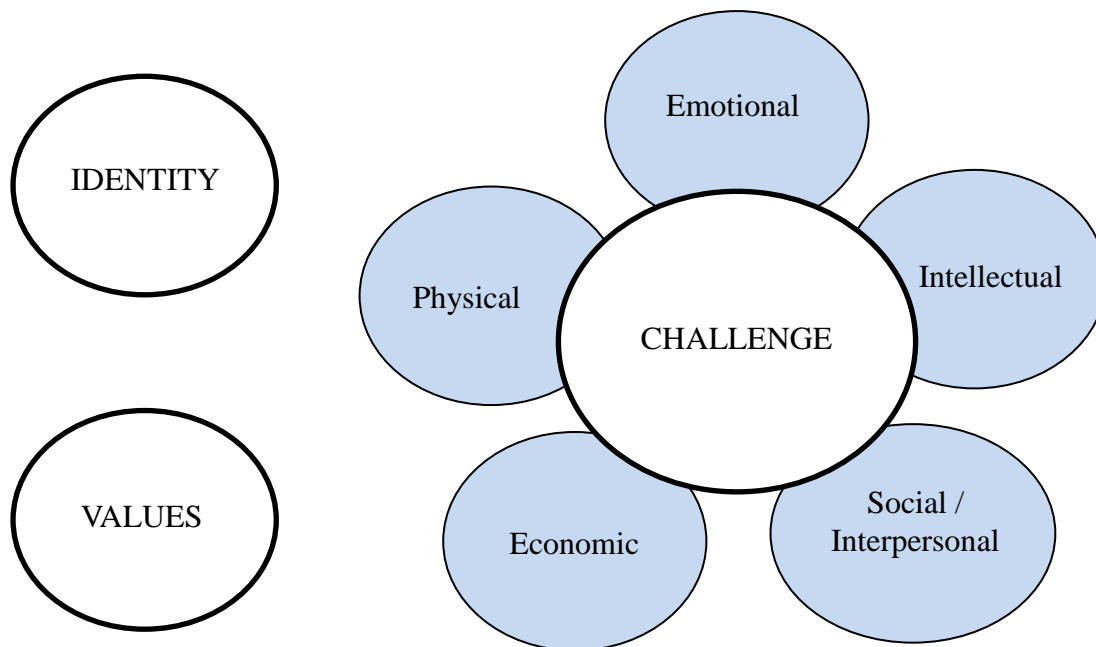
Figure 3.1: A simplified framework of the elements involved in the experiences of elite equestrian athletes

As a result of the thematic analysis six themes were elicited that run through the discussions across the identified first order themes reported. Figure 3.2 depicts the themes involved in athlete experience as a result of this level of cross analysis. This second model provides a clearer picture of the research that has already been conducted in this field and helps us position the current study strategically within the context of previous literature.
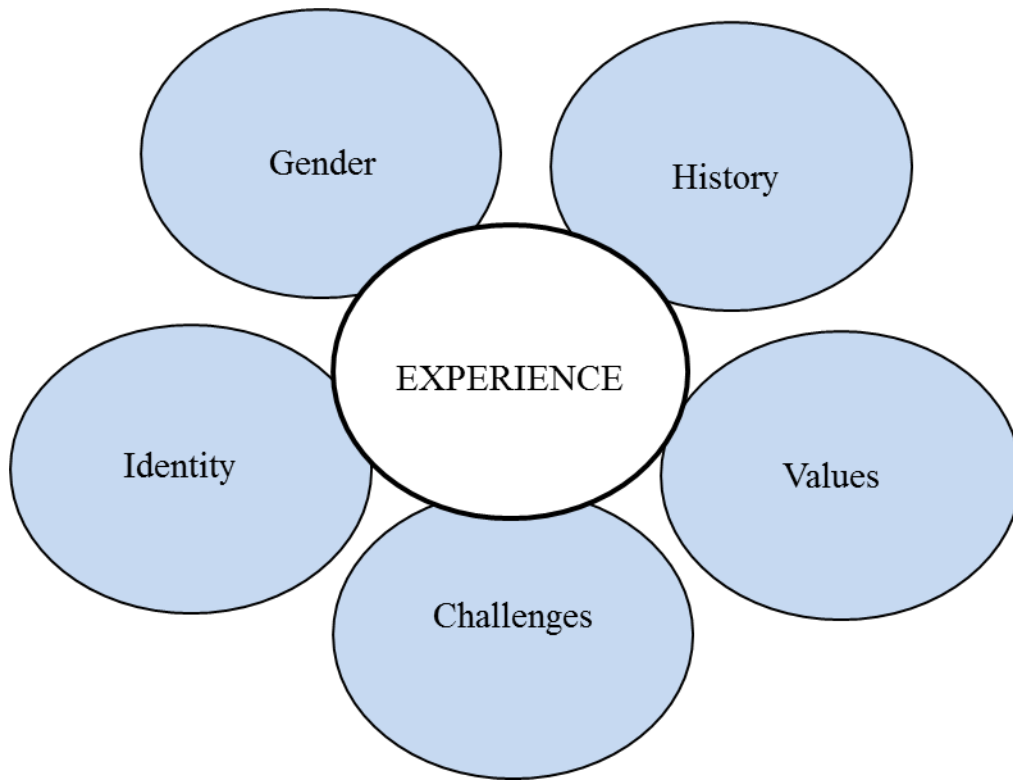
Figure 3.2: Adapted framework of the elements involved in the experiences of elite equestrian athletes.

With regards to the specific focus of this study, thematic analysis of the literature not only identified present themes but also highlighted missing themes. Specific identified gaps in the literature include: a lack of first person voice and specific reference to 'lived experience', a lack of discourse pertaining to sport specific identity, a lack of direct comparison between gendered experience, a lack of comparison between able-bodied and dis-abled experience, and no clear definition of 'Olympic experience' or what makes this type of sporting experience different from any other.

Whilst qualitative methodology clearly dominated over quantitative studies, and interviews were a dominant method of data collection, the third order analysis highlighted a lack of an overt epistemological, ontological or methodological discussion across the studies included in this review.

Beyond a more traditional narrative review of literature the method of a systematic approach has enabled us to clearly map the current focus of research in this area. As will be discussed in the following chapters, the identified themes help inform the analysis of primary data from interviews associated with this particular study, whilst the identified gaps in literature give us the confidence that this study will provide additional data that will contribute the body of knowledge in this subject area.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study aims to examine the 'Olympic experience' of an identified group, the British Equestrian team, encompassing both the Olympic and Paralympic teams. In order to address this phenomenon, the 'Olympic experience' is reviewed in the context of the athletes' wider sporting careers. Therefore the research question and the focus of this thesis is 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their career history?' The value and indeed interest of this study can be measured both intrinsically, in relation to ascertaining what is or is not unique about the Olympic experience for this group of athletes, and extrinsically by considering what the policy implications may be when one considers the athlete's view. Indeed, although the analysis of policy implications based on the lived experience of athletes is not a primary focus of this study, there are clear implications as to how elite equestrian athletes and their experience could be managed and where appropriate comments are made in relation to these policy implications.

As previously alluded to, little has been written about Olympic / Paralympic experience and very little has been written about elite riders. Clearly an understanding of both is needed to provide critical insight into the phenomenon of the Olympics / Paralympics for this group of athletes. In order to provide a full review of available literature relevant to this thesis a systematic literature review methodology was used. This study is also founded on a critical realist ontology and epistemology, seeking to identify structures in the world of Olympic and Paralympic equestrian sport, and the process of social construction of those structures. In this context, in relation to empirical data from interviews and other source materials we employ Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) derived from Altheide (1996) to explore ways in which subjects perceive, construct and react to such socially constructed structures. To give a practical example, in relation to

the differences in economic structures in the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian domains we consider both the process of construction of the economic 'facts' relating to ownership of horses (and the social practices associated with this) and how the individual perceives and 'constructs' this structure as a parameter (an opportunity and / or constraint) in the context of the sport.

The combination of a systematic literature review with a critical realist approach creates a framework that values interpretive insights into how the subjects perceive and construct their world while at the same time considering ways in which the literature identifies, comments on, and frames the reality of the world of equestrian sport. In the sections that follow specific methodological and epistemological issues relevant to the present study are discussed, before in the final section of the chapter the general methodology and specific methods employed are identified and evaluated.

4.2 Philosophical approaches and Paradigmatic debates

The word paradigm comes from the Greek language *paradeigma* meaning model, pattern or example. Covey (2004) says that humans interpret everything they experience through their individual, personal 'models' or mental maps, maps that are rarely questioned. Humans assume that what they see is 'reality' (but can only explain or frame what they see as reality by reference to a pre-given language about that 'reality). Our basic attitudes and behaviours are derived from our paradigms which affect the way people interact with each other. People see the world largely as they are influenced to see it through their perceptions, paradigms or mental maps. It is the basic belief system or worldview that guides enquiry, or the individual, regarding their place in that world, the range of possible relationships to it and its parts (Lincoln et al., 2011).

In the methodological literature much of the debate concerning ontological and epistemological issues is couched in terms of 'competing paradigms'. ''There are many paradigms that we use in guiding our actions: the adversarial paradigm that guides the legal system, the judgemental paradigm that guides the selection of Olympic winners, the religious paradigms that guide spiritual and moral life…[and] those that guide disciplined

inquiry'' (Guba, 1990: p.18). Within the philosophy of science the concept of paradigms has been strongly associated with Thomas Kuhn who employed the term to refer to a framework to assist in the understanding of past research enquiry, emerging practices and as a means of identifying ''models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research'' (Kuhn, 1996: p.10). Kuhn's principal focus was on the history of the development of understanding in the natural sciences. However while paradigms and their sequential occurrence are rather easier to identify in the natural sciences by reference to periods of what Kuhn terms 'normal science', relating to the dominance of one world view (e.g. the period of domination of the paradigm of Newtonian physics), which is subsequently replaced by a different dominant paradigm or world view (e.g. Einstinian relativity), in the social sciences competing paradigms (e.g. a positivist or an interpretivist approach to social enquiry) are often contemporaneous.

It should be noted that in the context of social research, the term paradigm is used widely, with a variety of meanings depending on when, where and by whom it is used. While the Kuhnian notion of paradigm shift in the natural sciences implies moving from one way of seeing the world to another – the scientist either sees the physical world as behaving according to Newtonian mechanics, or by Einstinian relativity – one paradigm effectively replacing the other as the dominant world view in the scientific community, in social science the situation is generally regarded as being much more fluid. There is certainly no universally accepted paradigm, often not even a dominant paradigm and thus there is still much discussion and argument centred on which epistemological / ontological paradigm should be adopted and consequently on which methodology is best used to conduct research (Cunningham, 1993, Patton, 2002).

Smith and Caddick (2012) explain that qualitative research can be described in terms of the set of paradigmatic assumptions a researcher holds, which encompass the basic set of beliefs about the world that the researcher subscribes to. According to Smith and Caddick (2012) these assumptions are held either implicitly or explicitly, and are grounded in questions about ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the relationship between the knower and the known). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write that

the researcher's basic beliefs and assumptions determine the inquiry paradigm and are derived from the answers to three metaphysical questions. The essence of these questions, assumptions or axioms relate to the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge and what can be known (epistemology), and the link between theory and method (methodology) (Smith, 1983, Guba, 1990, Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The ontological debate has often been reduced to the polarised oppositional positions of realism on the one hand (there is a real external world, with real structural characteristics which exist independently of our perception or recognition of such structures), and on the other a constructivist position (which suggests that what exists in the world is socially constructed – and may be constructed or construed differently by different groups). Critical realism seeks to dissolve this dichotomy by arguing that social structures are constructed by human interaction and understandings but that those structures are real, in the sense that once constructed, they exist independently of the individual's recognition of their existence. To provide an example from the domain of language:

- Individual actors might invent a new word or term;
- This may gain communal acceptance in the language, be brought into everyday use, and a commonly held view of what the word or term means may develop in the community of language users.
- The originator of the word cannot then (if disagreeing with the way the word has been used by the language community, and the common meaning attributed to it) argue that the publicly accepted meaning is incorrect (though s/he might argue that it was not what s/he intended to signify when s/he invented the term).
- In effect then the meaning of the word, though socially constructed becomes 'real' in the sense that it exists in the language independently of the perceptions / understandings / preferences of those who originally constructed it.
- Thus language structures are **both** socially constructed and real, existing independent of individual language users.

This is the nature of the critical realist synthesis of realist and constructivist ontology. Such an ontological potion has implications for epistemology also. How one learns about the social world is framed to some degree by how one defines that world. Thus the constructivist elements of the critical realist approach are associated with ethnographic, interpretivist, and agent or agency-oriented accounts of how subjects make sense of their world. Agents construct their own world to a degree while they also inhabit social spaces pre-structured by earlier actions, and by the language used in prior description. The interpretivist / ethnographical approach allows us to gain insights into processes of construction and to actors' perceptions of the structures that impinge upon their daily lives. While naive positivist approaches to research may be rejected by critical realists, nevertheless analysis which is complementary to understanding the impact of the socially constructed world whether quantitative or qualitative, will form a part of a critical realist approach.

A related set of concerns are raised by Burrell and Morgan (1982) who consider the relationship between human beings and their environment (human nature). The basic human nature question concerns whether human beings and their experiences are products of their environment, mechanistically / deterministically responsive to real structures encountered in their external world, or whether humans can be regarded as the creators of those structures / that environment. This debate about human nature is often expressed in polarised terms as a debate between *determinism,* which posits that human beings behaviour is determined by the situation (real structures have real causal consequences), and *voluntarism,* which posits that humans enjoy autonomy and act in accordance with free-will. It should be apparent that critical realism while acknowledging that we may not be able to act entirely as we would wish because of the constraints of real structures, that nevertheless our behaviour is not entirely governed or determined by such structures, and that real structures can be modified by social action. This is in effect the crux of the debate on structure and agency and it has implications for how we might research and explain human action. In effect the critical realist position requires us to identify what real structures exist, how they are socially constructed, what causal impacts they have, and how human subjects seek to reproduce or challenge such

structures, or do so unintentionally. In order to do this we need to consider subjects explanation of how they behave and why, but also since the existence and / or impact of real structures on human behaviour may be something of which individual actors are not conscious, we also require evidence of the impacts of such structures, evidence which may be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

4.3 Methodological and Epistemological issues pertinent to this study

Critical realists believe that there is an external 'reality', but there are deep structural relationships between social phenomena, which, albeit not directly observable, are crucial for understanding human behaviour (Marsh and Smith, 2001). As we have noted they acknowledge that the world is socially constructed, and that ''although social structure is unobservable, it can nevertheless be known to be real because it makes a difference to observable human behaviour'' (Lewis, 2000: p. 249). The real refers to the intransitive dimensions of knowledge, which exist independently of our understanding of the world, and in which actual causes, structures and powers to make things happen exist. Downward (2005) explains that the 'actual' domain refers to what happens if powers and causes act, whereby in contrast the empirical realm is where the real and actual are observed. The causal relationship between the pre-existing structures and human behaviour has been central to critical realism.

Reed (1997) argues that critical realism offers a unique and robust framework through which to understand and explain the interplay between structures and the human behaviour of agents. Critical realists posit that this relationship is dialectical. Agents are in a sense 'bearers' of structural positions, but they interpret those structures. Indeed, Lewis (2004) explains that individuals are born into a world of pre-existing structures and norms which help to mould but not determine their behaviour. At the same time, structures change as a result of the strategic decisions and actions of agents. Therefore, critical realists view structures and agents as factors that in combination determine the outcomes of social phenomena. Downward (2005: p.313), following Bhaskar (1998), argues that this point of view ''requires explanation of cause at an ontic depth, that is moving beyond the level of events and / or texts towards an understanding of the

processes that produce them''. Therefore, a phenomenon such as experience cannot be understood by examining structures alone or by relying solely on the agents' behaviour, but through the dialectical relationship between the two.

As has been discussed, critical realism is an ontological position because it relates to what is real. However there are epistemological consequences that flow from this with regards to the fact that we need a way of identifying 'real' structures and processes. In relation to this, this study adopts a retroductive approach in which we hypothesis about structures, identifying and suggesting further analysis of said structures. There are implications therefore for the epistemological strategies which may involve qualitative analysis of people's experience of the existence of structures and where possible quantitative analysis on the prevalence of structures and their impacts.

Adopting a critical realist ontology and epistemology as a framework through which to understand the Olympic and Paralympic experience of elite equestrian athletes, we can acknowledge that although the social structures of the Olympic and Paralympic Games are real, there are recursive relationships that may not be visible or observable. Placing the Olympic or Paralympic experience in the context of the athletes' wider career histories, relevant structural contexts may for example include economic structures which facilitate access to the sport or access to resources such as horse power.

With regards to understanding the lived experience of these athletes an ethnographic approach was adopted. As Krane and Baird explain;

> Ethnography is aimed toward understanding the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members. The group culture, then, will lend insight into behaviours, values, emotions, and mental states of group members (2005: p. 87).

More specifically, it is the subworld of elite competitive equestrian sport that is the focus of this study and as Crosset and Beal (1997) outline, the ethnographic approach to this

type of study requires an exploration of the everyday practices, norms, interactions and relationships of those intimately involved in the social and sporting world of equestrianism. Ethnography therefore requires access and time. It is important to note at this stage, that the primary data collection took place over a period of 18 months, from January 2008 until July 2009, during which time I had access to numerous social and sporting situations including training camps, press conferences, quarantine holding camps, and Olympic competition, largely for the purposes of a study conducted for the British Equestrian Federation, rather than simply for this thesis. However, whilst I have been a competitive horse rider myself and have worked in the horse industry, I have not competed at elite level nor have I directly worked at elite level within the context of equestrian sport, I am however, well versed in the language of equestrian competition.

During the 18 months of data collection I felt I became seen as a familiar face within the British Equestrian Team to the point where I was able to have informal conversations with members of the team and conduct participant observation even though I did not consider myself an insider. However, in relation to the Eliasian concept of researcher involvement-detachment as a balance, I believe I had sufficient insider awareness / empathy to issues such as the open discourse of sexuality within the discipline of dressage (and the absence of this within the other disciplines), yet my objective outsider perspective left me unable to ask, for example, some overt questions relating to sexual identity. According to Gold's (1958) typology of participant observation, I would therefore consider myself to be and 'observer as participant', meaning I was mostly cast in the role of observing, but I did participate in a minor social role. In the light of my cultural position and fairly limited timeframe of direct and sustained contact with this group I am not claiming that the research approach is purely ethnographic, I am merely highlighting the ethnographic nature of the data collection and analysis.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, I did not start with the a *priori* theory or hyphothesis-driven theoretical assumptions characteristic of a deductive approach, instead theoretical adequacy was derived from a retroductive approach which invariably starts with weak assumptions and a strong emphasis on exploration (Figure 4.1).

Exploratory
Inductive
Qualitative

Potential for
Future studies
Deductive
Qualitative & Quantitative

Structures

For example Olympic or Paralympic
or discipline specific
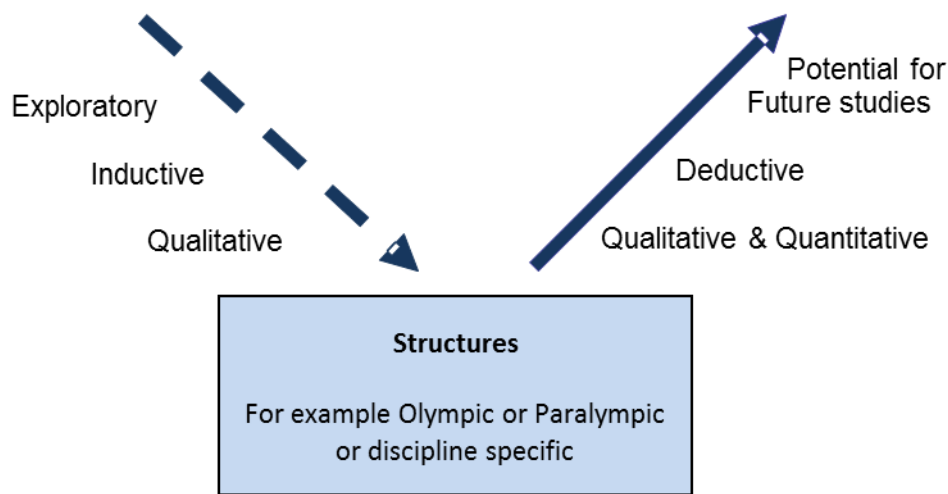
Figure 4.1: The retroductive approach

Given the fact that the empirical data used in the study are drawn largely from interviews and autobiographical material, the method of analysis was informed by Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA), it seeks to understand what the significant underlying relationships or processes are between the social actors and the surrounding context, and thus might be seen as the exploratory arm of retroduction (see Figure 4.1). In retroduction evidence is employed largely to provide informed hypotheses about the existence and nature of structures in an inductive fashion. Nevertheless evidence is also provided of a deductive nature. So for example where interviewees refer to social structures (e.g. the impact of the economics of horse ownership), evidence of social structures can be also marshalled (e.g. about who the owners of horses competing in the Olympic and Paralympic competitions might be, and their relationship to the riders).

4.4 General methodology and specific methods employed

In this study for the analysis of qualitative data in the form of documentary analysis or analysis of data from interviews, a form of qualitative content analysis, developed by Altheide (1996) and referred to as Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) has been employed. ECA uses the categorisation process of qualitative content analysis but focuses further on the identification and interpretation of the underlying themes. The major differences between quantitative content analysis and ECA are presented below (Table

4.1). Fitting with critical realist epistemology, the ethnographic character of this method allows the researcher to investigate the context in which the document or text was produced and also take into account the dialectic relationship of the key agent within his or her contiguous structures.

Table 4.1: Comparisons between Quantitative Content Analysis and Ethnographic Content Analysis.

	Quantitative Content Analysis	Ethnographic Content Analysis
Research Goal	Verification	Discovery; verification
Reflexive research design	Seldom	Always
Emphasis	Reliability	Validity
Progression from data collection, analysis, interpretation	Serial	Reflective; circular
Sample	Random or stratified	Purposive and theoretical
Prestructured categories	All	Some
Training required to collect data	Little	Substantial
Type of data	Numbers	Numbers; narrative
Data entry points	Once	Multiple
Narrative description and comments	Seldom	Always
Concepts emerge during research	Seldom	Always
Data analysis	Statistical	Textual; statistical
Data presentation	Tables	Tables and text

Source: Altheide (1996).

This comparative overview of the two forms of content analysis highlights that the formation of a conceptual grid, argued to be either a strength or limitation of quantitative

content analysis, is less rigid in ethnographic content analysis due to the use of inductive and deductive reasoning strategies.

4.4.1 Validity and reliability of data

Reliability is primarily concerned with consistency in the application of techniques and approaches that ensures a study, if conducted by somebody else would produce similar findings (Plummer, 2001). In quantitative research this is to be achieved by degrees of closure and the control of measureable variables which facilitate replication. In ECA the critical issue in relation to reliability is that of coding, and thus accounts of a coding protocol (how and why individual elements of text were given a certain code). Clarity in coding protocol means that another coder using the same criteria would allocate the same code to the same piece of text.

However, establishing validity in qualitative research presents another difficulty. Validity claims are generally concerned with 'truth' claims. This may be in terms of construct validity – is a measure employed in a study a 'true' reflection of what that measure operationally represents? For example is 'number of medals won' a true or appropriate measure of Olympic success? Internal validity is a second type of validity concern addressing the truth of claims of causal effect in a research project. External validity relates to claims to be able to generalise from the particular circumstances of the research conducted, for example to generalise from the sample population, or to generalise from analytic principles evident in particular case studies to their wider application. While Downward (2005) argues that validity of the qualitative analysis of cases does not rely upon quantitative evidence, it is also true to say that validity in quantitative studies relies significantly on qualitative evidence or argument.

Sayer (2000) and Danermark (2002) argues that critical realism is compatible with a wide range of methods, with the key issue being that analysis is matched to the appropriate level of abstraction and the material under investigation, as can been seen in Table 4.1. Altheide (1996) places emphasis in ECA on validity rather than reliability. This is not to say that ethnography does not require consideration to be given to reliability. Indeed,

inter-rater reliability, that is establishing whether a different coder in an ethnographic study might apply the same codes to a piece of text, can be evaluated by requiring a third party to review a passage of text or their forms of data to see whether the same themes are identified; or where themes and codes have been identified seeing whether a third party would apply the defined codes to the same passage of text. However, the normal emphasis for qualitative research is a validity check in the form of establishing how reasonable it is to identify the themes it does, and to apply the codes it uses in the way that it does. Indeed some qualitative researchers such as (Wood and Kroger, 2000) argue that 'validity' is an inappropriate term and prefer to use the term 'warrantability' to reflect that in qualitative research the equivalent of validity is an evaluation of reasonableness and coherence.

As previously indicated, the ethnographic nature of both the data collection and analysis, requires a level of reflexivity on the part of the researcher as co-creator and evaluator of the data. Engaging reflexively with the data has enabled me to foreground my position in the research and evaluate my social location, perspectives and 'biases' which may effect my representation of 'reality'. This informed ethnographic approach does not attempt to represent objective reality, but in effect seeks to capture the reality as perceived by other actors, with the reflexive process acting as a substantial guard against a more egregious misrepresentation of the data. Of course the account nevertheless seeks to provide a real account of how the research subject constructs their own reality or world view.

4.5 Data sampling and collection

The ethnographic approach to documents is based on the principles of qualitative data gathering and analysis with the main focus on grasping meaning, definitions and context. With regards to the data sampling and collection Altheide (1996) outlines that ECA is based upon three main assumptions:

1. The broader political, historical and socio-cultural background of a person can have an impact upon her/his views of the world and 'reality'. Thus the analysis of

text should take into consideration the environment in which the person speaking or writing the text has been and / or is located.

2. The researcher should be aware of the communicative and dialetic processes between the structural context and the actors, and should investigate the discursive constructs throughout the analysis. An individual's activities as part of the social world may be reflexive, they may refer to past experiences which suggest relevant action in the present. The researcher must try to take into account this process by also being reflexive of the overall process or of theoretical foundations, including assumptions about social science and order.

3. As 'reality' is to a large extent socially constructed, a research project is also considered to be socially constructed. This highlights the importance of recognising how context and perception influence the individual behaviour of actors, including the researcher. Awareness of the existence of taken-for-granted-assumptions and knowledge formation is also an important consideration.

Altheide (1996) suggests that a researcher must produce and follow a research protocol in order to guide the coding and categorising processes. The protocol should be designed to allow the researcher to take as much information as possible from the selected documents by listing questions, items, categories or variables that guide data collection from these documents. Documents used in this research, as defined by Altheide (1996), include primary (interview transcripts), as well as some auxiliary documents (biographical material). The utilisation of such a variety of documents may help to enable what Altheide (1996) refers to as the emergence of meaning, or the gradual shaping of meaning through the interpretation of documents.

Byers (2012) utilised ECA in order to analyse data pertaining to the control of volunteers in sports club. Byers (2012: p. 15) explains that the emergence of meaning, occurred for her after each interview when ''the interview schedule would change slightly, adding questions / themes to use in subsequent interviews as a result of new ideas suggested by the interviewee. This was, in part, practised under the assumption that meaning or patterns in the data would appear over time and not all at once.'' This method of analysis

described by Altheide (1996) and Byers (2012) allows for reflexive movement between concept development, document sampling, data collection, coding and analysis / interpretation required in retroductive analysis.

In my own study, Altheide's approach to analysis was used post hoc to inform and develop the analysis rather than as in Byers (2012) study to inform and develop data collection. The research protocol outlined in Figure 4.2 therefore influenced the process and practice of analysis, helping to produce a structured and well ordered approached to analysis.
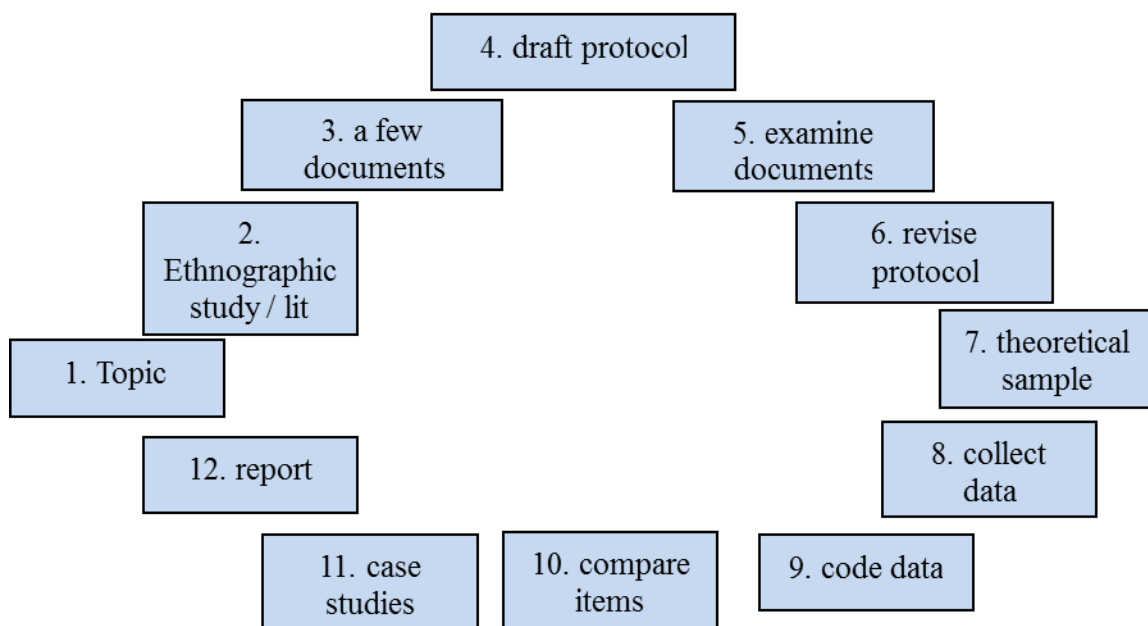
 Figure 4.2: The process of Qualitative Document Analysis

As previously mentioned, documents used in this research include primary (interview transcripts), and ancillary sources (biographical material). Due to the fact that the experiences of the individual athletes are not formed in isolation, the culture, community and power relations within the sport, the team and their environments, must also be considered. Therefore interviews were conducted with members of the British Equestrian Team, including riders, performance managers and support staff, many of whom work across all the disciplines (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1). With regards to accessing interview participants, consent was granted by the British Equestrian Federation to allow the

researcher access to various training and competition situations prior to, during and after the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. A convenience sampling technique was therefore applied resulting in 34 separate interviews conducted with 28 individuals who included riders and support staff across the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian team. Interviews were conducted over an 18 month period at a time and place that was convenient for the participants and the duration of the interview was predominantly determined by the interviewee.

When this study was first initiated in 2008, it was under the auspices of the University of the West of England, with supervision from a member of staff of that university. However, during the time of data collection, organisational circumstances resulted in a lack of PhD supervision and registration at the same time that access was granted to conduct this research for the British Equestrian Federation (BEF). On 1 April 2009 I was accepted to register as a part-time research student at Loughborough University in the School of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences. Once registration was established the decision was taken to conduct a systematic review of the literature as a major element of this study. It became clear that I would have ideally completed the systematic review prior to carrying out the interviews. However, due to the pragmatic, convenience-driven timing of the interviews, the BEF brokering of access to interviewees, and the individual nature of the lived experience, a semi-structured approach to the interviews was undertaken.   I had a broad idea of the topics to be covered but I allowed the participants to lead the direction and pace of the interview. This allowed for a more spontaneous, free-flowing and interactive interview more conducive to the ethnographic approach adopted. All interviewees were recorded and transcribed verbatim. With regards to ethical considerations, anonymity was offered to all those interviewed and only their position, Olympic or Paralympic experience and gender has been used to identify them as interviewees (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1).

Within the context of the critical realist ontology and epistemology adopted in this study, the researcher supports the view that structures and agents are factors that in combination determine the outcomes of social phenomena. As such, a phenomenon such as

experience cannot be understood by examining structures alone or by relying solely on the agents' behaviour or explanation of that behaviour, but through the dialectical relationship between the two. As such Altheide's approach to analysis is used in order to identify the world view of the individuals concerned, and this includes their explanation of their experience and their identification of structures, either explicitly referenced or implicitly referred to during interviews.

Personal documentary sources such as biographical material on rider's websites / blogs and rider autobiographies also formed a significant source of data in this study. However, it is important to note at this point that we are aware that autobiographies' are not the same as autoethnographies. Primarily, each may be written for different audiences and may therefore be influenced by the intended reader, for example autobiographies are produced to be publicly interesting and this may influence the style and content of this medium and biographical content on riders' websites may be produced for marketing and promotional reasons. However, whilst we are aware of potential limitations and bias presented in these ancillary sources, we believe they provide valid additional data sources and provide content regarding rider experience which supplements the primary data sources.

Rider autobiographies were selected based on the fact that they were written by British riders prior to the London Olympics. This Olympic cut off point was an important criterion as none of the Olympic riders had won gold medals prior to London 2012 and it was felt the exceptional circumstances of medalling at a home Olympics would be such a unique experience that it should be viewed separately, and in any event the primary interviews had been conducted prior to any of the Olympic team winning gold. Ideally autobiographies would have been selected from riders in all four disciplines but as indicated earlier this material was not available. The discipline of Eventing has produced the most rider biographies / autobiographies and therefore three autobiographies from the domain of Eventing were selected as a representation of this type of ancillary material.

Altheide refers to documents in general as symbolic representations that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis and thus refers to document analysis as ''an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analysing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning'' (Altheide, 1996: p. 2).

4.6 Data coding, categorising and analysis

Altheide's approach to analysis was used post hoc to inform and develop the analysis. The development of the research protocol used in relation to the data coding and categorising process did however follow Altheide's (1996: p. 27) 'rules of thumb' and asked the questions 'does it generate categories that subsequently will be explored?' and 'does it allow the researcher to identify new categories?'.

The formulation of the research question and the subsequent production of the systematic review methodology take us through the first two stages of Altheide's (1996) process of qualitative document analysis. The second order themes identified through the systematic literature review informed the analysis (though because of the history of this project, alluded to earlier, not the design) of the primary interviews. Rider biographies were then selected and reviewed and the first draft protocol was established. Primary analysis was then conducted using deductive coding, whilst simultaneously allowing space for inductive codes to emerge. A revised protocol was then developed with the aim of facilitating a systematic approach to analysis, whilst allowing the researcher to remain reflexive and move in a recursive way between concept development, coding and analysis (Figure 4.3). The constant comparison enabled the researcher to clarify themes, frames and discourse, thereby moving through stages nine and ten of Altheide's (1996) process of qualitative document analysis.

What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their career history?

Systematic Literature Review – Second order themes	ECA of Rider autobiographies	ECA of Interviews
• Identity • Gender • History • Values • Challenges • Experience	• Competition • Challenges • Relationships • Success • Experience	• Identity • Gender • Equestrian Sporting Culture • Values • Challenges • Experience • Performance Support • Success

Figure 4.3: Themes and codes derived from Systematic Literature Review and Ethnographic Content Analysis

The qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package NVIVO was employed as a tool for recording and presenting the coding categories that were adopted. The construction of the data coding and categorising protocol in the case of this thesis was based both on deductive categories identified from the systematic review analysis; Identity, Gender, History, Values, Challenges and Experience, and inductive categories which emerged during the process of analysis. Data analysis therefore involved extensive reading and browsing through the coded material - as inductive codes emerged, the researcher would revisit previously analysed transcripts, comparing within and between categories and re-coding (whenever needed). Use of the software package facilitated the process by providing the tools for an organised way of categorising data.

The research process of data coding, categorising and analysis across the variety of documents used in this study, enabled what Altheide (1996) called an 'emergence of meaning', by which he refers to the gradual shaping of meaning through interpretation of

documents. This thesis employs a retroductive (and at this stage exploratory) approach from a critical realist perspective which involves analyses not only at the level of the individual athlete but will also incorporate secondary analysis of structural context. Therefore throughout the analysis the notion of inductive and deductive reasoning was employed leading to the identification of themes such as 'identity', which had been deductively identified through previous research, and sport specific themes pertaining to identity such as 'horsey' which emerged through the analysis of both the primary and ancillary data.

4.7 Conclusion

We began this chapter with the reintroduction of the research question 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experie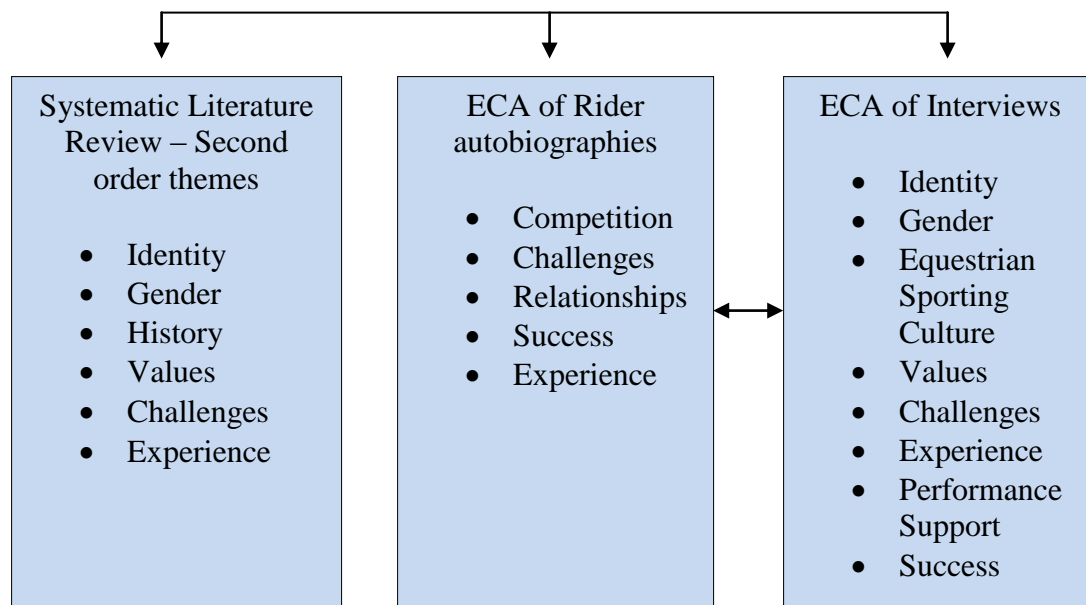nce for elite riders in the context of their career history?' As has been discussed, the experiences of the individual athletes are not formed in isolation, therefore we must also consider the culture, community and power relations within the sport, the team and their environments. In order to answer this question we must consider the relationship between the identified actors and structures. With this in mind, through the course of this chapter we have discussed the ontological and epistemological considerations, discussed the methodological concerns and explained in detail the research strategy pertinent to this study.

The ontological and epistemological standpoint of this research is that reality is a structured open system in which the real, the actual and empirical domains are organically related. Within this reality the relationship between the structures and the actors is often unobservable but nevertheless real. Within the wider balancing act and context that critical realism employs, we are looking to identify important features of underlying structures and their impact / implications for experience of the actors.

With regards to data collection, a convenience sampling technique was utilised, resulting in 34 separate interviews conducted with 28 individuals who included riders and support staff across the Olympic and Paralympic British equestrian team. The scoping study of the systematic literature review provided preliminary identification of structures but the

interviews were informed by the ethnographic approach to this study. As has been discussed, critical realists view structures and agency as factors that in combination determine the outcomes of social phenomena. As such, a phenomenon such as experience cannot be understood by examining structures alone or by relying solely on the agents' behaviour, but through the dialectical relationship between the two. Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) was deemed a highly appropriate method to provide direct evidence of the Olympic and Paralympic experience.

It is important to note that this study involves retroductive analysis, however through the utilisation of the conceptual and theoretical assumptions that have been outlined in this chapter; the aim is to better understand the phenomenon of experience. The results of the Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) are discussed in the following chapter and through a critically descriptive analysis of the data, we aim to move closer to understanding the 'Olympic / Paralympic experience' of the British Equestrian team within the context of the athletes' wider sporting careers.

CHAPTER 5: AN ACCOUNT OF THE RANGE OF RIDER AND STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the aims of the analysis, to present an overview of the interviewees and a rationale pertaining to why these individuals were selected for this study: to provide an explanation and outline of secondary sources used and finally to present a critically descriptive analysis of the data. As previously outlined in Chapter 4, this study adopts a critical realist ontology and epistemology, and employs as method Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). Documents used in this research include primary (interview transcripts), as well as some auxiliary documents (rider autobiographies). Fitting with critical realist ontology and epistemology, the ethnographic character of this method allows the researcher to investigate the context in which the document or text was produced and also take into account the dialectic relationship of the key agent within his or her structures. In light of this chosen methodology, the aims of this chapter are as follows:

- To explore the nature of the uniqueness of equestrian sport at elite level, particularly Olympic and Paralympic level.
- To explore the nature of the differences between the experiences of those involved in the different equestrian disciplines: Eventing, Showjumping, Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage.
- To identify the differences and similarities in the cultures of the different equestrian disciplines: Eventing, Showjumping, Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage.
- To explore the roles which key stakeholders play in the production of these experiences.

In order to address these aims and understand the Olympic and Paralympic experience of elite equestrian athletes, we acknowledge that although the social structures at play in the experience of the Olympic and Paralympic Games are real, there are recursive relationships that can be unobservable. The socially constructed reality of the athletes will inevitably involve key stake holders within the wider Great Britain equestrian team. Interviewees were therefore selected to represent this range of stakeholders based on their role within team GB. A total of 28 participants were selected comprising of 7 riders, 5 grooms, 1 Performance Director, 3 Performance Managers, 3 Coaches, 7 support staff and 1 representative from the BOA and BPA. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the interviewees and their Olympic experience at the point of interview.

Table 5.1: Overview of interviewees and their Olympic experience at the point of interview.

Code	Position at point of interview	Gender	Olympic Experience	Nature of Olympic Experience
1	Team GB support staff	M	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Work with the Olympic riders across all three disciplines
2	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	F	Atlanta Paralympics Sydney Paralympics Athens Paralympics Beijing Paralympics	Rider
3	Groom	F	Beijing Olympics	Groom – Eventing
4	Performance Manager	M	Athens Paralympics Beijing Paralympics	Performance Manager
5	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	F	Sydney Paralympics Athens Paralympics Beijing Paralympics	Rider

Code	Position at point of interview	Gender	Olympic Experience	Nature of Olympic Experience
6	Groom	F	Beijing Olympics	Rider selected but did not compete – Eventing
7	Team GB support staff	M	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics and Paralympics	Team GB support staff – experience across all four disciplines
8	Groom	F	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Groom – Eventing
9	Team GB support staff	F	Athens Olympics and Paralympics Beijing Olympics and Paralympics	Provides support to all four disciplines but primary experience with Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage
10	Team GB support staff	M	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Not with Equestrian Worked with the Olympic riders across all three disciplines but did not attend the Games
11	Coach	M	Sydney Olympics Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Coach – Eventing
12	Eventing Rider	F	Beijing Olympics 2008	Selected but did not compete
13	BOA	M	Beijing Olympics	Operations
14	Groom and Coach	F	Athens Paralympics Beijing Paralympics	Groom and individual coach

Code	Position at point of interview	Gender	Olympic Experience	Nature of Olympic Experience
15	Team GB support staff	M	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Outside of the Olympics works specifically for the discipline of Eventing but during Olympic competition, works with all three disciplines
16	Groom	F	Beijing Paralympics	Groom
17	BPA	F	Atlanta Olympics	Senior national coach for canoe slalom
			Sydney Olympics	Senior national coach for canoe slalom
			Athens Paralympics	Deputy Chef d'mission Paralympics GB
			Torino Paralympics	Deputy Chef d'mission Paralympics GB
			Beijing Paralympics	Deputy Chef d'mission Paralympics GB
18	Team GB support staff	M	Athens Paralympics Beijing Olympics	Para-Equestrian Dressage All three disciplines
19	Performance Manager	M	Atlanta Olympics Sydney Olympics Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Dressage Rider Dressage Rider Dressage Rider Team Captain Dressage
20	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	M	Beijing Paralympics	Rider

Code	Position at point of interview	Gender	Olympic Experience	Nature of Olympic Experience
21	Team GB support staff	F	Los Angeles Olympics Seoul Olympics Barcelona Olympics Atlanta Olympics Sydney Olympics Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Working with owners and supporters of Eventing
22	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	M	Beijing Paralympics	Rider
23	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	F	Athens Paralympics Beijing Paralympics	Rider
24	Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider	F	Beijing Paralympics	Rider selected but did not compete
25	Coach	F	Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Eventing
26	Performance Director	M	Athens Olympics and Paralympics Beijing Olympics and Paralympics	All four disciplines

Code	Position at point of interview	Gender	Olympic Experience	Nature of Olympic Experience
27	Team GB support staff	F	Beijing Olympics	All three disciplines
28	Performance Manager	M	Los Angeles Olympics Atlanta Olympics Sydney Olympics Athens Olympics Beijing Olympics	Rider – Sweden Eventing Team Chef d'Equipe – Spanish Eventing Team Performance Manager – GB Eventing Team

Beyond the ECA of the primary interviews, auxiliary documents were selected for analysis. This secondary data includes the autobiographies of Olympic riders and auto-biographical discourse relating to Paralympic riders. Whilst it is acknowledged that the auxillary data included in the analysis, was created for different purposes / audiences, the utilisation of such a variety of documents may help to enable what Altheide (1996) refers to as the emergence of meaning, or the gradual shaping of meaning through the interpretation of documents. Through the process of continual descriptive analysis across the primary and secondary sources, the researcher plays a reflexive and interactive role, which allows for the facilitation of emerging themes and the identification of relationships or processes between the social actors and the surrounding context.

Finally, in order to provide a coherent framework for analysis of the data, we return to the adapted framework of athlete experience as identified in Chapter 3 that focuses on the following themes (Figure 5.1):
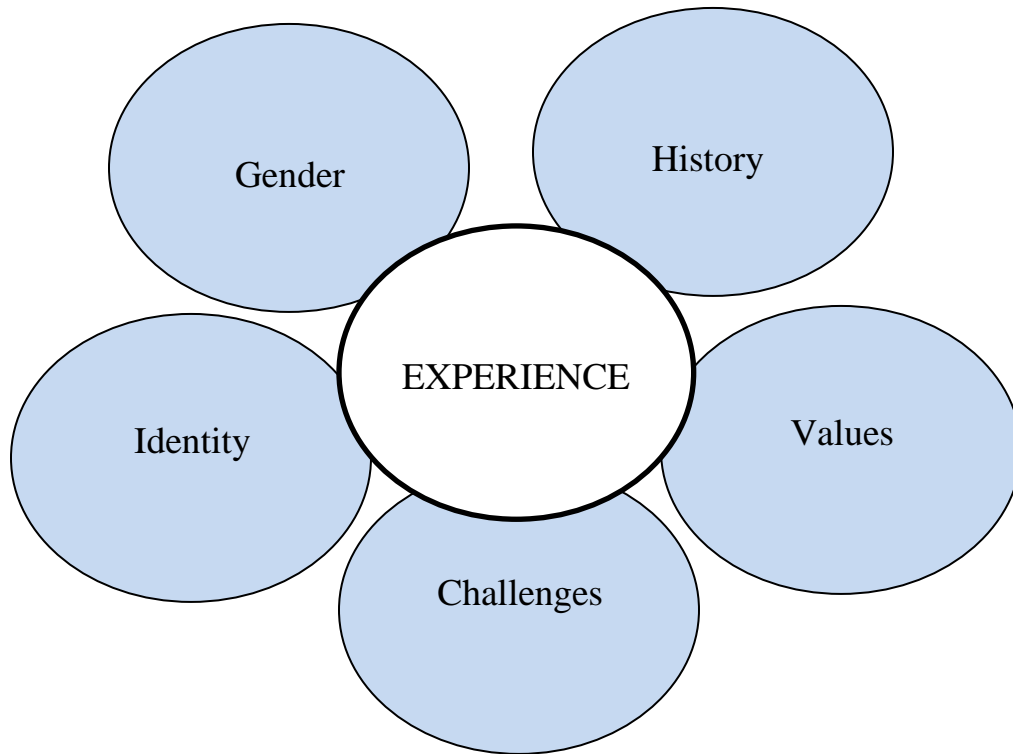
Figure 5.1: An adapted framework of the elements involved in the experiences of elite equestrian athletes (reproduced here from Chapter 3 for ease of reference for the reader).

We will begin by analysing the athlete experience using the deductive themes highlighted, however, we then go on to address several themes and sub-themes that have been inductively identified by virtue of the ethnographic approach.

5.2 Identity

In Chapter 3: Systematic Review Methodology, 'Identity' was analysed as a second order theme. Review of the literature in the context of the theme 'identity' highlighted several types of identities, from individual, to broader themes of nationality, race, culture, ethnicity and gender. Whilst the analysis highlighted literature which focussed on an individual's identity, there was a distinct lack of literature which concurrently linked the theme 'identity' with sport specific discourse. However, through ECA of the primary and secondary sources specific to this study, several sport specific 'identities' were acknowledged. These range from the general equine related identity of 'horsey', to

discipline specific (both in and out of Olympic / Paralympic competition) for example 'Dressage riders' and 'eventers', to identities specifically linked to the 'Olympics', 'Paralympics' and the wider 'Team GB'.

Identity often refers to distinctive characteristics attributed to individuals or those shared by distinct groups. One such characteristic may be the common use of a language or specific terminology. Reference to the colloquial term 'horsey', as shown in the following quotes, demonstrates a distinctive 'them and us' identity:

> The sort of great saying of any publicity is good publicity is ironically quite true, but obviously we want it to be all for the good reasons, but it's just trying to sort of sell the stories and breakdown some of the barriers and the Olympics gives us the perfect opportunity, because we are on that global stage, when we have a World Equestrian Games we're on the global stage but still only to the horsey people. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

> For me, as I said, it's been my dream since I was a 6 year old and I think one of the... one of the real appeals of the Olympics is it's such a universal experience, you know, or sporting, universal experience that, you know, if you're an Olympian, you know, it's something that everyone can relate to, whereas, you know, if you say 'Oh well, I've been to the World Equestrian Games', you know, to someone who's not well versed in sort of horsey speak, there's 'Oh, that's nice.' (Interviewee 12, Eventing rider).

The use of the term 'horsey' by someone outside of the collective group could be seen as a derogatory term due to its childlike connotations and association with the 1938 children's song 'Horsey Horsey' written by Paddy Roberts. However, as these quotes demonstrate, when used by an insider, the term refers to characteristics of a collective group 'horsey people' and characteristics of a language 'horsey speak'. The way that the above two interviewees refer to the identity of 'horsey' in the context of 'them and us' shows a collective understanding of what the experience is like from within, with what

could almost be described as a 'desire' to be understood by those outside. Interviewee 12 specifically differentiates between the horsey-specific experience of the World Equestrian Games and the universal experience of the Olympic Games, the latter being an experience which would be recognised / understood and by implication more deeply valued by a wider group of people. The ensuing quote also uses the 'Horsey' identity to differentiate equestrian sport from others in the context of a multi sport event such as the Olympics and highlights the use of nationality as a form of identity:

> I think its everything, representing your country and obviously you have the Europeans and stuff, I mean the Olympics is the big one, its much more mainstream than the Europeans, its not just equestrian, its everybody, it's the whole of Team GB, its not just your horses or you're just going somewhere with horsey people, you're like part of Great Britain, like part of a much bigger whole than normal. (Interviewee 3, Groom).

The collective identity of equestrian sport in the wider sporting landscape is also highlighted in this next extract from Interviewee 27. Here it is interesting to note that the interviewee refers to equestrian sport within the context of Olympic sport but outside of the context of mainstream sport:

> I think the Olympics brings with it a lot of potential to put equestrian sports into a different light than they would otherwise be. We could really be the headline grabbers, quite easy, and it does get us... it opens journalists' eyes to us a little bit more, because we are alongside athletics and swimming and the more mainstream sports and that's what I think is special about the Olympics and why we always have to... we'll have to grasp to make sure we are part of it, because it does put us up there with other sort of sports that people are more familiar with. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

Whilst Interviewee 27, refers to the positive effect of placing equestrian sport in the context of wider mainstream sport, Pippa Funnell recounts how difficult it can be to

explain the nuances of equestrian sport to those outside of the sport. For many riders the cross country phase of the Eventing competition at the Athens Olympics was seen as not challenging enough due to changes in regulations and limitations of the course design. In this sport different courses can suit different types of horse but in the Olympic context teams are chosen before the course is seen. In her autobiography, Funnell outlines her concerns as she first walks the course and then reflects on her experience of the press conference that followed:

> We finish the course with 11.2 time penalties. I am obviously disappointed, but Kiri is safe and I am in one piece. I only wish that the track could have been more demanding to back Kiri off and to have encouraged other riders to take some of the slower options. Within minutes of dismounting I rush to a press conference to explain. But it is extremely difficult to account for my time faults to a largely non-equestrian press. What a rider feels and what the viewers see can often bear no comparison. I tried to explain just why I couldn't have taken some of the risks on the course that other riders had done in order to get the time. But I found it upsetting when someone even queried why I have been selected on this horse. I have no doubt that I have one of the best horses in the world. How could the British selectors not have selected a horse of his calibre, having won two of the toughest three-day events? (Funnell, 2004: p. 269-270).

In the previous quote we see Funnell's frustration at being judged by the non-specialist press. In the next extract we see how Funnell's sporting ability is acknowledge by the wider sporting community as she is invited to the BBC Sports Personality of the Year event:

> I love being asked to this because when you're sharing the stage with the top runners and footballers it makes you feel that you are not just an event rider but a real sportsperson. (Funnell, 2004: p. 133).

These two examples from Funnell again illustrate the notion of 'them and us' and how this implicates on her personal sense of identity.

The comparison between 'horsey' equestrian sport and 'other sports' with regards to identifying characteristics is highlighted in the following quotes that refer to the 'uniqueness' of the sport. Obviously the combination of a human and non-human athlete makes equestrian sport different from human only sports. As the following quote demonstrates, this can add to the unpredictability of the sport:

> Things can go wrong and people fall off and horses have stops where you wouldn't expect them to and it's two brains trying to compete as one and you can't be 100% sure what your horse is going to do. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

A member of the GB support team explained that the dynamic of the human / horse partnership resulted in an 'unselfish' athlete attitude in equestrian sport compared to other sports, implying that this is a unique characteristic and again illustrating the distinct identity of an equestrian athlete:

> Athletes can be very frustrating to work with, because of the intensity and their selfishness sometimes, but with this lot, because they're not the most important part, the horse is the most important part, they, they haven't got that selfishness about them really, so they're a lot better to work with, and I enjoy this sport more than other sport. (Interviewee 1, Team GB support staff).

> The year before I had a rider that fell and I didn't see them until 8 o'clock at night, and I said "Where have you been?" They said "Oh, I've been looking after my horse". So they're still the last, last thing on the list to get sorted out. So that's what makes them quite unique. (Interviewee 1, Team GB support staff).

Other unique characteristics of equestrian sport include the fact that men and women are competing equally against each other and Olympic riders may compete in certain circumstances against complete amateurs. Interviewee 1 refers to these aspects as a great 'leveller' of the sport:

> Well, when you see people that ask you about the sport compared to other sports, I mean firstly you've got males competing against females on an equal level, which is very unique. You've also got... you could be an Olympic champion, world champion one minute, and the next week you're competing against people doing it on a part time basis and get beaten, because it's all about the horse. So it's a very levelling sport, there's no room for egos as well, because you can go on your backside very quickly and I think that's what makes it quite unique. (Interviewee 1, Team GB support staff).

> I mean the whole notion that I can get on my horse and I can go and compete against Zara Philips, on a level playing field, well I couldn't pick up my golf clubs and go and walk next to Tiger Woods and play with him. First affiliated event I did, we parked next to Mark Todd and I did my Dressage after Ginny Elliot, I mean you can't do that anywhere else, and we don't make enough of a song and dance about this… when we think about men and women are equal, absolutely dead equal, what other sport... I mean there's one where you shoot, but it's not a physical sport. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

The 'levelling' factors outlined above imply what could be described as implicit and explicit identities. The explicit identities being gender and professional / amateur sporting status, with the implicit being the more generic 'rider'. This generic identity of 'rider' is not only void of gender or sporting 'eliteness' it can also be used as an identity that is inclusive of both able-bodied and disabled athletes. Indeed, examples of this were discussed in Chapter 2 (page 77) with reference to the 'Aaaah bless…' quote, and again when we discussed Wells' experience of having 'two careers' (page 77).

The Paralympian in the following quote moves from discussing his experience at the World Equestrian Games, a championships which sees able-bodied and disabled competitions running concurrently, to his experience at the Paralympics. It is interesting to note the semantics as he first refers to the Olympics before correcting himself:

> I mean getting selected for the World Championships last year you know that was great you know it's the World Championships blah blah blah but for the Olympics well Paralympics sorry that's just the next level you don't get any higher than that really, erm in my sport anyway you know that is the highest place you can go. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

Throughout the analysis of the primary data, it appeared that the identity of the Olympics and Paralympics were somewhat interchangeable but only to those with Paralympic experience, those who only had Olympic experience never referred to the Paralympics. In the ensuing quote the Paralympic rider is referring to her expectations of what the Beijing Paralympics will be like due to the fact that they will be held in Hong Kong rather than Beijing due to quarantine issues:

> I think well just it's the Olympics, I've been working towards this for four years…I am a bit sad that's its not all together with the other sports because they say it wont feel like a Paralympics but we'll see. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

The issue of sport separation for equestrian sports in relation to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics is discussed further in section 5.5 Challenges and section 5.8 Experience of the Games. However, with regards to 'Identity' this situation reiterates the notion of a collective sport specific identity in the context of a multi-sport event. For many of the individuals interviewed the distinctive characteristic and hence identity of the Olympic or Paralympic Games was the multi-sport environment:

You've got that camaraderie of other sports and cyclists saying "Brilliant! Well done." and vice-versa. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager).

I think that was the advantage of the village in Athens because you're just in awe of some of these athletes, from the little four foot gymnast or great huge you know wrestlers or judo, I mean they just come in all shapes and sizes and its just so interesting and we'll have that taken away won't we? You know you could just literally go and watch them train and it was just amazing, all we'll look at is just equines all the time. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

The unique characteristic of an Olympic village is again reiterated in the next two quotes and here we also see the differentiated identity between the Olympics and 'a major championships':

In Hong Kong we won't be in the Olympic village, so we won't be part of everything else, which I thought in Athens was great really. To be in the Olympic village and to be with all the other athletes from all the other disciplines was, I think, a really Olympic experience. I think being in Hong Kong, where you're sort of separated and you're only with equestrian will put a different feel on it, really, it'll feel like you're just... I think it'll feel more like you're at a major championships than it will at an Olympics. (Interviewee 25, Coach).

The Olympic village I think is different, it has a different feel, it's just like another World Championships where you're sharing a hotel with a group of equestrian athletes. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

In the next extract from Interviewee 22 we can see how the separation of being in Hong Kong rather than Beijing affected this Paralympian. Not only do we see the 'identity' at a competition level but also at a sport-specific level and even at a discipline level, which will be discussed in more detail below:

It does kind of exclude us, we are excluded a little bit, for God's sake we're eight hours away. It's not like we can just pop in the car and go and have a look. Yeah I kind of, yeah I'm going to miss that because its just going to be, I know it's the Olympic Games but its just going to be another huge Para-Dressage competition, its going to be a little bit like the Worlds but only on a grander scale. Erm so yeah we are a little bit, and its not even as if the able bodied are going to be there so its not as if there's integration or anything like that so yeah its just going to be us Dressage lot…It's the Olympics Games and you're going there live but you're not going to get to see anything else or soak up any of the other atmosphere because I can imagine the atmosphere is going to be amazing for us but gosh can you imagine what its going to be like when you've got all the other sports involved and all the other people involved. (Interviewee 22, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

In the subsequent extract, this rider is reflecting on her experience at the Athens Paralympics, which she attended at the age of 16 years, whilst looking ahead to what the experience may be like at the Beijing Paralympics:

That was amazing I mean the whole thing was amazing. Being with other disabled athletes erm and it boosted my confidence because literally you look around you and there were people much worse off than you and you just felt that what are you moaning for I mean if they can do it I can, so it really gave me a boost. And the whole, the massive tent for food was really an out of this world experience. I think I'll miss that in Beijing actually it will just kind of feel like a World Championships. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

Interestingly, Interviewee 23 is the only Paralympian that referred to other disabled 'athletes'. As we can see in the following quotes from fellow Paralympians, the primary identity they discuss is that of 'disability' rather than 'athlete':

So we'll get the experience of being in the Village with everybody and seeing it and the awe-inspiring thing of seeing how some of the third world people cope with doing their sport etc, that's always such a humbling experience because you know you think they manage with just a stick or basically hoping along on one leg and just a stick to help them and its an old stick they've just picked up and polished and everything and there's you with an electric wheelchair, well no I won't have an electric wheelchair but I will have a push wheelchair etc I mean if I was in the third world I'd just be sat in a hut and shuffling around on my bum etc so its just looking forward to that being in the village because that's always such a great experience. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

Yes and also for us it is very inspiring some of the para stuff. And not just watching your own, you know having the opportunity to watch other sports erm and again experiencing the different countries and their attitude towards disability and how money has affected how some of their disabilities are treated. I remember in Athens almost doing a double take because some of the Africans they didn't even have crouches and things. One guys he had this sort of branch of a tree and he was just hobbling along with that with his leg wrapped around that well here he'd have this that and the other. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

In none of the previous quotes do the interviewees identify any sport specific examples and their reference to disability in generic terms, void of any particular defining characteristics such as classification status or for example wheelchair athlete. Their reference to nationality as an identifying characteristic is also vague with several interviewees referring to individuals from the 'third world'.

Within the context of Olympic and Paralympic competition, one would also expect to find reference to nationality in relation to identity and team. Whilst discussing her first Olympic experience in Sydney 2000, and specifically her experience of participating in the opening ceremony, Funnell acknowledges feeling ''overwhelmed with the pride we

felt by being part of Team GB'' (Funnell, 2004: p. 146).

Recognition of the wider Team GB was most noticeable when interviewees discussed the issue of sport separation in association with the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics:

> We don't want the equestrian team to believe it's just another European or World Championship but they are part of the Olympic family and they are Olympians and everything that goes with being part of that Olympic family and part of that British Olympic family. (Interviewee 13, BOA).

> There is an Olympic Village in Hong Kong, but it's a hotel so it's manufactured. So we're working on Olypmifying it so that it's not British Equestrian Federation everywhere its Team GB and all the Team GB branding everywhere and all the goodies that we put together. Not only do we brand it all up in terms of the floors in terms of team GB but we also give them lots of bits and pieces that when they go into their room they understand that we've made it all quite special we might be three and half hours away or 1500 miles away or whatever but we're still thinking of them. (Interviewee 13, BOA).

However, despite the BOA's efforts to be inclusive, the lived experience of those out in Hong Kong provides a different insight:

> The one thing about being in Hong Kong and not in Beijing is that you then don't feel part of Team GB as a whole, with the other sports, coz when we were in Athens, we were able to, coz we were quite close to the town centre, we were able to get the coach in or the train in and we could then go and watch other sports and they had a place called the Team GB Lodge, which was sort of a friends and family point. So all the athletes would come there and their friends and family would go, so you could be sat in the lodge there, and Kelly Holmes would walk past, and that's an experience in itself because you are mixing with sort of people who are sort of more – what's the word – in the media a lot more, coz obviously

equestrian isn't a high media sport and things like athletics and things that... and swimming and whatever are. So it's nice to sort of be in amongst those type people. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

Through the analysis so far we have discussed the sport specific and the competition specific 'Identity' relating to insider / outsider, or them and us sport related identities, and we have discussed notions of disabled 'Identities' and touched on Team GB and nationality as an identity. The following quote taken from one of several interviews with the Performance Director (this particular interview was conducted prior to the Beijing Games), includes reference to all of these identities:

I think the Paralympics is a little bit different as well in that there's a lot more interaction between the nations. Its funny you go to the Olympics and people who see each other week in week out won't talk to each other, it really is pretty serious stuff the Olympics, Paralympics is serious but more off the field of play people mix more between the nations. I think probably the Paralympians will miss the multi-sport environment more than the Olympians to be honest, because most of the time at the Olympics most of the equestrian people, less for Eventing, don't really live in the village or didn't in Athens, one or two riders are pro it but most lived out so, I think they'll and also, this will sound slightly wrong, the Olympic riders are current professional riders in that they will go straight back from the Games and get on other horses at other competitions. The Paralympians, this is the major competition for this year, some of them might not compete again until, well might not even compete again for the rest of the season, they haven't got a string of horses, there aren't that many big competition during the year so they will be keen to stay on after and go back to Beijing for the closing ceremony and be part of it. The Olympians it's the competition and once the competitions finished that's it, move on, next thing Burghly, Barcelona Super League whatever it might be World Cup series indoors starting. So life moves at a quicker pace on the competition circuit. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

It would appear that within the Olympic and Paralympic context there is recognition at least of the overarching Team GB identity which is then subdivided into the collective sport specific 'equestrian' or 'horsey' identity, which is inclusive of all the disciplines but exclusive of all other sports. As mentioned previously the deductive theme of identity was to be expected. However, the ethnographic approach utilised within this study specifically left space for people to discuss what identity meant to them and as a result the inductive themes, such as 'horsey' are of interest here, as are nuances of discipline-specific identities.

Some characteristics associated with discipline-specific identities have rather practical implications. The actual requirements of the horse and rider within the disciplines are very different:

> The disciplines are quite different really, all we've got is a four legged animal underneath us but it's actually bred very different, they're very different sports. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

This in turn can result in different cultural profiles and behaviours. In the accompanying quote we can see how the generic sport science support service of sport psychology is approached differently by the different disciplines:

> Dressage has always had psychology, it had it before Sydney. Eventing did have it, didn't really get on with it particularly, I don't think and therefore don't want it. Dressage have had it and actually have always been relatively happy with how it works and actually have stuck with it and tried to mould it as they want it, as opposed to throwing it out with the bathwater and saying it can't work. I don't think there's any particular right or wrong answer and Showjumping a lot of the time, they were quite a lot older, pretty successful businessmen and they don't really get it. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

The social interactions and behaviours of the different teams are further examined in the

following sequence of quotes which are all associated with the discipline of Dressage. Here we really start to gain an insight into the views and actions of this group of athletes. The narrative presented here not only implies specific characteristics associated with Dressage, it also acknowledges the differences between this team and the other disciplines. The first quote comes from an interview recorded in Hong Kong during the Beijing Olympics. This particular interview was recorded just prior to the start of the Dressage competition and specifically on a day when a tornado warning had meant that everything had shut down and no training could take place:

> There's two things that can happen at these Games it could be quite a normal temperature, and we've already experienced that in the week that we've been out here. So then nothing will change, it'll just be like a normal World Championship, European Championship. Or, we could be facing this kind of situation, here, and what this situation will require is huge flexibility and adaptability and that's something that Dressage riders are not good at. It doesn't come into the routine, regime, discipline of Dressage. It comes into Cross Country riding, where you ride over different terrains, different weathers, no precise time, you know, or Showjumping, you don't know whether you're going to be waiting 2 hours to jump or 5 minutes, in Dressage we know the time we ride, we know everything, everything's constant. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

Not only does the interviewee recognise Dressage-specific characteristics, he also acknowledges that these are different from the other two Olympic disciplines of Eventing and Showjumping. What is interesting is the association between the requirements of the sport and the characteristics of the different riders. The nature of the Dressage competition is the completion of a pre-determined test. The riders will have completed the same test at numerous competitions; consistency is an inferred element of this sport and for these riders change is disruptive but for showjumpers every competition is different:

When you're jumping there's nothing constant, you turn up at the show, you don't know the course plan, you don't know anything, you don't know the ring, you don't know whether it's on a hill, you don't know whether it's like this in mud. So there's no, no level playing field like we know in Dressage. So you are used to turning up to the unknown, you walk, "Christ that's difficult, what am I going to do there", strategies, tactics, "Shit, should have done it in 6", you know, nothing's for definite, like it is in Dressage. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

As the Performance Manager discusses preparing the Dressage riders for these types of challenges, we gain an insight into the dramatic characteristics he recognises in his team:

So in our team practice, what I very much wanted the team to do was drip-feed a few challenges in, challenges that psychologically could irritate or frustrate or inflame, but with an announcement that that's what I'm going to do to you, so let's see how much self-control you've got. So the challenge is, you know, yeah you can throw a tantrum, that's easy, that's... but now I'm going to mentally torture you and see how strong you are and for the prima donnas that's the challenge for them, not exploding, because that's easy, that's well practised, well rehearsed. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

It would appear that the discipline-specific characteristics are exaggerated within the context of Olympic competition. In the following example the Performance Manager refers to Dressage riders as 'private people', not as social as Showjumpers. In an Olympic competition, Dressage riders are not only competing as a team but they are also living in a team focussed environment.

As Dressage riders we're very private people, we make... we have our plan, we don't always announce it, or maybe the one we announce isn't the one we use but we have it and we do it on our own and we train on our own at home, and we don't compete like Showjumpers competing, mixing, living with each other week in, week out, we don't do that. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

The discipline-specific identity of Dressage as outlined in the characteristics discussed above, is not however consistent with that for Para-Equestrian Dressage. Despite the fact that the nature of the competition is the same, i.e. a pre-known Dressage test, consistently encountered at numerous competitions, Para-Equestrian Dressage riders do not come across as being private people:

> Erm you know everyone wants to interact with everyone you know what I mean, we are, all the countries we've got mates with all the countries and its great for everyone to meet up again you know we met last year at the Worlds, you meet whenever you go to an international like Belgium, I went last year in September and it was great to meet up with everyone. And yeah you do sort of get mates and you know what people are doing and you keep in touch by email to meet up so it's like a long distance friends. I mean when the actual competition day comes obviously you're very focussed with team GB and then at the same time the South African for example Philipa, I always have a laugh with her you know good luck that sort of thing you know what I mean even though she's another country she's still a mate so you want her to do well. Apparently I've been told that's quite different from the other sports, where they stay very much in their country but no, everyone just cracks on. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

We began this section of analysis with the deductive theme of 'Identity' but through the process of ECA we end here with a framework of identity specific to this group of athletes which includes additional inductive sub-themes as highlighted in Figure 5.2.
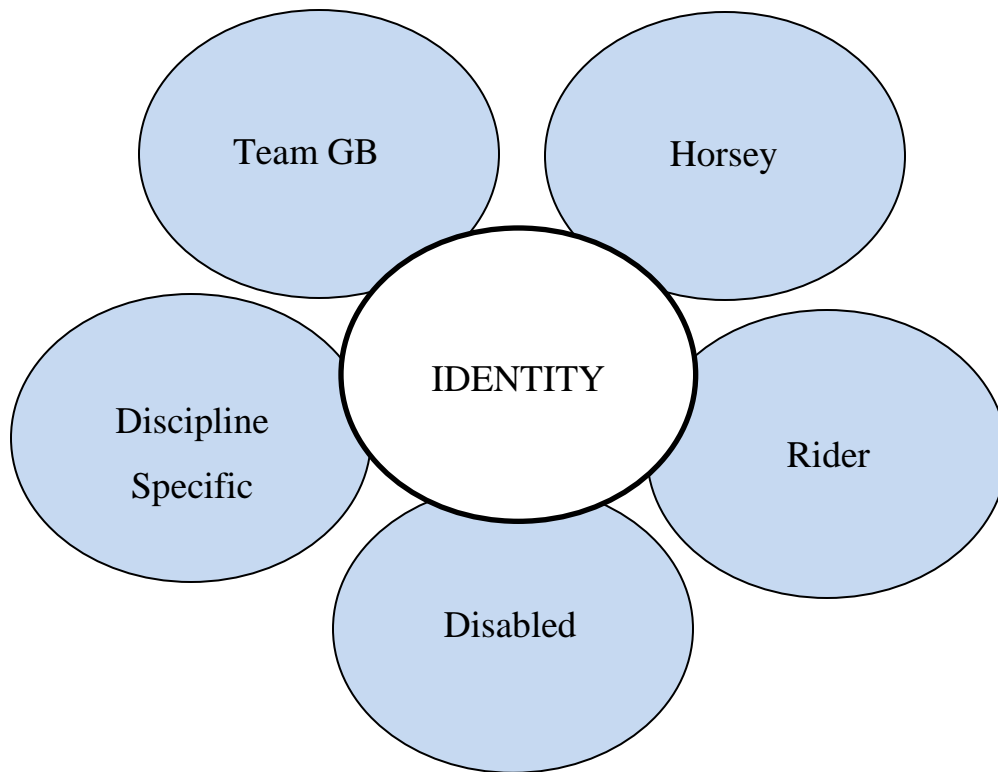
Figure 5.2: A framework of sources of identity for equestrian athletes represented within this study, raised in the primary and secondary data

It is also relevant to discuss here the absence of themes. The systematic review of literature highlighted broad themes pertaining to identity including of race, culture, ethnicity and gender, however these themes were not present in the identity construction of this group of athletes. As discussed in Chapter 2, the socio-cultural context of equestrian sport is often neglected in the Eurocentric discourse surrounding equestrian sport whereas issues of social class, gender and elitism are often at the forefront of the discourse. Despite the emergence of new markets and global development of equestrian sport, in the Olympic context Eurocentric and Western cultural bias still provide the dominant framework. And in the context of the analysis of the primary and secondary data presented here, the focus is on the British Equestrian Team which whilst historically this team has shown equality in gender representation, the same cannot be said of race and or ethnic representation.

In the systematic review methodology in Chapter 3, 'Gender' was identified as both a first and second order theme. Notions of gender (gender ideologies), sexuality and female emancipation were themes identified as a result of the thematic analysis and it was concluded that notions of gender and gender ideologies were most prominent in studies associated with media and sport. This is not surprising considering that sport is overwhelmingly constructed in the mass media as a male domain. Sport, is after all predominantly separated into same-sex competition (unless physiological differences between men and women offer no competitive advantage or disadvantage – as is the case with equestrian sport), with male sports taking the dominant default position. Whilst the majority of early discourse surrounding equestrian sport in the context of Olympic competition was ladened with gendered reference (as discussed in Chapter 2), analysis of the current data shows a distinct absence of gender as an identity in the way interviewees and other participants see themselves and others.

With regards to the auxiliary documents, it is interesting to note that gender is only evident in King's autobiography and only in reference to her experience of motherhood. Of the riders included in this study only two are parents. Both Fox-Pitt and King refer to their children in their autobiographies but only King discusses the impact this has on her sporting career. In the chapter entitled 'Marriage, Motherhood and Medals', King interestingly refers to the planning of motherhood in relation to the timing of the Olympics:

> We had decided that no time must be wasted in trying to have a baby at the start of 1996, so that I could prepare for the Atlanta Olympics that summer. (King, 2009: p. 105-106).

However, this planning meant that King was five and half months pregnant whilst competing at the European Championships. King describes the dilemma she faced with regards to whom she should inform about the pregnancy. Ultimately she only informed the team doctor and chose to keep the news from the chairman of selectors and her team mates, in the following quote King justifies her decision:

He [the team doctor] advised me not to tell anyone else, because it would be too much of a burden for them. So I kept it a secret from Bridget Parker, the chairman of selectors, and Gilly and my team mates, knowing they would worry and think they had to make concessions for me. (King, 2009: p, 106).

King was part of the gold medal winning European Team and following the medal ceremony she informs the chairman of selectors that she was pregnant. In the following quote we can see that King's fears of being treated differently had some basis:

I went upstairs and found Bridget in her bedroom. She was a bit taken aback, but she managed to congratulate me. I explained that I thought, if I'd told her, she wouldn't let me ride. When I asked what she'd have done, she admitted that I'd have only been an individual [therefore not selected to compete in the team competition]. (King, 2009: p, 109).

King then goes on to explain that her sporting achievement whilst pregnant became front page news:

Many people thought that motherhood would mean the end of my career…People pointed out that Lucinda Green [an Eventer and Olympic Silver medallist] was 'never the same again' after having two children, but they were missing the point. She just didn't have such good horses again. (King, 2009: p. 110).

In the above quote and the one that follows, we see how King reflects on the dual roles of motherhood and athlete and how despite the fact that others appeared to put these two together, King was able to separate them:

Everyone warned me that I'd lose my nerve, but I was going cross country, I thought to myself, *No, this feels the same as usual.* I was aware that I was still riding forward, that I wasn't 'hooking' [a riding term meaning holding back] and, most importantly, that I still really wanted to do it. (King, 2009: p. 114).

King's reflections on motherhood in combination with her sporting career and reference to the sex-integrated nature of equestrian sport from Interviewee 1 are the only reference to gendered discourse:

> Well, when you see people that ask you about the sport compared to other sports, I mean firstly you've got males competing against females on an equal level, which is very unique. (Interviewee 1, Team GB support staff).

Analysis of the current data therefore shows a distinct absence of gender as an identity in the way interviewees and other participants see themselves and others. The absence of a gendered identity could be seen as evidence of irrelevance of gender within a defined mixed-gender team.

5.3 History

'History' was identified as an emergent second order theme, further sub-divided into general history and sport history. Crossing first order themes of 'biography', 'gender', 'sporting culture', and 'career', history often provided a contextual framework for the main narrative. With regards to the results of the ECA, the emerging core of this phenomenon is 'equestrian sporting culture'. Analysis of the primary interview data resulted in the following inductive sub-themes; rider career history, sport development, economics and relationships. From this and through the retroductive analysis undertaken as an element of the applied critical realist framework, the following framework emerged (Figure 5.3):
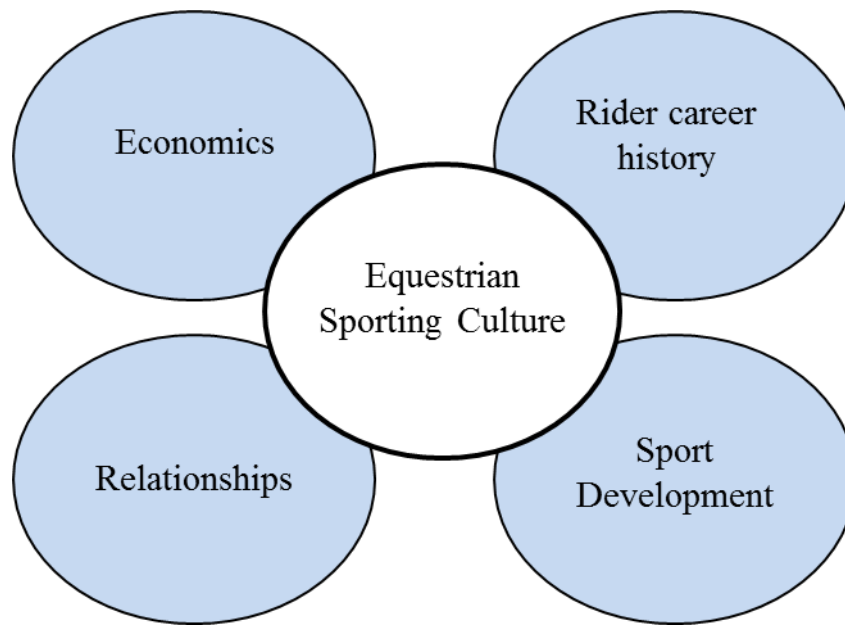
Figure 5.3: A framework for relevant elements of equestrian sporting culture, raised in the primary and secondary data

All the riders included in this study had been selected for the British Olympic or Paralympic team at the point of interview and several of the riders also had prior experience competing at an Olympic or Paralympic Games. Analysis of the individual rider's experience of their own career histories combined with wider discourse pertaining to the development of the sport highlights the unique nature of rider careers. We can begin by addressing the wider history of the Olympics and Paralympics from a sport development perspective, as highlighted in the following:

> In terms of the development continuum Paralympic sport is pretty new, you know, Olympic sports has got 100 years of history, even, you know, in terms of the Stoke Mandeville Games we've only got 50 years of history and, you know, that's quite a lot in terms of what are two relatively short histories, that we've still got a lot of work to do, both in terms of, you know, sport being used as a rehabilitation tool, or sport being an elite profession and, you know, we've made, I would say significant inroads, but we've still got the vestiges of rehabilitation and care as a culture rather than as a this is sport for sports sake. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

The specific history of equestrian sport within the context of the wider Olympic and Paralympic history was discussed in Chapter 2 here we can see how the relatively short history of Para-Equestrian Dressage has impacted on the development of the sport and the lived experience of those involved:

> I'm the performance manager for the Paralympic Dressage element and I come under World Class element. It's a role I've been doing for five years; I'm the first incumbent in the role in a salaried position. Before I started doing it there was a voluntary manager, who, you know, did as much as they needed to from competition to competition, but as the sport has progressed, it evolved and has become more successful and to maintain its success its part of this sort of evolution that, as well as getting Lottery funding towards it, is to have a professional management structure as well, because sometimes a volunteer, with the best will in the world, is not actually directly accountable for their actions or inactions or they will be but, you know, they can't be held responsible or sacked, fall on their sword, whatever. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager Para-Equestrian Dressage).

Para-Equestrian Dressage made its debut at the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics and from these games until the Athens Paralympics, riders competed on borrowed horses. In the following quote we can see how the development of allowing riders to bring their own horses affected the experience of the individual athletes:

> Yes it's a totally different competition and it has changed the sport. Before it was rider skill ok because you obviously had to just get on something and produce work in five days, erm now yes its still rider skill because you still have to be able to ride the horse that you've bought, but it has brought a different calibre of horses into the sport. And I think it will be harder for new countries coming in who don't have finances maybe to keep up with everything. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

At the time of the interview one of the riders involved in the study had competed in every Paralympics since Atlanta and was about to compete in her fourth Games. Here we gain an insight into how her experience changed over the years, partly due to the 'newness' of the sport but also due to the wider attitude towards Paralympic sport:

I went to Atlanta in 1996 which was on borrowed horses, so we didn't take any horses with us. We had heat and humidity out there and thunder storms so I've done heat and humidity and that's where I learnt to drink a lot. In Atlanta we got team gold there and individual bronze in the Kur. Atlanta wasn't a particularly amazing experience it was such hard work, their transport was completely chaotic we were 30km away from the village, I had to get up at quarter to five in the morning to get the transport out there, you were at the venue all day where there was nowhere to properly get any rest, I have a photograph with [team mate] who was on the team with us asleep in the loos because it was the only quite place she could find. Then we got back, the buses would come in around 9pm and they weren't roll on roll off, so off course all those in wheelchairs had to be put on individually and it took hours and we always came back in convoy etc so we'd get back about half eleven, quarter to twelve and then of course we had to go and eat. So I wasn't in bed before half past one most of the time. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Sydney was different because it was so much better organised. We didn't stay in the village we stayed in a hotel near the venue, we did get into the village and it was roll on roll off and it was just so much better organised, the stadium was fantastic. In Atlanta the Paralympics didn't have much status in America, in fact they were even dismantling some of the stuff around us at one point and in Sydney it did, it mattered it was as important as the able bodied Olympics had been, so it was just such a fantastic experience for that, so enjoyable really, it was hard work of course, it's always hard work but not in quite the same way that Atlanta had been so that's why I think Sydney was so great. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

As discussed in Chapter 2, Great Britain has a strong equestrian history and true to the origin of Paralympic sport, Para-Equestrian Dressage in the UK evolved predominantly from the ethos of rehabilitation through sport related activities.   In the UK this is primarily through the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) which was established in 1969. Several of the riders in this study were introduced to Para-Equestrian Dressage through the RDA and in the following quotes we can see how different their experiences were:

> I started riding when I was six, with the Riding for the Disabled Association. Erm my school took groups of disabled pupils to the centre to ride instead of doing P.E to help with physiotherapy and I instantly fell in love with the freedom it gave me and horses and stuff. Erm and I carried on riding for therapy with the RDA for roughly a year and when I was around 13 someone said had we tried going to this specialist RDA centre which helps train para-Dressage athletes. I didn't realise I could do it as an actual sport and compete so I went along to South Bucks RDA and they introduced me to Dressage and that was 7 years ago and I haven't looked back since. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

> I was a pony mad child but my parents couldn't afford for me to do anything and then as a teenager I started riding but non-competitively and I was able bodied then. It was only after my accident that I started again and it was more as a therapy, I loved horses and there was an RDA in the same village where I lived so I just went along. I think the RDA had a few small competitions and then I got picked up by international squad really and did more. But I'd already been competing able bodied and actually I got far more pleasure doing the able bodied stuff because there wasn't really much of it then. Oh but now it's, it is beyond recognition. I mean when I first started it was 1987 and yeah there is no comparison and how far it's come so quickly. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

The previous two quotes demonstrate how the riders were introduced into the sport from a therapy perspective but in the next quote we see how this point of entry had negative connotations for one rider:

> Yah I've ridden since I was 8 so I knew the basics I knew what I was doing I just needed to adapt it to my disability, whereas these guys have had to completely you know make their bodies do things that when you see them off the horse they can't do. Erm so I came into thinking oh God I am just going to be sitting on a hairy pony being led around doing and told oh aren't you doing well darling, I can't be doing with being patronised, I can't bare self pity but I came to watch a world seminar at Hartpury College, and sat there and I thought, God, because at the time my illness was quite new to me and I did take a few months to acclimatise to it, there was a lot of tantrums and tiaras to coin a phrase and stuff being thrown around the house. So I went to this thing and I thought what the bloody hell are you whinging about you know its just not, my problems are just not an issue really, I can get by with mine, I know mine is going to get worse but every morning I wake up and I just think YES hallelujah they're still working. But I thought right OK if these guys can do it and do it to a level they're doing it at, there's no god-dam reason why I can't do it, so er that was it. (Interviewee 22, Para-Equestrian Rider).

In the extract from Interviewee 22 presented above, the rider shares his first experience of the sport. In the following extract we see how quickly he summed up his potential career opportunities within the general sport development structure:

> So as I say the whole thing for me I've got to do it properly. I made no bones about the fact that, when they were talking about putting me on a squad, I wanted to be on the performance squad, no disrespect to the start and potential squads, I could see no point 40 years of age with a degenerative disease, disorder, what is the point in putting me on start and potential, either I've got to go in at the top and try to stay there or forget it. Erm I know my limitations, I know how far I can go

as in the Dressage sphere if you like, I've no illusions about ridding Grand Prix, I don't want to ride Grand Prix, I just want to do what I do as good as I can do it and then that shall be it and shall retire. (Interviewee 22, Para-Equestrian Rider).

Similarly in the following quote we gain insight into the lived experience of another rider and the development of her career:

I was introduced into many sports, just able-bodied, I'd never thought of going into para and I always wanted to compete able-bodied and my first thought of para wasn't, you know, wasn't positive, because I hadn't heard of it before and then it was only when I went to a talent-spotting for able-bodied riders that I got introduced to it and then I kind of got... not got forced into it, but persuaded and then obviously I found out all about it and I think it's just a great opportunity and a great pathway to go through for people who might not be able to do it, you know, with the able-bodied but I think it's great. (Interviewee 24, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Interviewee 24 is fairly unique in the equestrian world in that she has what she refers to as a 'dual career' in able-bodied and Para-Equestrian Dressage. At the time of interview she was riding at 'Young Riders' level (able-bodied) and had been selected as 'first reserve' for the 2008 Paralympic Games. In her interview she discussed her experience of this dual athletic career:

I think it was quite hard at the beginning because I, I was one of the first ones to go internationally as an able-bodied rider, and they didn't know what to do, and the selectors didn't... they were kind of a bit iffy whether to touch me, because they didn't know if I was reliable and... but I think I just had to keep working away and prove myself that I was like any other rider, except I needed slightly adapted reins, and..., coz they've got a FEI [classification] now, which took a while to get around but now they've accepted it and, you know, I got that dispensation and so... and I got quite a good reaction at the international last year.

So hopefully I'm going to go on and build from that this year. (Interviewee 24, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

From a sport development perspective, entry into Paralympic level competition appeared to happen within a short timeline for these riders following introduction to the sport. For the Olympic riders their career histories are far more elongated. As outlined in Chapter 2 equestrianism is classed as an 'early start, late specialisation' sport, with riders starting learning to ride by the age of 6, but only specialising in a specific discipline around the age of 16. Interestingly in the Olympic disciplines the British Equestrian teams are constructed via age classification: Youth Teams; Pony, riders aged 12-16 years; Junior, riders aged 14-18 years, Young Rider, riders aged 16-21 years and Senior Teams. This type of age differentiation for teams is not evident in Para-Equestrian Dressage. Due to the potential longevity of riders' careers at a senior level within the Olympic disciplines, it can be very difficult for riders to progress from the Youth Teams into the Senior Teams. In the following quote a representative from the BOA addresses this point:

We're working very closely with the British Equestrian Federation now in terms of getting young athletes engaged with the Olympics. We participated in the Australian Olympic Youth Festival and equestrian, I pushed hard with that organising committee to allow us to send an equestrian team…I think an important plank in our strategies is that we're trying to engage much more closely with younger athletes who may well make the transition or we assist them in making the transition between junior, youth international sport and senior international sport in the Olympic programme. The difficulty for 16, 17 and 18 year olds is that you've got rider who are in their 30s and 40s representing Great Britton and so that transition process can take a long time. But it's kind of an important aim for us to move into that environment with them, every time you take teams away in that environment it's very difficult, its very different taking 15, 16 years old on a 23hour flight where they may have represented their country at a junior international level before but not in a multi sport environment and it's the multi sport Olympic, Olympism, where you've got an Olympic village, an

opening ceremony and closing ceremony and your working and understanding the needs and demands of other sports along side you all the time. (Interviewee 13, BOA Operations).

The Olympic riders featured in this study have all progressed through the Youth Teams onto the Senior Teams. However, being on a Senior Team is no guarantee of making it to the Olympics. For example the Showjumper, Tim Stockdale, first represented Great Britain on a Senior Team in 1988 aged 24, whilst he has represented his country on over 50 occasions he has only competed at one Olympic Games, Beijing 2008. In comparison, Stockdale's team mate in Beijing, and indeed his team mate on numerous occasions, Nick Skelton, only 7 years older than Stockdale, has competed in every Olympic Games since Atlanta 1996.

Maintaining a career at the senior level and more specifically being selected onto an Olympic Team is fundamentally down to having access to suitable horses. Access to suitable horses is a differentiating factor between the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines and is tied in to the Equestrian Sporting Culture themes of; development of the sport, the riders career histories, relationships and economics. As previously mentioned Para-Equestrian Dressage riders, competed on borrowed / locally supplied horses until the Athens Games. The economic impact of this development in the sport is highlighted in the example below:

> There's still a bit of a mix up so if some countries can't afford to bring their horses they can borrow horses but they are still classed as own horses, you know its not a separate competition, you know whereas before at World Championships you had a borrowed horse competition and an own horse competition so that's kind of changed. And yes I think people are spending more on their horses although some of us have still got cheap ones and we're doing ok, you've still got to be able to ride them. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

The cost or value of horses at this level of the sport is not generally public knowledge but as discussed in Chapter 2, top level horses are worth millions of pounds. Horses are commodities and in a similar fashion to stock options their value fluctuates based on performance with basic economic principles of supply and demand affecting the market value. Most riders relay on owners or syndicates to supply them with the horses but this means they have very little control over how long they will have access to any given horse. From a team perspective horse power is an essential element of performance. The following quote was taken from an interview with a Performance Manager shortly after the Beijing Olympics:

> I think the main lesson learnt is that we do need horses. Where, as we came down to the wire, so to speak, we were definitely short of top class horses. So we need those to come forward. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

From the British Equestrian Teams perspective, heading into a home Olympics increased the pressure to perform and there was a clear strategy not to 'lose' horses prior to the competition. There is always a deadline, on the 31st December the year before an Olympics, where horses have to be registered to the nation they are going to compete for, but as Rob Hoekstra, Performance Manager for Britain's Showjumping team explains the fate of those top horses was never fully in the British team's hands:

> In equestrian sport, rarely do the best riders own the best horses. Far more common is for international competitors to ride and train a horse owned by somebody else. If the owner is presented with an offer for the horse that they consider too good to turn down, there is nothing to stop them selling, regardless of the consequences for the rider or a nation's Olympic hopes'. (Williams, 2012).

From a sport development perspective, emerging markets such as the Middle Eastern countries of Saudi Arabia and Qatar are getting very involved in the top end of Showjumping and bring with them substantial economic buying power. The Saudi Arabian Showjumping team earned the final qualifying place at the 2012 Olympics after

winning gold at the Pan-Arab games just before the December deadline of registration. This resulted in one of the British team (Bruce Menzies) losing his Olympic horse as it was owned by a Saudi prince. As Hoekstra explains:

> When Saudi Arabia qualified for the Olympics, the pressure on the prince to support his own nation became very great. His decision was he'd like the horse to participate for Saudi Arabia. Bruce has missed out on that and that's a shame for Bruce, because he doesn't have another horse to take that horse's place. In other words, it ended any hope Menzies had of representing Britain at London 2012 (Williams, 2012).

In fact the British Showjumping team lost two Olympic horses to Saudi Arabia and neither British rider had alternative rides to maintain their place on the team. Yet despite losing a total of three top Showjumping horses to foreign rivals before the 2012 window closed, The British Olympic team went on to win team gold at the 2012 Olympics. Obviously the 'transfer window' operates both ways with British rider Scott Brash picking up a horse that had been due to compete for Ukraine, the new owners of the horse paying a reported £2m (Williams, 2012).

Unlike other sports supported by commercial investment, the private investment in equestrian sport results in an economic impact that lacks stability or contractual longevity. As with commercial sponsorship, the incentive for private investment is linked to the association with the sport, however there is a difference between commercial and personal relationship management. It is this issue that leads us from sport development, and economics to relationships.

Analysis of the primary interview data resulted in the identification of the theme 'relationships' which was sub-categories into three primary categories and a further 17 secondary categories (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Categories of relationships

Primary category of relationship	Secondary category of relationship
Organisational	• BOA • BPA • FEI • BEF • NOCs • LOCOG
Discipline Specific	• Eventing • Showjumping • Dressage • Para-Equestrian Dressage
Personal	• Farrier / vet • Grooms • Managers • Owners • Rider and Coach • Rider and Horse

Analysis of the primary interview data highlighted that organisational relationships were never discussed by the riders, only by representatives of the BOA and the BPA, and the Performance Managers and the Performance Director. The only exception was the secondary category of BEF which was discussed by some members of the Team GB support staff. The nature of the relationship discussed in this category was primarily operational / functional as demonstrated in the following quotes, the natures of these specific relationships are discussed further under section 5.6 Challenges:

> Technically all communication with an OCOG should go through the national Olympic committee, so through the BOA or BPA. Realistically what happens is the Team Leader (myself) builds up a relationship with their venue manager. Now in Athens that was one guy effectively and that number of people grew as it got closer to the Games. But because we're in a satellite venue, it's a whole, the Equestrian Company and it's an organisation that's grown exponentially but has grown in a way that has been very difficult to understand who is responsible for

what. So in Athens we rang up one person effectively, and he travelled around the World going to a lot of events so we saw him in the bars and bazaars and could you know pin his ears. And also it was a lot more black and white in Athens, you were with the BOA, so yeah we had people in the village and out of the village in Athens as well, but there was a lot less areas of uncertainty because areas we're dealing with in Hong Kong we're dealt with by the BOA and BPA in Athens. So for instance the doctor, the physio, admin support, the press, legals, all BOA or BPA provided in Athens, so we didn't have to worry about all that. Obviously we're having to worry about that in Hong Kong, which brings a whole level of planning to it plus the Chinese need 20 forms for something you and I would write on a postage stamp, so yeah its been a very complex plan to bring together, and also its been difficult, to plan as early as one might like. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

Yeah we have a good relationship with Australia, lots of the European families stick together. [the Performance Director] has got strong links with the USA which we tend to use but on a less kind of lesser basis because we're part of a European Olympic Family, erm I did a presentation a few months back to the Americas, so it's all the countries in south America and north America, so we've got reasonable links but we're kind of grouped into a continent and that continent is Europe so with 49 Olympic Committees that make up the European families we're pretty close to yeah which is great because we'll fight battles on their behalf because when we get to the Games its all about us as an Olympic family winning issues with the organising committee because it's their first Olympics and they're bound to make mistakes and they won't know ways around systems where as you know for some of us we've done a number so we're saying to them look if you do this it will help your organisation massively just trust us. (Interviewee 13, BOA).

It is interesting to note that discipline-specific categories emerged as defined relationships which mirror the previous discourse pertaining to identity. Indeed the nature of the relationships discussed here is based on the sense of team identity and here

there is a mixture of personal and functional based relationships. For example many of the support staff refer to relationship with or within discipline-specific groups simply because this is who they have a working relationship with (functional) however this is often based on the identifying characteristics of that discipline (personal) as we can see in the following discussion:

> Within the two Dressage teams, they actually do see it as performance and yes there will be problems, but generally I spend a lot of my time talking about performance not about problems, whereas I think the other two disciplines look at psychology quite differently and they think, you know, they talk, "Well, I don't have a problem" rather than, "How can I do... how can make sure my mental approach is right?", or "How do I know that my mental approach is right?" and that's completely different. I mean I toured with Showjumping over a summer for about six months, and it was like having three... a little bit like having three heads and a straight jacket in your back pocket, that's what they look at it like. And maybe that's me and my approach, I mean I don't think I'm that unapproachable...(Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

In the following quote we are offered an insight into the experience of relationships within the discipline of Dressage and we see the complex nature of the structure of this particular team:

> I look at my role as managing, as I said, the people, within that team and the team is a very big team, it's not four riders, you know, it's all the squad, it's a groom per horse, so two owners. World Class core team, and in Dressage there's a lot of private backup, in fact most top riders have their own sort of mini-teams and so it involves an awful lot of people and an awful lot of very organised people, people that self define how they do things, their routine, their methods and people in Dressage are good at planning, or mostly good at planning, or think they're good at planning and I have to bring that altogether and that's my job. When I took over the team, I know the team obviously because I've worked with the team for a long

time, and I thought the team was very nice, but a bit tired, and I told them so, and what I wanted to do was get back to that expertise and professionalism and define exactly what everybody had to do in terms of their core role and any bolt-on and what I hate is overlap, because I think that's where it all gets terribly muddled and where you get many of the frustrations and irritations. So, that's the way we run it, we try to run it that everybody is very clear about their main role, about the extra roles and the other thing is, is the feeding back from every single task, unless the communication is fed back and the [circle] is completed then for me, it isn't done. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

In all four disciplines riders compete on the competition circuit predominantly as individuals only coming together as a team for certain international competitions. However, comparative ethnographic analysis highlights subtle differences across the disciplines with regards to their team structure. Through the reflexive movement between the themes of identity and relationships we are able to build a narrative of the lived experience of these athletes within their teams. The socially constructed reality of these athletes is further framed by the contextual structures identified through analysis of the themes sport development. For example, in the above quote the Performance Manager whilst referring to team dynamics also refers to characteristics of Dressage riders such as organised but in an individual way. Individualism was one of the defining characteristics associated with the identity of a Dressage rider. It would appear therefore that Dressage remains a team of individuals.

In the ensuing quote from a member of the GB support staff, who has worked with all three Olympic disciplines, we see members of the Eventing team described as comrades before the interviewee goes on to reaffirm the individual structure within the team dynamics of Dressage:

I mean obviously I see them at events where they're competing as individuals, but they are... they're all a bit of... they're all, I call them comrades, they're just all that... they're always friends and they always chat through things, but, but when

they're at an Olympics or any championship, all of a sudden the whole focus is completely different and it is, it is, it's sort of weird in a way...A lot of times, and it's going to sound awful, it's not meant to, but it depends who's in the team. I would say Dressage we find it the most difficult to create that feeling of a team. Probably mainly because a lot of them live and compete abroad, so they don't see them like our guys do, day in day out and that team mentality is quite difficult to build because it's either there or it's not and yeah, they're probably part of a team, but I mean putting them... sending them off to the park to go and play on the swings together isn't going to make the Dressage riders a team, it's not going to have that... you know, couldn't send them down to the river and tell them to make a raft to build... to swim across it because it... that's not going to work with them. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

In the category of personal relationships we can further sub-divide these into rider-centred or functional. For example, analysis of the primary interviews identified discourse relating the personal relationships between groups such as managers, farriers and vets and grooms (functional) and the relationship between a rider and another, such as coach (rider-centred).

With the functional based personal relationships, the discourse is often centred upon support and a common focus. In the next two quotes we see the discourse pertaining to the tentative relationship between the grooms, which echoes the fact that this is predominantly an individual not team sport:

Erm yeah, I think we already know each other a little bit and I think as we sort of.. well this is the first training days, this is the first time all five have been together, I think definitely as we all start to meet up more and more there really will be a team spirit. (Interviewee 3, Groom).

Yeah, we all get on well and some of us know others better than we know, but you know, once you get with a group of people you always meet new people and

everyone gets on really well, and everyone's willing to help each other. (Interviewee 6, Groom).

The next quote is taken from an interview with a more experienced groom who had already been to an Olympics and here we see more relaxed and inclusive discourse relating to team dynamics and relationships:

I think that's the nice thing about Eventing. Even though it's individual competition normally everybody is very friendly and it's very much a, you know, a teamy friendly sort of feeling. A lot of the riders socialise together at the events, the grooms do, so it's quite nice actually to be in a team situation. (Interviewee 8, Groom).

The following quote is taken from an interview with the team farrier and at this point in the interview he is discussing his experience at an Olympic test event where he took on the role as the event farrier:

Because I work with vets on a daily basis, so I'm attached to that profession quite closely. I tend to hang around with the guys, the vets, so I just sort of sit in the office and, you know, you try and help people coming... people come in and ask questions, you, you know, the vets have quite, you know, obviously a very large role to play, so I sort of support them in what they do and that certainly, you know, sorts my day out and I also made a very early decision to get friendly with the relevant owners and the teams, so I actually do a bit of a wander round in the mornings and the evenings and talk to people and just to try and get them to realise that you're not an enemy and I spent a lot of time talking to the various teams and it worked well in the end, because they were not afraid to come and ask you to do very small jobs that had they not been done, they would have turned into quite large jobs. (Interviewee 7, Team GB support staff).

In the example above we see how important relationships are with regards to support and getting the job done. This type of relationship management is emphasised when interviewees discuss their relationship with owners. As mentioned earlier, most horses are privately owned and it is the owners who have the control of who, rider and therefore nation has access to the horse. In the first quote relating to owners we get a sense of what it is like working with this group of people:

> You can't stop the owners talking to them [the press] and obviously the owners are quite a difficult group to deal with, because on the whole they have one concern out there and that's their horse really, and if their... if something's gone wrong, like, I don't know, a photographer has taken a flash picture when their horse is just entering [0.51.06] and it freaks and does whatever, then that owner could easily turn around and say something to the press, out of turn, and then it'll transpire that the equestrian team all hate the press and rrr-rrr-rrr. (Interviewee 27, Team GB Support staff).

In the subsequent two quotes we see how this group of individuals have been managed in the context of the Olympic Games and we see two different perspectives on this relationship management strategy:

> I am the Owners Host and my primary role is to look after all the owners of the Eventing riders, Showjumping and Dressage riders, as well family members and other members of support staff, so effectively I am the personnel person… they sort of thought this role might be viable and so they took me out for the test event in 2003 and it actually worked well and the owners actually had a much more pleasant trip because, beforehand they were just sort of, not left to their own devices, but they weren't incorporated as much into the team, so they didn't have one central person that, when they had a problem, they could go to and things like that and they kept sort of hassling the team staff, which actually put pressure on them, because they were having to deal with those and stuff, where now, with the role since we've been doing it, which started fully in 2004 for Athens, that is all

eliminated, so now the owners are directly under my control, and then the... they don't hassle [the performance managers], and coz they've got enough on their plate as it is, so it means they can actually concentrate on what they're doing rather than having to answer questions from owners and things. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

Erm I think the other thing is that we've tried to do far too much for the owners and erm A) they appear to be pretty unappreciative for a lot of things you try to do for them and B) extremely unrealistic in their sort of expectations, erm and that's been quite sad for me really you know, basically there's myself Sophie and Sarah in the office and we've you know done a hec of a lot and I think some of them just think we're a travel agency that can just be kicked around and that's quite upsetting in a way because you try to do your best for them and they can't make their minds up, they can't communicate and that obviously doesn't apply to everyone but erm it is quite depressing and erm you know I've always been very pro doing things for owners but actually I'm sort of rather of the opinion they can frigging well sort themselves out and that will certainly be the case for the World Equestrian Games, they'll get given a little bit but not a lot. (Interviewee 26, Performance Manager).

In the riders' autobiographies we get a sense of a much more personal relationship between the rider and the owners and despite the earlier comments about market influences, we are given insight into the longevity of some owner / rider relationships. Funnell (2004) describes how she still has owners who have been with her since the start of her Eventing career. Funnell's relationship with her owners appears to be interwoven with her relationship with the horse. In the first chapter of her autobiography Funnell shares her view of the relationship between rider and horse:

I also learned very quickly that if you spend time creating a relationship with an animal, it will do many things for you. Even as a small child, I had a strong

relationship with my ponies; they weren't just tools for winning rosettes, I loved being with them. They were my special friends. (Funnell, 2004: p. 5-6).

Funnell's attachment to certain horses appears to have influenced her relationship with owners. Funnell began her Eventing career in Norfolk as a groom for Ruth McMullen. After eight years of working for McMullen and at the point of getting engaged to her future husband, Funnell left McMullen to set up on her own. In this example we see how Funnell's relationship with her horses pushed her to maintain relationships with their owners:

> Despite the security of my engagement to William, the financial side of going alone did worry me. Although I hadn't earned much at Ruth's, I'd never paid rent, electricity bills or any other expenses. All my attention was focussed on producing horses, rather than running a business, and the thought of financial responsibility was daunting…. A big confidence booster was being assured of owners paying livery fees, because the McIntyres, Rawsons and Jewsons had agreed I could keep rides on their horses… I felt guilty taking business away from Ruth but, as always, the fear of being parted from horses that I adored was by far the stronger emotion. (Funnell, 2004: p. 67-68).

Despite Funnells primary relationship being with the horse, her respect of her owner's opinions, are also taken on board. In the following extract we see how Funnells loyalty to one of her owners influenced her decision over one particular horse, although this is not without recognition of her relationship with the horse:

> One horse I was tempted to leave behind for Terry, though, was Sarah Jewson's skewbald gelding Bits and Pieces [known as Henry]… He had turned up in Ruth's yard the previous year as a five-year-old, and my initial opinion was: 'This one hasn't got big time written all over him – it's one for Terry!'… Sarah, though, is one of the most enthusiastic and persuasive owners, and she was excited about Henry, who had earned a few novice points with Terry; so I gave in and agreed to

take him for a month's trial… But that spring he was quick to upgrade to intermediate level, so he stayed – and in any case, by then he had begun to appeal to me because I realised that he had a similarly generous heart to Barnaby. (Funnell, 2004: p. 68).

Despite Funnell's recognition of the need to make business decisions, the majority of the discourse relating to owners and their horses is very clearly embedded in an emotional response. Fox-Pitt however, displays a much more business-like approach to horse ownership. In a similar fashion to Funnell (2004), Fox-Pitt (2009) has chapters named after key and influential horses from his career, but interestingly he also has a chapter called 'Business Basics'. In this chapter he outlines how he has learnt to handle the business side of the sport from sponsorship deals to relationships with owners and bringing in income through renting out stables:

I knew I had to earn a proper living one day, and I was aware that competing wasn't the easiest way to do it. If you want to get to the top, riding has to be all consuming rather than a sideline and, even if you're good, Eventing provides little in the way of income. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 155).

I now aim to have five major sponsors plus several smaller product endorsements. The products are diverse, lawn mowers and quad bikes, stables, probiotic diet supplements and vibrating massage blankets as well as clothes. Clinics and lecture demos are another source of income. I will do more individual teaching in time, but it's riding horses that gets me up in a morning and they are my priority. I also buy and sell the odd horse, but I'm a hopeless dealer and hate selling. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 155).

Livery is now a large part of my turnover and I've been lucky to find ten to twelve loyal enthusiastic owners with the same goals. Veronica and Nikko Ward were my first owners, the Michael Turner, who owned Chaka, got me off to a good start, reinforcing my belief in plain speaking. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 156).

Whilst Fox-Pitt refers to owners and horses in the same sentence it is not in the same emotive style as Funnell. Fox-Pitt's objective approach to owners is highlighted in this next quote:

> I had to put myself in the market place when Chaka retired, initially with Frank Andrew, who owned Cosmo, and Monica Hunt, who bought Mostly Mischief for me to ride. I looked at my fellow competitors and saw how they came and went, depending on the quality of their horses. As there are only so many good eventers [horses], I had to make it clear I was available and keen. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 156).

Indeed, Fox-Pitts business approach to the sport has lead to the creation of 'Fox-Pitt Eventing Club':

> In February 2006, we held the inaugural open day for the Fox-Pitt Eventing Club, which we hope will be the first organisation of its kind to succeed in our sport. Racing has some fantastic success stories…Eventing has dabbled with the idea, but never with much conviction. I'm hoping we can get people involved who could never afford a horse outright, but would like to share in the action. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p.235).

> Alice [Williams wife] and I own the club horses and we guarantee that at least one will be running throughout the season, so if both are off the road, we have to provide a substitute. Several members have approached us to say they'd like to be involved, so we're thinking of running a syndicate in tandem with the club next year. Members could follow the club horse, as they do now, or pay more for a fractional ownership of the club syndicate horse. If it was a winner they'd be eligible for their share of the prize money and proceeds of any sale. (Fox-Pitt, 2008: p. 236).

Fox-Pitts more business-like approach to his relationships with owners does not however negate all emotional ties. In the following passage we gain insight into the breakdown of

the relationship between Fox-Pitt and the owner of his 2008 Olympic horse 'Parkmore Ed' Phillip Adkins:

> Philip Adkins had made it quite clear that he was unhappy about Ed being listed along with Max and Tam for the Olympics, rather than ahead of them. Unknown to me, he had organised for Ed to be collected after his Showjumping round, during which he clinched third place, and taken back to Philip's stables. Looking back, I wish I had let him take him, but at the time I felt Ed had a vital role to play as my Olympic horse, or at least as a backup. However, Philip was determined to force the selectors and Yogi to list Ed as my number one choice… I felt at the very least Philip should talk to me directly, explain his thoughts and listen to what I had to say about Ed's performance. I finally reached Philip on the phone and persuaded him that if Ed had any hope of going to the Olympics he did not need to have his routine disrupted by changing yards. (Fox-Pitt, 2008: p. 278-279).

And here we see how the pressure of the Olympics as opposed to other competitions influenced the breakdown of this owner rider relationship:

> This was the beginning of the end of my relationship with Philip. The previous year had been a real success, with Ed's win at Burghley being a dream come true, but the whole 'Olympic thing' caused a real difficulty between us. Yogi became a vital mediator, an unenviable role for which I shall always be grateful. For the first time ever, and the last, my only means of communication with one of my owners was through Yogi. (Fox-Pitt, 2008: p.279).

In King's (2009) autobiography, we are given a similar insight into her relationship with owners as with Funnells account. King has also been fortunate to have long term relationships with some of her owners and notably one of these, Gilly Robinson, puts forward her account of the relationship in a unique section of King's book entitled 'How others see Mary':

It was really the gosling incident that clinched our initial sponsorship deal with Mary, because she had the courage to be truthful and admit that the fluffy creature in the photograph in her sponsorship pack had been eaten. I thought if she was honest about that, she would be honest about other things. (King, 2009: p. 276).

Interestingly, in the following quotes, again from Robinson, we get an insight into the owner's experience of different competitions. ['Boris' and 'William' are the names of horses owned by Robinson and ridden by King]

The result that meant the most to me was darling Boris (the love of my life!) coming second and third at Badminton, closely followed by William winning. When Boris was in the lead and then fell at the lake, I went out to meet Mary when she weighed in. She came out of the tent, and we both said simultaneously, 'Damn!' and then started laughing, despite the fact that it was really a sad result. But you've got to get on with these things, and that's been the style of our relationship. She's taught me to say. 'Never mind'. (King, 2009: p. 277).

Olympics are not my favourite thing because they're not a great experience for owners – I'd rather win Badminton or Burghley – but it's not all about the owner and I know what it means to Mary, so I have felt for her so much when it's gone wrong. (King, 2009: p. 277).

As we have seen with Funnell and King, some owners stay with riders for years, often starting the relationship at the start of the rider's career. As this type of relationship progresses the rider often has responsibility for finding a suitable horse for the owner to buy. In King's autobiography we also have insight into another way relationships are formed between owners and riders. Through the following passages we can see how the various stakeholders are involved in the career of a horse:

I'd been following the progress of 'Call Again Cavalier' for years, because he'd been produced in the West Country by Vicky Brake, and I thought he was a

terrific little horse.   Vicky was put on a provisional longlist for the Athens Olympics with him at the end of 2003, but she knew he was a valuable horse that she couldn't afford to keep, so she'd put him on the market at the start of 2004. Yogi Breisner [Performance Manager] had phoned me up to see if I'd be interested, as this was a horse the selectors wanted to remain in British ownership, but I didn't have an owner with that sort of money. (King, 2009: p. 201).

'Call Again Cavalier' was sold to Sue and Eddie Davies and their daughter Janette Chinn, and was ridden by one of Britain's leading riders Caroline Pratt.   In 2004 Pratt was tragically killed after a fall at Burghley.   Pratt had already completed the cross country phase of the event on 'Call Again Cavalier' but had fallen from her second horse:

After Burghley I wondered who would get the ride on Call Again Cavalier.   I'm sure most riders were, like me, thinking what a lovely horse he would be to have. I did consider writing to the owners, saying will you consider me, but I felt I couldn't do that.   Caroline's death had been such a shocking tragedy that things needed to settle down, and I felt the owners should make up their minds what to do. A few months later, I was up at the yard and my mobile phone rang.   It was Yogi, saying would I consider taking on Call Again Cavalier!   I couldn't believe it.   I was overjoyed, and when I put the phone down, I was so excited that I jumped around like a child. (King, 2009: p. 201).

King's partnership with 'Call Again Cavalier' was a success and the owners went on to buy another horse for King 'Imperial Cavalier'.   King competed on 'Call Again Cavalier' at the 2008 Olympics securing team bronze and 'Imperial Cavalier' at the 2012 Olympics securing team silver.   However King's relationship with 'Call again Cavalier' did not get off to the most promising start and in her autobiography she recalls one incident where she lost control during a competition and fell off in front of the owners:

Cavvy then merrily galloped off into the distance and, feeling a complete idiot, I ran after him.   Someone caught him and came running towards me leading him; to

my huge embarrassment it turned out that someone was Vicky Brake. I can't imagine she was too impressed. I felt I had really let the side down, and my new owners were visibly disappointed. (King, 2009: p. 203).

King then goes on to explain how her coach reacted to this situation:

Yogi consoled me by saying, 'Don't worry, it's the best thing that could have happened. He needed to hit a fence to steady up, and you needed to learn more about him.' (King, 2009: p.203).

The above quotes demonstrate the complex and influential nature of relationships within this sport. In this one example we gain an insight into relationships between the rider and the owner, the owner and the horse, the rider and the coach, and the rider and the horse.

The relationship between the rider and the horse is most evident in the rider autobiographies with most riders dedicating separate chapters to discuss the influence of specific horses on their sporting careers. The recognition of this relationship is eloquently described in the following quote taken from Funnell's (2004) autobiography in which she reflects on the moment she fully realised that she had won an Olympic medal:

After the press conferences, where I think we were still a bit subdued – we got some stick back home for being downbeat on the TV – because it seemed so shattering to miss the gold, we went back to the supporters' tent and joined up with Mum and Dad and William. Then the champagne flowed and we could let our hair down. The alcohol loosened my emotions at last and I had to go back to the stables for a quiet ten minutes on my own with Rocky. This is the time I get tearful after a big win, when I'm on my own with my horse and it sinks in just what they've done for me, and just how much the whole achievement is down to a partnership. At this moment, words couldn't describe how grateful I felt to this horse. (Funnell, 2004: p. 151-152).

As an appendix in his autobiography Fox-Pitt (2007) describes his top ten horses which span the length of his career to date. Each account includes information pertaining to the breed of the horse and how Fox-Pitt came to ride them. But beyond the practical content is a touchingly insightful account of the relationship between the rider and horse and the influence of this on the rider's career. In the following extract Fox-Pitt talks about Tamarillo a 16.2hh bay gelding with whom he won Badminton and Burghley as well as numerous medals while representing Great Britain.

What can I say about Tam, my iconic Arab prince who thinks he rules the world? He's the most extraordinary horse I've ever ridden or could ever hope to ride. Like Cosmo, he arrived with baggage, his nerve was fragile, and it took patience to build the relationship we have today. That probably stood me in good stead, because patience is a quality he tests to the limit on a daily basis....Win or loose, he's my horse of a lifetime, a charismatic star with an army of fans. I keep telling him he should never be beaten, something he's well aware of, but only time will tell if he has plans to prove it. (Fox-Pitt, 2007: p. 307).

In the above example we see a narrative rich with emotion and characteristics that could have been constructed to describe any human based relationship. We are also given an insight into the unique character / temperament of the horse as experienced by the rider. The relationship between the rider and the horse is also shown in the following extract from Interviewee 22 and here we see how this influences competition preparation:

The horses aim is, he's the kind of horse that we don't compete a huge amount, he's better off when he's like wow this is good this is fresh and this is new, so you know he's actually taking not time off because obviously I need him fit but he's just on hacking duty at the moment and I'll pick him up again towards the end of next week and then we'll start just working on the bits and pieces of the test that could do with some work and he might, I might take him out for one more competition before he comes into quarantine but that will be it, it will just be a run through somewhere at a local show. And then it will be quarantine and knuckle

down for the last couple of weeks. As long as he's fit, that will be plenty for him because he soon switches off. (Interviewee 22, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Analysis of the primary interview data resulted in the following associated codes; rider career history, sport development, economics and relationships. Each of these themes highlights the uniqueness of equestrian sport and combined with the results of the ECA, the emerging core of this phenomenon is 'equestrian sporting culture'. The fact that equestrian sport has its own culture is not surprising as we see constructs of culture embedded in many sports. However, whilst 'equestrian sporting culture' has been acknowledged within this emergent theme of history, it is important to note that through the reflexive nature of the analysis, we see relationships and structures pertinent to 'equestrian sporting culture' across various elements of the analysis, across both the inductive and deductive codes.

5.4 Values

As a result of the scoping study for the systematic review, Olympism was identified as a key search term and as a theme Olympism was addressed in the first order analysis. Whilst loose sub themes of 'philosophy', and 'history' were identified, there was a distinct absence of a universal definition of Olympism, although this is not surprising, as for many Olympism is either culturally or content specific. Olympism may be seen as a by-product of 19th Century humanism, and Eurocentric ideals, a movement developed from Victorian codes of sportsmanship and fair play, exclusive amateurism and muscular Christianity. It could be argued that Olympism has evolved or been replaced in the modern context by Olympic and Paralympic Values. Despite numerous papers within the identified literature discussing either the Olympics or Paralympics, the second order analysis highlighted that there were no direct references to either the Olympic Values of respect, excellence and friendship, or the Paralympic Values of courage, determination, inspiration or equality.

Ethnographic Content Analysis of the primary interviews and auxiliary data included in this study has shed light on the place of Olympism and Olympic and Paralympic Values

within the lived experience of these athletes. Analysis shows there is no direct reference to Olympism.   Indeed in the quote below from the Performance Director we see an almost juxtaposed position to Olympism, yet clear association with the Olympic value of 'excellence':

> To me the Olympics is about medals and if you're not ready yet to win a medal it's about moving a step closer to winning a medal, its all about performance on the field of play and I'm sure all the holding hands and stuff is great but its not really for me I'm afraid. erm I think that if anyone needs five rings on the wall to actually motivate them into performing they're probably not likely to get it right anyway. We haven't come here to mix with other nations; you know promote the values of sport. We've come here to win medals; you know that's the bottom line isn't it. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The British Equestrian Performance Director is responsible for both the Olympic and Paralympic teams and whilst in the above quote the direct reference is to the Olympics, we cannot conclusively dismiss this winning attitude with regards to the Paralympics. However, in the following quote, also from the Performance Director, we do see differences between the two teams with regards to sporting culture. As previously mentioned, culturally Olympism was grounded in the ideals of amateurism. Reference to the professional and amateur nature of equestrian sport with regards to Olympic and Paralympic riders is highlighted in the following:

> I think the Paralympics is a little bit different as well in that there's a lot more interaction between the nations. Its funny you go to the Olympics and people who see each other week in week out won't talk to each other, it really is pretty serious stuff the Olympics, Paralympics is serious but more off the field of play people mix more between the nations… this will sound slightly wrong, the Olympic riders are current professional riders in that they will go straight back from the Games and get on other horses at other competitions. The Paralympians, this is the major competition for this year, some of them might not compete again

until, well might not even compete again for the rest of the season, they haven't got a string of horses, there aren't that many big competitions during the year so they will be keen to stay on after and go back to Beijing for the closing ceremony and be part of it. The Olympians it's the competition and once the competition is finished that's it, move on. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

It is interesting to note that whilst the Olympic and Paralympic values are presented as distinct and separated without repetition, the same cannot be said with regards to the emergence of these values from the current data. Indeed several of the values have been recognised in relation to identity. The Olympic value of 'friendship' for example was specifically associated with the sporting culture of Para-Equestrian Dressage:

Everyone wants to interact with everyone, we've got mates with all the countries and its great for everyone to meet up again you know we met last year at the Worlds, you meet whenever you go to an international like Belgium, I went last year in September and it was great to meet up with everyone. And yeah you do sort of get mates and you know what people are doing and you keep in touch by email to meet up so it's like a long distance friends. I mean when the actual competition day comes obviously you're very focussed with team GB and then at the same time the South African for example Phillipa, I always have a laugh with her you know good luck that sort of thing you know what I mean even though she's another country she's still a mate so you want her to do well. Apparently I've been told that's quite different from the other sports, where they stay very much in their country but no, everyone just cracks on. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

This is not to say that 'friendship' was absent from those involved in the Olympics, but reference to this value remained within team GB, more specifically it only appeared in discourse at a discipline specific level where the concept of friendship was also differentiated:

We've been trying to be very careful and say "If you want to come and speak to Zara, that's fine, but you speak to her and her four other team members", because they're a team of five, this is one of the opportunities where they are a team, most of the time they spend their whole life competing on their own, and all of a sudden they're a team... And it's lovely to see... I mean obviously I see them at events where they're competing as individuals, but they are... they're all a bit of... they're all, I call them comrades, they're just all that... they're always friends and they always chat through things, but, but when they're at an Olympics or any championship, all of a sudden the whole focus is completely different and it is, it is, it's sort of weird in a way. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

Interestingly the notion or construct of team consistently appeared in relation to the value of 'friendship'. Within the autobiographical literature, the riders do refer to their friendships with their fellow team mates but again these remain within the confines of discipline specific and team GB-specific contexts. The notion of cross-nation friendship in the context of the Olympics or Paralympics is only evident in the quote from the para-equestrian Dressage rider (interviewee 20).

The Olympic value of 'excellence' has already been mentioned in this section in reference to the quote from the Performance Director and is discussed further under section 5.8 Success, where the construct of athlete identity is shown to be associated with success specifically winning medals.

The Olympic value of 'respect' did not appear in the data analysis, neither did the Paralympic value of 'courage' or 'determination'. Whilst the notion of 'equality' has been discussed in the earlier section on 'identity' this was in regards to equestrian sport in general and not specifically in the context of values associated with the experience of the Games. Access to able-bodied competition may be one aspect to the discourse surrounding equality but perception is another.

As previously discussed Sophie Wells is a member of Team GB who competes with

Dressage and Para-Equestrian Dressage. In the following quote from one of Wells' Paralympic team mates, we are given an insight into the perception of equality / the lived experience of this:

"Very proud of my team mate representing GB able bodied. Flying the flag for paras yet again, showing that we do SPORT too and should be thought of as equals to our able bodied counterparts". (Balshaw, 2014).

Not only does Balshaw (2014) differentiate between the 'able bodied' and 'paras' but goes as far to imply that the latter is not perceived as a sport but shows his desire for his and Wells' identity to be equal to those of 'our able bodied counterparts'.

The Paralympic value of 'inspiration' was found in discourse relating to the Paralympic experience. In the following quote, one of the GB support team, who works across both the Olympic and Paralympic teams, explains where his inspiration comes from:

People, they ask me, you know, "a win with the Paras, well, is that not just like... isn't it just second rate or...", you know, that's the way people think of it. And I say "Well, I tell you what, when you get up in the morning, you don't have to think about it do you? Whereas these guys, it's a challenge and it just makes you think, when you're having a bad day, just think about these guys, day in day out, fighting every day, to stay "normal" if you like. So when, when that... you know, if you think you've got a bit of a headache, and you just think again, you know," and it's quite funny Lee... coz I get on great with them, but we were in... we were in Hungary and I'd just taken work gear, it's boiling hot, 40 degrees, and Lee said to me "Oh, where's your shorts?" and I said "Oh, I didn't bring any, I wasn't expecting that temperature," he said "Oh, you're ashamed of your legs are you?" and I said "No, no I just didn't bring any". And he said... he turned round and said, "Look, see the bodies round here, and you're ashamed of your legs," and I just thought, you know, the humour in these people, they're just great. So, I think even if I was asked to do the able-bodied, I wouldn't... I wouldn't get the same buzz as I

do out of these and that's why, you know, if you've got that you can spend time with them and it's... I don't know... but it's... they're great guys to work with. (Interviewee 7, Team GB support staff).

We began this section discussing the concept of Olympism and the modern day concept of Olympic and Paralympic Values. We conclude by presenting a conceptualisation of the framework of values as experienced by these equestrian athletes (Figure 5.4).
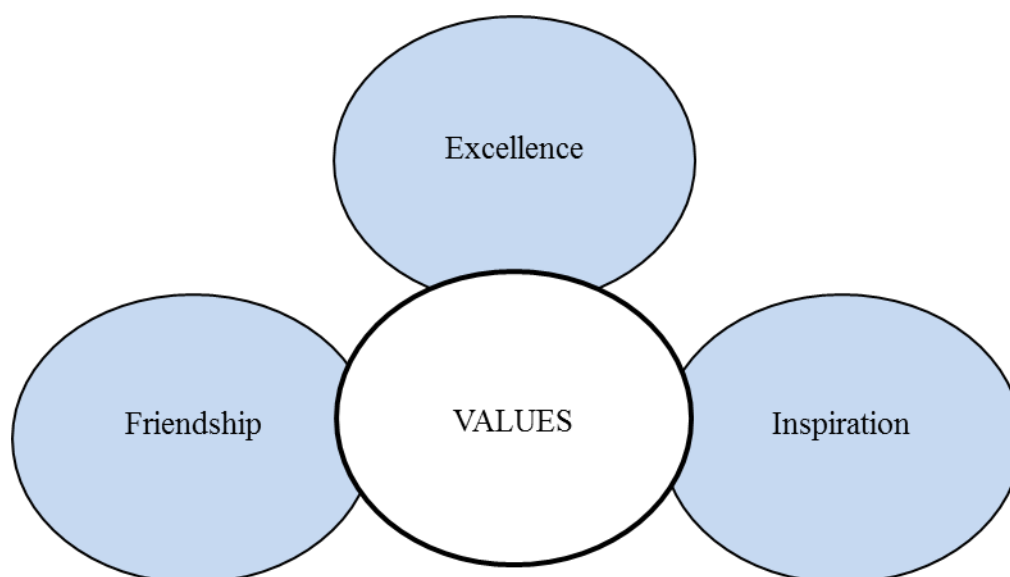
Figure 5.4: A framework of significant values for equestrian athletes raised in the primary and secondary data

It is important to note that these values were associated with both the Olympic and Paralympic experience. Whilst these may also be considered wider generic sport values, these have been identified as salient equestrian sport values.

5.5 Challenges

'Challenges' was identified as an emergent second order theme, predominantly focussed on the challenges faced by athletes who compete at an elite level. In the literature relating to Olympic performance, challenges are seen as issues which negatively effect performance at the Games such as too much media attention (Gould et al., 2002a,

Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) issues with coach-athlete relationship (Gould et al., 2002a, Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999, Jowett and Cockerill, 2003) team issues (Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) getting tickets for friends and family (Gould et al., 2002a, Gould et al., 1999) travel to venues (Gould et al., 2002a, Gould et al., 1999) issues with housing or the village (Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999) issues with training / preparation (Gould et al., 2002a, Greenleaf et al., 2001, Gould et al., 1999, Orlick and Partington, 1988) departure from normal routine (Greenleaf et al., 2001) injury (Greenleaf et al., 2001) and stress during competition (Pensgaard and Ursin, 1998, Gould et al., 1993a).

Whilst some of the above themes associated with challenges have been identified in the context of this specific study and will be discussed accordingly, analysis of the primary interview data resulted in the following inductive sub-themes; location, logistics and accreditation, as being specifically applicable to this sport. With regards to the results of the ECA, and through the retroductive analysis undertaken as an element of the applied critical realist framework, the following framework emerged (Figure 5.5):
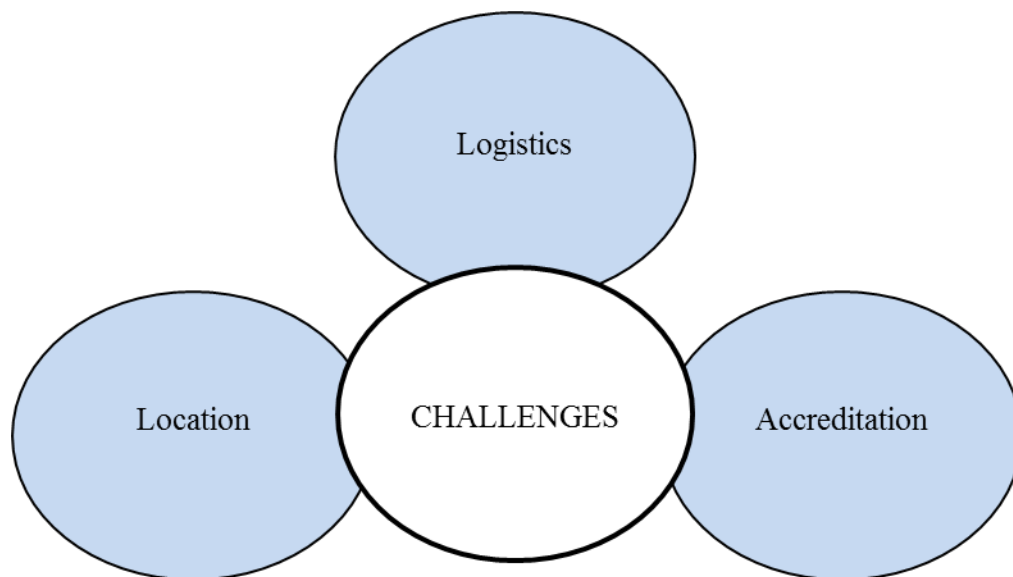

 Figure 5.5: A framework of the challenges for equestrian sport at the Olympics / Paralympics, raised in the primary and secondary data

It is interesting to note that with regards to the primary interviews, the majority of the discourse pertaining to challenges came from the managers or support staff rather than from the athletes themselves. However, in the analysis of the biographical material the athletes did identify with several of these challenges.

The location of the Olympics was not identified as a challenge in the systematic literature review, but with regards to equestrian sport this was identified as a challenge in both the primary and secondary data analysis. There have been concerns regarding the inclusion of horses at several games based primarily on issues pertaining to location. For example quarantine issues in Australia relating to Melbourne Olympics (1956) which resulted in the equestrian competition being held in Stockholm, and again in Beijing (2008) where the equestrian competition took place in Hong Kong approximately 1225 miles away from the Olympic Stadium, and heat concerns pertaining to the Games in Rome (1960), Los Angeles (1984), Seoul (1988), Barcelona (1992), Atlanta (1996) and Hong Kong (2008) (de Haan & Johnson, 2010).

With regards to climate challenges the Barcelona Olympics proved to be a significant point in the Olympic history of equestrian sport. During the Cross-Country phase at the Barcelona Olympics, several horses exhibited signs of heat distress linked to exercise-associated hyperthermia (de Haan & Johnson, 2010). Veterinarians working with the horses at the end of this phase reported many horses' temperatures reached the maximum readings on their thermometers of 42C (Marlin, 2009). Competing under these conditions even for short periods is obviously undesirable and many riders reported ongoing problems with their horses even post Games. However, as we can see it was not just the horses that suffered competing in the Barcelona heat:

> I became more and more tired in my upper body so at one point I just had to let him go, and he took off like the wind. I had an almighty fight to get him back for the end of the course, and when I finally slid off him I was so weak and wobbly that my legs gave way. (King, 2009: p. 84).

Having been shocked by the competition environment and experience in Barcelona, those involved with the sport of Eventing had only four years to prepare for Atlanta which would deliver similar temperatures combined with issues of humidity. In response the FEI, launched a research initiative specifically to provide a clearer understanding of the effects of hot thermal environments on competing horses. In 32 years between 1960 and 1992 there had only been 24 papers published relating to this subject, yet between 1992 and 1996, 23 papers were published followed by a further 28 papers between 1996 and 2000 (Marlin, 2009). This surge in research informed the training, preparation and management of horses and riders in relation to Olympic competition and this body of knowledge ultimately informed and changed event management and policy issues (de Haan & Johnson, 2010). In the following quotes we get an insight into how the athletes experienced the location challenges of Atlanta and how this affected the riders' experience of Olympic preparation and competition. To begin with we get a sense of the athlete's initial apprehension:

> There was a lot of nervous talk about Atlanta as a venue for horses. The time of year – July – was about the worst it could be, there in America's steamy Deep South. The heat and humidity would be extreme and many people felt it was dangerous to take horses into those sorts of energy-sapping conditions. This was the last thing we wanted for our horses, even if it was an Olympics, and it was a continual worry. (King, 2009: p. 115).

> By the time I was selected, Atlanta was only a month away. Like every other athlete, going to the Olympics had become a dream, but when I joined the team there was an atmosphere of pessimism. Atlanta would be too hot and humid for horses, the competition was in the wrong season and the quarantine regulations would seriously damage our chances. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 93).

And here we see how Fox-Pitt's apprehension turned into realisation as he arrived in Atlanta:

Our sense of doom increased when we stepped off the plane into temperatures of thirty degrees centigrade and more than ninety-five per cent humidity, the most unpleasant climate I've ever been in. My first feeling was, 'this is a joke'. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p.93).

In her autobiography, along-side her concern for the horses; King also discusses her concern for her own fitness:

It was probably the first time that any of us had really worked on our own fitness. I took up running – something I'd never bothered with before. We had to go into the heat chamber at Hartpury College, and to Bisham Abbey, the sports medicine centre, for a fitness test, where they tested the strength of different muscles, and our breathing and lung capacities. We rode exercise bikes, which were connected up to various computers and machines, and had tubes in our mouths hooked up to something else, so they could see how the body was coping with exercise. But the depressingly awful outcome was that, when they looked at the results, we were no fitter than the average man on the street. We had smokers in our midst and this dragged our results down. (King, 2009: p. 115-116).

As the Olympics move venues, equestrian sport regularly faces climatic challenges. In the ensuing quotes taken from interviews prior to the 2008 Olympics we can see how climate continues to be of concern but we can also see how developments in preparations have changed from Atlanta 1996:

Obviously climate is going to be the factor that we're, you know, we're going to battle with that's peculiar to Hong Kong and I'm under no illusions I don't think it's going to be a pleasant experience, I mean you don't like to say that too much in the press but, you know, I think the horses, some of them will struggle inevitably, you know, I think hopefully ours will be well prepared, will be fitter than all the others and hopefully will cope better than all the others, but inevitably we're going to see a little bit of hardship, there will be horses that aren't fit enough

and that will, you know, will be under stress and, you know, that's never nice to experience and I think from a rider's point of view, it's going to be pretty bloody vile as well, just, you know, I, I know myself I don't mind riding in, you know, your average English summer, but it's going to be fucking hot, there's no two ways about it and it isn't going to be nice and humidity is something I've never experienced before, so that's a complete unknown for me. (Interviewee 12, Eventing Rider).

Ideally it would be lovely to be in a horse friendly place but we're not. So I think the bottom line is, it's still an Olympics and I think that is a challenge in itself isn't it so I think you have to forget all the bit that's around it and just get on. Because if you think too much that you'll be thinking negative wont you and I think you just quietly put that to the back of your brain and be aware that, you know we've trained for that, we've done all the investigations looking at how to cool horses down, cool vests and all that, what's comfortable for them so its safe. But if it was a terrible day on the day then we'll have to monitor their engines and be sensible wont we. But as I say if that's happening to us its going to be happening to the other teams as well, so we won't be on our own. So if it's tough for us it'll be tough for the other teams, you still win medals, might not be such a brilliant score but you'll still win medals. (Interviewee 11, Team Showjumping Coach).

And in this next quote, taken from an interview post the Beijing Olympics we see how the Team Doctor viewed the preparations:

I think the preparation was the main thing. I think using the heat chambers was a really good idea, gave everybody a good idea of what it was going to be like. All Dressage and eventers used the heat chambers, most of the grooms. Show jumpers did not but show jumpers actually most of them compete in the Far East anyway because I know they come to Malaysia so they in some ways travel that bit more and actually fairly prepared mentally for what it's like and they tend to travel and

compete without much time in between so it's something they're more used to. I think actually we did lots of education before they came. I think most of them read it. Yeah, preparation is the main thing. (Interviewee 18, Team Doctor).

It is interesting to note that the Olympic and Paralympic riders have similar concerns regarding the climatic challenge and that their preparation is very similar:

It's horrible because when we went in there they'd set it to something like 38 degrees and 85% humidity which is hot and sticky it's horrible. You get in there and you have to fill out these forms for the psychologist and by the time you've filled out the forms, you're soaked through, your t-shirts sticking to you, you're jodhpurs are sticking to you, your hairs all flat, its awful. Erm but yah its horrible you breath in and you fell like you're not getting oxygen you're getting water and you find yourself taking deeper breaths and more frequently just to get the same amount of oxygen. You start just sitting there getting used to it but they had like a robotic horse a simulator and we had to ride and there's a bike in there as well and a treadmill which obviously none of the para's used, so we all use the horse. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I've never been to the far East at all, so that whole experience I'm really looking forward to. Because I like to travel but I think the conditions will be really hard you know the heat and humidity, I don't really cope that well in heat so I'm wearing a hoody now, I'm trying to get used to it so I'm now going to investigate the heat chambers so I can go into it knowing that I've done the best possible preparation for it. But my horse is quite, he seems to enjoy the hot weather. I'm finding him going better now its summer so that should help my like confidence. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider)

The following quote is taken from an interview conducted in Hong Kong during the Beijing Olympics on a day when teams were in lock down due to a typhoon. In this

example we see that although prior experience of climatic challenges help in preparation and training, each specific location of the Olympics creates individual challenges:

> They [the Olympics] are very different and they're very unique and what makes it unique are the climatic conditions, nothing else changes. The facilities are... the hard facilities are superb, I mean they are, you know, well you can't fault them, they are excellent. In Dressage, it's the same test, absolutely the same test, it's the same arena, it's the same surface, it's five judges, it's the same judges that have been judging for 20 years. So everything is known, the only thing that isn't known is the climate and what we do know about the climate is that we don't know what it's going to do. Since I came to the test event, I've been trying to explain this... one of our private trainers is an Olympic Gold medallist and I said to her, "You don't..." coz actually quite a few people didn't bother to come to the test event, and I said "You don't know what this climate's like. It's not the same as, you know, we're not talking about hot and humid like Atlanta and these other places, or Sydney, this is different" and here we are sitting in a hotel, we can't go out, because of a typhoon, it's that unpredictable. (Interviewee 19, Dressage Team Captain).

With regards to preparing for the climatic challenges, several of the interviewees remarked on the importance of attending the test event. In the following example we see how this direct experience influenced the coaching preparation:

> Straight after the test event last year, having realised exactly how hot it is and how humid it is, and how much it's going to take out of the horses, how much they sweat and the degree of difficulty for the cross country, we came back and I just straight away sort of talked to the riders and said, "look, you know, we have to get our heads around the fact that when we start work through the winter, in preparation for next year, we have to get to the point where we can, you know, consolidate it into a much shorter period of time." So that's something they're being quite good at, and I think that's quite important really, you know, we're

trying to save the horse power as much as possible. (Interviewee 25, Dressage Coach for Eventing).

As previously discussed due to quarantine issues in China, the equestrian events were held in Hong Kong. This decision not only presented climatic challenges but also logistical challenges. As equestrian sports require unique venues and facilities, they are often situated varying distances away from the athletics stadium which is often seen as the most iconic Olympic image and a symbol of the heart of the Games. This is not a unique set up only for equestrian sport, as rowing and sailing are also often separated. However, the degree of separation varies between games. The Beijing and London Olympics are examples of polar opposites in terms of the location of the equestrian events relative to other sports. In 2008 the equestrian team were based in Hong Kong approximately 1225 miles away from the Olympic Stadium in Beijing, in 2012 the distance between the equestrian venue (Greenwich) and the Olympic stadium (Stratford) was approximately 6 miles. In the next section we see how logistical challenges affected the experience of those involved.

We begin this section by focussing on the logistical challenges as experienced by the Performance Director. In a series of interviews carried out before, during and after the Beijing Olympics, logistical challenges became a common recurring theme. The decision to move the equestrian competition to Hong Kong was announced in 2005 and in this first quote the Performance Director explains how his initial concerns have played out:

> I don't think it was anything unexpected I mean I sat down with Jim Wolf who's my counterpart in America and we wrote a list of things that we thought would impact on us by being in Hong Kong and that list hasn't changed. We haven't taken anything away from it or added anything to it, it was not rocket science to work out so for instance how are we going to communicate with the BOA, would we have free flights to Beijing would we get free post to Beijing (which we're not) you know would they give us additional rooms in the Olympic Village so that we didn't have people split up all round the place, which they haven't. You know

so there were things we said straight away would impact on us and I don't think that has changed so, but I would say for a long period of time between 05 and now we just haven't been (probably up until Christmas this year) we haven't really been able to get answers out of the Equestrian Company, its been 'we're considering that' or 'we're working on that' and I think its only recently that we're starting to get answers. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The Equestrian Company, as referred to in the above quote was the satellite organising committee responsible for the equestrian competition in Hong Kong. In the following quotes we see how the addition of a third party added to the logistical challenges:

Technically all communication with an OCOG should go through the national Olympic committee, so through the BOA or BPA. Realistically what happens is the Team Leader (myself) builds up a relationship with their venue manager. Now in Athens that was one guy effectively and that number of people grew as it got closer to the Games. But because we're in a satellite venue, it's a whole, the Equestrian Company and it's an organisation that's grown exponentially but has grown in a way that has been very difficult to understand who is responsible for what. So in Athens we rang up one person effectively, and he travelled around the World going to a lot of events so we saw him in the bars and bazaars and you could you know pin his ears. And also it was a lot more black and white in Athens, you were with the BOA, so yeah we had people in the village and out of the village in Athens as well, but there was a lot less areas of uncertainty because areas we're dealing with in Hong Kong we're dealt with by the BOA and BPA in Athens. So for instance the doctor, the physio, admin support, the press, legals, all BOA or BPA provided in Athens, so we didn't have to worry about all that. Obviously we're having to worry about that in Hong Kong, which brings a whole level of planning to it plus the Chinese need 20 forms for something you and I would write on a postage stamp, so yeah its been a very complex plan to bring together, and also its been difficult, to plan as early as one might like. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

I suppose the other thing is dealing with an organising committee that is based in Beijing but has a satellite organisation in Hong Kong brings with it huge difficulties. And that's because although it is a satellite organisation in Hong Kong technically its part of BOCOG so therefore, its although they're operating in a completely different environment, political environment, rules and regs environment, physical environment, they're still referring things back to a central organisation, and a central organisation that is more focussed on what is happening in Beijing that what is happening in Hong Kong, and if you put that alongside the Chinese culture, which I suppose I would describe as one not willing to commit if there is a possibility that they are going to have to change their minds later, that has meant getting information out of BOCOG and the Equestrian Company (which is the satellite organisation) has been very difficult. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

So far we have seen how the logistical challenges are also interwoven with challenges associated with relationships. In the following quote we get a sense of the frustration felt by the Performance Director with regards to the role of the FEI:

I'd say the expectation of the organising committee, well I mean its erm, it's been as one knows an Olympics will be you know you start of with a hell of a lot of frustrations and you slowly work your way through them and then once you've done all that the FEI turn up and think everything is wonderful and that's just about what happened really. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

They're [the FEI] staying at the Olympic Village which is highly illegal and totally against regulations and is something that will have to be picked up on after these games. So they're staying in the Olympic Village in single rooms and the directive is for teams to have twin rooms so it doesn't really sound quite fair and erm equitable. Erm I would say that erm the village, the way we've worked it with the village, the village is excellent and the Eventing team are extremely comfortable and happy there. We do have some spare rooms there and I just

wonder if we ought to be moving some more team staff in there but we'll look at that as we trundle along. Erm it's been bloody hard work but then it always is. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

Another relationship affected by the separation was that between the Performance Director and the BOA. Plans were obviously put in place to deal with the separation from the BOA which predominately resulted in additional accreditation which will be discussed below. However, as the following quotation highlights, the physical separation from the BOA was a challenge for the Performance Director:

I think you know, you kind of know that it's just going to be long days, possibly not helped by where we are. It's been as hard a work as kind of knew it would be. I think probably what surprised be a little bit is erm I think I've missed the BOA more than I thought I would. There're things that have taken longer and been more difficult. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The additional logistical challenges faced as a result of the equestrian event being separated also affected the Performance Director's overall experience:

You then also have the sort of final add on, the fact that we're still part of the Olympic Games but we're effectively operating in an equestrian only environment. So on one hand you can have the impression that hay this is just another equestrian event lets bend some rules but you can't because you still have all the Olympic Paralympic rules and regs that go with it so, really what we've ended up with, to be honest, to an extent, is we don't get the best bit of being at the Olympic Games we get all the bad bits, so its quite a challenge. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

Below we discuss the challenges of quarantine as experienced by other members of the team, but in the following extracts we appreciate the logistical challenges of getting horses to the Olympics from the Performance Director's perspective:

Well if you're running a business that turns over 9 billion Hong Kong, sorry makes 9 billion Hong Kong profit a year, then the last thing that you need is equine flu coming into your horse population because you'll lose racing. And that has happened before, so that's a nervousness from the local authorities, that's the Hong Kong equivalent to DEFRA and the Hong Kong Jockey Club about the health of the horses coming in and the restrictions that are therefore placed on us. So there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing over that and you know decision only really really finally made just before the test event and how that would work. So that's introduced quite a bit of, not doubt but, room for multi options in how things would work. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The additional requirement of quarantine affected the timing of final selection:

Its not about controlling disease because if there's disease they don't go, so I think there's quite a different emphasis here, so that puts the emphasis on us to make sure its healthy horses that go into pre-export quarantine so almost there's a sort of build up to pre-export quarantine were we'll make sure the horses that go in are healthy because once they're in you cannot bring anything else in. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

And the geographical location of the competition affected wider logistic / planning decisions:

You then add in the length of the journey, so for instance when we freighted feed to Athens, we packed it two weeks or something before we got there, for Hong Kong we'd be packing it, 10 weeks 8 weeks before we get there, hence you'll be packing it before you've selected, so the sort of lead in times are far greater for Hong Kong, and then also you add to that the complete lack of space, in the venue, that has huge challenges in trying to deliver an environment where the athletes and the grooms, the riders and the grooms and the staff can work

effectively in a relaxed environment, so that's very difficult. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The following quote is taken from an interview conducted during the Olympic competition in Hong Kong and here we see that despite all the planning and pre-event organisation, logistics still raise ongoing questions and frustrations for the Performance Director:

> Yep been here for two weeks and I would say it's been kind of expected in terms of the complexities of such a multi, erm site, multi venue site or multi location site. So we're basically operating out of erm four residential sites, here the Sheraton, Grooms Village on site (**door bell again**)**,** Grooms village on site, and erm The Regal River Side were we've got Grooms staying and obviously the Olympic Village at the Royal Park Hotel. So that's complicated and I think I'm not 100% sure we've got it quite right to be honest, erm whether we should have actually not been here at all as a team in the Sheraton and whether we should have gone to the Regal River side which is what a lot of teams have done but then I think the comfort factor of being here is quite important. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director)

Interestingly enough, despite all of the above identified logistic-based challenges described by the Performance Director prior to the games and during the games, in an interview conducted post games the logistics were not the issues deemed most challenging:

> The Olympics were quite a roller-coaster; there were a lot of challenges while we were out there. I think all the logistics worked fine, and I think everyone was very happy with the set up we had the transport and accommodation and kit and all that side of it was fine and went very smoothly to be honest. A couple of typhoons, a typhoon at the end played havoc with our flights home, the Olympic flights home, but that was not too much of an issue. There were a number of issues with horses

that caused problems, especially within Eventing and Jumping, and issues with one owner and within Dressage perhaps one rider that didn't perform anywhere near how she should have performed. So, I suppose results generally were disappointing but with some highlights that were very good, but there was certainly management issues that, that took up a lot of time and, you know, were difficult and also I think that... I don't think we underestimated the challenge of being on our own in Hong Kong but it certainly created additional work, that perhaps took me away from the coal face a little bit, but the set up was there to cope with that, i.e. the team managed their team and I managed the overall structure. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

This sentiment was also echoed by the Performance Manager for Eventing in an interview conducted post games:

The logistics of the whole competition worked extremely well. Our preparation worked well apart from losing those horses that I talked about. The quarantine worked very well, the team spirit among the riders were extremely good, and the staying in the Olympic village and the transport between the Olympic village and the venue and having the owners down at the Sheriton Hotel, and the way [the performance director] had set up the stable under the tack rooms and the rest rooms and the containers that we'd taken out, all that worked absolutely 10 out of 10. There is nothing that we could have wished for, any different in that sort of area and, you know, I think everyone, you know, had worked very hard on that side worked extremely well. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager Eventing).

As mentioned at the start of this section, the riders themselves did not comment overtly on challenges associated with logistics and this is probably a reflection of the work of the Performance Director and his team. In the following quote we get a sense that these challenges whilst sometimes magnified by the specific location of an Olympics are to some extent part and parcel of the Olympic experience:

I didn't expect it to be such a bloody palaver to get permission for our quarantine station but that's typical when you involve some government people because the bureaucracy and everything else but the quarantine situation for Sydney was a much much easier one than for Hong Kong, either though it was a longer one, erm the rules and regulation for this one is much more stringent. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager Eventing).

Each Olympics has got those kinds of challenges mainly because you are dealing often with a nation that is not used to running equestrian sports and also it's a new venue and a new organising committee and so therefore they are not able to learn from their mistakes because it's a one off. The next site for the Olympics usually go and watch the old one and of course there is feedback back, but your still running it, you know if you took you know a real well oiled organising team like the Badminton team and put them on a new venue, there would still be faults the first time that they couldn't prevent because you only learn by actually running it there. So that's just one of the things of the Olympic Games but that's also part of the charm of the Olympic Games. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager Eventing).

The riders' experience of the Olympics is discussed in more detail in section 5.7. However in the following extract from King's autobiography we get a sense of the expectation associated with the experience of these particular games:

Due to quarantine restrictions, the equestrian Olympics would be held at Sha Tin racecourse, Hong Kong, instead of in Beijing. We knew we would be better off there, where there would be state of the art facilities, veterinary expertise and wall-to-wall air-conditioning to help us cope with the high humidity, but I was glad that I'd experienced four 'proper' Olympics, as I anticipated this would feel like a glorified World Equestrian Games. (King, 2009: p. 246).

King's mix of practical reasoning with personal emotion as a rider, who had experienced several Olympic Games, is mirrored in the following quote from a first time Paralympian:

> I know that our competition day is four days from the end of the Games so we get to go back into Beijing then and as I say chill in the village. Erm but yeah I think at the end of the day you're there to compete at your sports so whether or not there's other things going on, it's probably better that there's not because you won't be as distracted. So yeah it's just another competition really and you just focus on your sport. (Interviewee 20, Para–Equestrian Dressage Rider).

For these riders the Olympic and Paralympic experience began in quarantine in the UK. Both Olympic and Paralympic teams had to stay at an equine facility in the UK for a period of 10 days before flying. Not all teams were quarantined at the same time as the schedule was based on their dates of competition and subsequent flights. The duration of quarantine elongated the Olympic / Paralympic commitment / environment for what could essentially amount to four days of competition, each team could be spending up to five weeks together. Here we see how this was viewed as a potential problem area by one of the managers:

> I think its always a challenge when you have to do quarantine and you have to do a long distance of travel because you have people together for a much longer period of time so its higher risk of people falling out and getting fed up and getting bored and all those things that can happen. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager Eventing).

And in the following quotes we get a feel for what this experience was like for the riders:

> I mean it's basically just this area with all these barriers around and there's only one entrance and exit and you've got to disinfect every time and get changed every time you come in and out. You know it's a bit of a pain but its got to be done you know what I mean we can't risk getting any contamination with any of

the horses and things like that and obviously we've got to tick the boxes. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I think, it took a little bit to get my head around because its one thing talking about it and then actually when you see it on paper and you think oh my god I'm actually away for five weeks you know its was kind of like this huge chunk erm and it seems very different kind of the fact that we're at home, well we're not at home are we we're still in the UK and it's certainly an odd feeling but its more settling the fact that we're in a venue that we know and we're very familiar with and we know what routine we'll be in while we're here. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I had been dreading quarantine. The thought of having three horses at Stow-on-the-Wold whilst trying to give the horses at home a chance to keep up their work for ten days was giving me a fair amount of worry. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 282).

It is interesting to note the difference in the challenges faced by the Paralympic rider compared to the Olympic rider with regards to quarantine. Whilst the practical requirements of quarantine and the timeframe are the same for both groups of riders, the Olympic rider has the added pressure of dealing with additional horses and competition preparation outside of the Olympic schedule. The challenge of 'fitting in' the Olympic competition clearly differentiates the overall experience for the Olympic and Paralympic riders and this is discussed further in section 5.6 Experience of the Games.

Finally we discuss a specific challenge that emerged from the primary data but one that had not been identified in the literature was that of accreditation. Accreditation is essentially a pass which provides access to certain areas. In the ensuing quote we gain insight into the specific challenges facing equestrian sport, which is according to the Performance Director an 'accreditation-hungry sport':

It's a complex equation for the British Olympic Association because they get these bundles of accreditations and they then have to divide them up between sports, when of course sports want more than they're going to get. And we're a very accreditation-hungry sport. Just to explain what I mean by that if you're a sailor you rely a lot on the meteorological advice you get from the team meteorologist, they don't actually have to be in the accredited area, they can sit outside the accredited area and study the weather. Now if we're taking anyone that works with the horses we cannot take the horses outside of the accredited area so therefore they have to be accredited. So there's no point taking an equine physiotherapist if they're not accredited, but human physiotherapist you might get away with because you can take the athlete out of the accredited area to see the human physio. So accreditation is a big challenge, and you know the whole Olympic village environment is good when you've got a multi sport environment, you've got the British Olympic Association there and all that, but we're going into what is effectively a hotel converted into an Olympic village. (Interview 26, Performance Director).

Again here we see the challenges associated with accreditation but this time from the Paralympic perspective:

Accreditation is always a problem but particularly as we are on our own and not in a multi-sport environment, we have fought and we got an extra accreditation officially for the vet this time, so he's not having to sort of be taken out on somebody else's accreditation and it's been quite tricky now that we know we've got four riders in Grade 1 riders, which are riders that are in a classification category that means that you can get... that carers or additional support staff will come as well, because of the caring nature. They had to understand that, you know, just coz you're a Grade 1 rider, you don't just get your own carer, so we've got three covering seven riders. We made it very clear before the process of selection that depending on who the riders are that are selected there maybe requirement to use some of the owner accreditations for central support staff, such

as a physio, you know, and other people that, that any one rider may not need, but they're there to be used and will be helpful and by doing that we might have to only get them there by, by hi-jacking some owner accreditations and if that was the case, if you were a rider and you are entitled to 2 owner's accreditations but if we'd had to use one of your own accreditations for a spare, you know, we would, we said, and we'll stick by it, that the owners themselves would still be flown out, economy class, given a room in the hotel, and then we would buy them day tickets to the venue, but they wouldn't necessarily, you know, they wouldn't have owners accreditation, some people get very excited about accreditations, it's bizarre. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager Para-Equestrian Dressage).

Accreditation equals access but it is not just access to the riders that is important:

The grooms are a bit of a problem because there's an emergency medical centre at the venue but there isn't a true medical centre where they are. So whether they can get medication for simple ailments at the stables is difficult but there is a drug box locked away at the stables, another one locked away at the village, so if necessary I can actually delegate someone to go and get certain medications. (Interviewee 18, Team Doctor).

As a result of the ECA we have identified three dominant codes within the theme of 'challenges'. Many of the challenges appear to be sport specific and directly relate to issues pertaining to the involvement of horses within this multi sport environment. There have been however slight nuances between challenges associated with the Olympic or Paralympic teams. These differences are discussed further in the next section of analysis which focuses specifically on the experience of the games.

5.6 Performance Support

Pure psychology or sport science related performance literature was rejected from the systematic literature review due to it being beyond the scope of this study. However analysis of the literature included in the study, resulted in the identification of the first

order theme 'psychology and performance'. In general this material was grounded in the discipline of psychology but was linked to performance related issues such as mental preparation and coping strategies during the games (Pensgaard et al, 1999), role expectations and pressures on athletes in association with winning (Greenleaf et al., 2001), coach-athlete relationships and Olympic specific variables which athletes felt effected performance such as social support and the ability to get tickets for friends and family, and environmental concerns such as venue transportation difficulties and Olympic Village distractions (Gould et al., 2002a). Some of these issues have already been addressed in this analysis under the previous sections. In this section we will focus on 'Performance Support' and we will consider how this support affects the lived experience of the Olympic / Paralympic Games.

Within British sport, and certainly at Olympic and Paralympic level, 'performance support' is often structurally outlined in specific identified pathways. Equestrian sport for example is reliant on the athletic partnership of both the rider and horse. As such the governing body of equestrian sport in the UK, the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) has developed performance pathways for the development of its athletes (both the horse and rider). The BEF runs the World Class Programme which has been in existence since just before the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games. The programme is about identifying the most talented riders and horses and working with them to ensure that they reach their maximum potential and deliver their best possible results at World level and Olympic / Paralympic Games. The World Class Programme therefore fits into three conjoined areas: the Equine Pathway, the Development Programme and the Performance Programme and it is also split into areas of support such as coaching, equine health and research, and development, including a support area for human health and fitness.

Through a combination of understanding this pre-determined performance structure and analysis of the primary data, four sub-themes were identified within the broader theme of performance support; equine performance, fitness support for riders, psychology and management support (Figure 5.6).
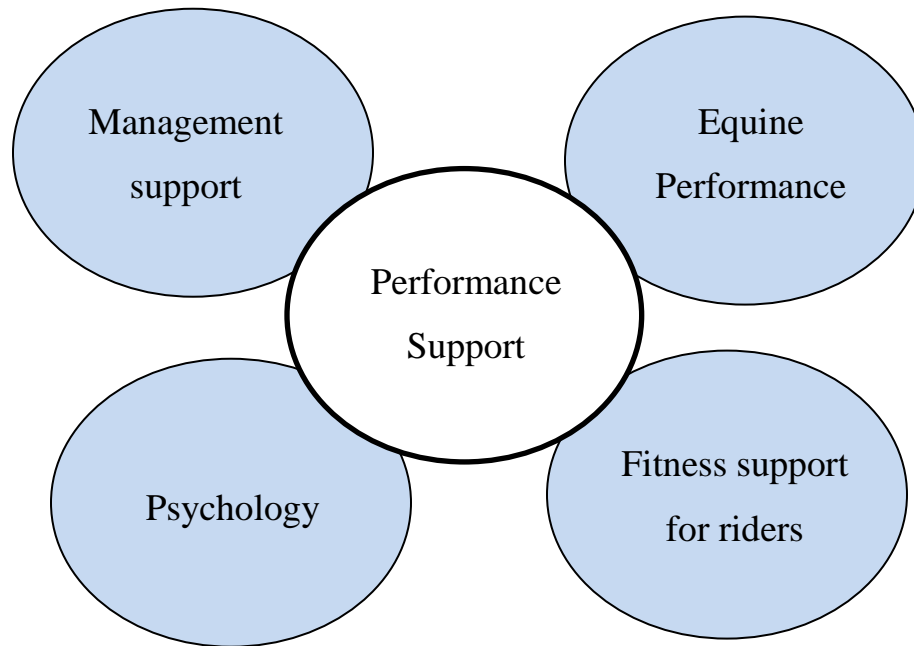
Figure 5.6: A framework of themes relating to performance, identified by interviewees as raised in the primary and secondary data

Performance support is an ongoing process but in the case of equine performance, the location of the Olympics is an influential factor. As previously discussed the conditions and outcome of the Barcelona Olympics, influenced the sports interest and focus on environmental stress and equine performance. In the following quotes we see how equine performance support was influenced by the decision to host the Beijing Olympic equestrian competitions in Hong Kong:

> I think the climate is the biggest issue but with having the test event last year then at least we're more prepared than some countries might be and also we've had a lot of experience with championships at different hot climates and, you know, we've done a lot of research. Dave Marling was out there doing a lot of heart monitoring and the horses coped well. I think if they're fit before, you travel them well, then they've got a much better chance of coping with the cross country well. (Interviewee 8, Groom).

In the following quote we see how knowledge about the conditions changed the approach to training:

> I think climate would be biggest concern I suppose... Dressage is still very important because obviously you always want a good team result going into the cross country because it gives you that buffer really, but at the same token, I need focus on getting the best performance using the minimum amount of effort because obviously the horses are going to need as much as they've got in the tank for the cross country. So the plan would be not to have to work the horses too hard when we're out there and try and save as much of them as we can, but still get the best result. So that's a little bit what we're trying to do, or have been trying to do since sort of March really, is cut down the working in time and get the riders confident and the horses confident in a plan and system that allows them to get the end result in 20 minutes as opposed to 40, you have to change that psychologically and confidence wise in the rider, that they trust themselves to ride well enough and have the horses trained well enough that 20 minutes is enough, because that, you know, that's going to save a lot of horse power. (Interviewee 25, Coach).

Olympic / Paralympic specific training not only takes into account the direct climatic affect on the horse but as the team moves closer to the actual competition, changes are made to simulate other characteristics of competition:

> You'll be amazed how long it takes you just to do one horse, because actually when you're in this environment, you know, the vet, the osteopath and, you know, they're always the wanting to see a horse and we're trying to sort of re-enact a little bit how it's going to be in Hong Kong. So I think from tomorrow [named rider] is not actually riding until I think we're down to ride between 8 and 11 o'clock, because obviously she'll either be riding late at night or early in the morning, so we're just sort of getting a little bit in the zone. (Interviewee 14, Groom and Coach).

In the previous quote the respondent mentions managing only one horse. This is a unique situation that Olympic or Paralympic competition brings, as those involved with equestrian sport are used to working with numerous horses on a daily basis. Managing this situation with regards to equine performance is highlighted as a concern by the performance manager:

> We're training at night, coz that's when we're competing. But we've hardly got into the training because the biggest thing in this situation is to hold your nerve, in any Olympics there's a general [fire] that takes hold and Dressage riders who see the next team working a bit harder, so they work harder, they may work their horses harder, I've seen so many really good Dressage horses just burnt out before the competition started because you're in this very artificial situation, with one horse to ride, normally riders have a busy life and lots of horses to ride and then they're looking sideways at what the others are doing and thinking they have to do the same and you need a lot of self-control and self discipline and actually self belief to not put your foot on the accelerator I'm really interested to see that, all teams, virtually all teams have taken that on, especially the Germans and that's a very important lead for some of our riders, they look to see what the Germans are doing and they're still not into, even half training to be honest with you. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

Yet despite all the preparation, there is still a sense of the unknown:

> Obviously the climate is going to be, and as much as we've prepared and we've gone to the trial event, there's the huge unknown factor of who much stress that will put on the horse on the cross country day and whether they really will hit a wall and whether his stamina will be able to cope with it and from our point of view, what he'll have left for the final day with the Showjumping and depending on how bad the humidity and if we're lucky on the day, you know we've had all these worries before and then suddenly its like an English day. You know in Athens we did all these preparations and on the cross country day it was quite a

breezy cool day, but I don't suppose we're going to have a breezy day in Hong Kong. But you never know the humidity may not be as drastic but if it was bad, I think we've got to be prepared to give them a lot of TLC and tread carefully and just monitor them very well for what we're going to do with them with them in the jumping on the Sunday. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

Ideally it would be lovely to be in a horse friendly place but we're not. So I think the bottom line is, it's still an Olympics and I think that is a challenge in itself isn't it, so I think you have to forget all the bit that's around it and just get on. Because if you think too much that you'll be thinking negative wont you and I think you just quietly put that to the back of your brain and be aware that, you know we've trained for that, we've done all the investigations looking at how to cool horses down, cool vests and all that, what's comfortable for them so its safe. But if it was a terrible day on the day then we'll have to monitor their engines and be sensible wont we. But as I say if that's happening to us its going to be happening to the other teams as well, so we won't be on our own. So if its tough for us it'll be tough for the other teams, you still win medals, might not be such a brilliant score but you'll still win medals. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

However as we can see from the next example, not all nations go into the games with the same level of equine performance preparation:

I mean we've done so much planning and prep for it, and I think out of all... most of the nations, ours will... our horses will be the most primed and ready for the conditions out here. We are very good at doing that. I do worry about some of the sort of Eastern European nations that are maybe competing here, that they're preparation hasn't been good enough and obviously with the conditions that are out here, that may lead to them having problems, but I hope that the, the officials and everything are very sort of up to speed on their sort of horse welfare and if a horse is looking tired, that it's stopped straight away, and I think that, that's key, because it would be... I think it would be tragic if an accident happened through

them not being quick enough to identify that a horse is actually really tired, because that's when accidents do happen. (Interviewee 15, Team GB Support Staff).

Earlier it was outlined how equine performance support prior to the games was adapted to suit the climatic conditions. Next we see how this adaptation in training continues even during competition as adjustments are made based on facilities, climate and how the horses cope with both:

> I think from what they've said the facilities are absolutely excellent and we've got aircon in the indoor school, so we can do a lot of preparation in that. And the fact that we're there 10 days earlier I think we'll be able to play with that to feel well are we better to be in the aircon or are we better to be out of it. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

> It's probably better in a way, you know, to do little bits of work outside, but maybe on the day of the test it's a good idea to work them in the air conditioning, in the cool and then just bring them out and finish them off for 10 minutes and then go in and do the test and then take them straight back into the indoor school afterwards to just allow them to cool off, is probably a better way round it, probably less stressful for them and probably will enable them to recover quicker and probably stay a bit calmer. (Interviewee 25, Coach).

Despite all the equine support, competition horses are not machines and as with humans they can pick up injuries or illness that can affect their performance ability. The anxiety of this during pre games time is picked up in the following two quotes:

> Obviously while we're at home there's that added pressure of keeping the horses sound and making sure nothing goes wrong at the last minute which is a great worry, so we're counting down the days, until we finally make it. (Interviewee 3, Groom).

I think as well, you've got tremendous highs and lows, if you get what I mean, with the horses, they're so fragile that anything, you know, something can happen and that could be the end of your dreams can't it? So, you know, they do seem to deal with these immense highs and lows...the comments that come back when they say "Oh, how do you feel about going?" "I'm not there yet" (Interviewee 10, Team GB Support Staff).

And the effect of this during Olympic competition is highlighted in the following quote:

One of the horses got ill on... when it arrived out in Hong Kong and so that meant that we couldn't train that horse until literally before the competition started, literally, I mean he started back in training again the morning of his Dressage test and so that again worked a little bit against us… and then again one of the horses had an injury on the cross country, which left it very, very doubtful that it was actually going to complete the competition and I think that all the personnel, particularly the vet and the groom, did a fantastic job to get that horse to the Showjumping line. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

In the previous quote the performance manager referred to support of the wider team to get that particular horse to the start of competition. In this final section, under equine performance we get an insight into the role of one member of that team responsible for supporting equine performance and we see what the Olympic experience is like for this individual:

Exactly, if the farrier isn't right, these horses can't perform, if they're not balanced and they don't have the suitable shoes they won't perform so it won't happen, and people are realising, you know, year upon year, people are realising that, you know, the farrier plays a very important role. (Interviewee 7, Team GB Support staff).

As far as I'm concerned, if nobody even knows that there was a farrier team there, that nobody even saw or filmed or there was pictures of farriers, that's fine, because there will be problems, there will be decisions made, you know, on every level, on a daily basis, once we start competing and if no one ever gets to hear of it then that's a success, that's just fine. That's the way I'm sort of looking at it. We're not there to... we're not there to be gung-ho, we're not there for personal pleasure, we're there to do the job and if the job's right and no one gets to hear of it, then I'm happy. I'll walk away from it and I'll be happy. I mean you ask the vets the same thing, the vets are there purely to make sure that these horses are fit and well and able to do the job and they're not interested in having their name up in lights, because they were the one, or that person was the one that did it. It's a team effort and if the team do the job properly and nobody gets to hear of it, fine, that's the way I want it. (Interviewee 7, Team GB Support staff).

As discussed equine performance support has really taken off since the Barcelona Olympics. Whilst coaching support is well established, additional human performance support is a relatively new concept in equestrian sport. In the subsequent quotes we get an insight into how the GB support staff responsible for supporting rider performance, are slowly breaking down barriers:

Some of the work we've done, I think has sort of opened their eyes a bit just to, okay, it is 80-90% about the horse and quite rightly so, but, you know, the sport itself is getting more competitive and, you know, there are certain edges to be had from, keeping yourself in good shape as well. It's been a sport, I think, traditionally that obviously the physical preparation hasn't been at the focal point but it's starting to change now. (Interviewee 10, Team GB Support Staff).

You've got to build the trust, firstly it was just try and convince them they didn't have to ride in pain. Once we got that, then it was getting them used to the fact they can actually use me, they don't have to have something - limb hanging off - in order to get in here and have treatment, any slight niggles, any slight fall they

can come in and get sorted out, once they felt, when they're relieved of pain it's a lot better but we also do a lot of work with helping their performance and how they move on a horse, if they get tight in the hip or their pelvis or in their back or whatever. So that all helps... it's all part of the whole picture. But it's taken four years now to get that... get them to come in on a regular basis, to pick up the phone and say "I'm hurt" but I mean I don't give them that opportunity now. I look at the results and see who's fallen, knowing that they're still a bit stubborn, but particularly now, at this time. But at events now, they'll all come and see me on a regular basis, it's almost become accepted that I will be at an event, it's much, much better. (Interviewee 1, Team GB Support Staff).

Yeah, it's a slow shift, but I mean we are... we're slowly changing the culture. You know, they are starting to think more about themselves as part of, you know, what goes on with the horse, you know, we've managed to instil this idea that, you know, they will now use [Interviewee 1] and, you know, they don't have to have a limb hanging off, as he says, and now my job really is try and then look a bit beyond that and about first of all cutting down the injuries, along with [Interviewee 1], to make sure we're not getting these bits and pieces and then looking at where we can actually make some improvements to actually help the horses to do what they're trying to do and, you know, the problem is with this sport what we work with are physical bits and pieces which aren't necessarily obvious, so, you know, your coordination, your reaction, your balance, and of course those sorts of things aren't... it's not like sort of pumping up a bicep and seeing your muscle get physically larger, you know, you need to go through a process of somebody actually feeling better on a horse, and of course has a positive benefit with confidence as well, which is obviously quite a key factor in a sport. (Interviewee 10, Team GB Support Staff).

As can be seen from the above quotes encouraging riders to utilise fitness based support has required a cultural shift. In the following quote, we again see that there has been a slight difference in how each of the teams have reacted to this:

I mean the show-jumpers are probably slightly less switched on to it but I mean the Dressage and the eventers and the paras as well, have been really quite good at this. (Interviewee 10, Team GB Support Staff).

Buy-in from the teams and individual riders as discussed above, will affect how often they seek out this type of performance support and this can affect the proficiency and experience of the individuals involved:

You've got to know them inside out, so that if something does go wrong with their back or their neck or with their hips or whatever, you can be a lot quicker in your diagnosis and a lot more effective with the treatment if you know them well, because you also get to know them better, some respond to a bit more shouting at, or some might need a little bit more TLC. (Interviewee 1, Team GB Support Staff).

In the next sequence of quotes we get a sense of how rider performance can be improved by working on issues that don't directly involve the horse:

We're preparing everyone for the environment, you know, obviously the climate out there is pretty difficult to cope with. We're doing a lot of work on the riders' respiratory function and also, as [Interviewee 1] mentioned, on their hydration strategy, to make sure that, you know, we don't dehydrate. Just really sort of highlighting to the riders and making them aware of what it's going to be like out there, we'll be using some heat chambers in the build up as well, to give a bit of an experience. But the riders have been very good at sort of taking this on board and then it's been a good opportunity for us to kind of really push what we can do in terms of their physical preparation at the moment, just sort of cranking things up a bit, and everybody sort of started to focus now on getting there. So yeah, the climate and the environment is the key thing really. (Interviewee 10, Team GB Support Staff).

For me, we need to sort of work on that it's not about changing one thing by 100% it's about changing 100 things by 1% that makes the difference if they're not right, if they're not fit, and the balance, coordination is not brilliant, if they're slightly injured or they've got some tightness or... it's going to affect them in some small way at some point. (Interviewee 1, Team GB Support Staff).

They walk them [the cross country course] in the most stupid shoes, and they come back and wonder why they've got back pain when they come. So we've got that through to them and I think teaching them about walking the course, and the right time, with a water bottle, with, you know, and making sure they've got the right footwear and the right clothing when they walk the course will make a big difference and minimalising that, because that's what will fatigue them I think and cause the biggest problem. Not just the performance it's just living and working out there for 10 days before their own event. (Interviewee 1, Team GB Support Staff).

The preparation phase really is the general riders health and fitness, making sure that all the immunisations are up to date, that they've got the correct strategies so far as hydration is concerned. We're looking at cooling techniques, general hygiene, and diet. I think the preparation was the main thing. I think using the heat chambers was a really good idea, gave everybody a good idea of what it was going to be like. (Interviewee 18, Team GB Support Staff).

Below we gain insight into how the riders themselves view their fitness preparation in relation to performance. In the first quote we even see an overlap of resources between human and equine performance support:

It's a lot of physio but also knowing that when I feel that tightness not to suddenly get worse but to think ok just try to let go so it is a lot of mind over matter as well as the physio back up which is very important. I mean the physio that we've got coming over with us, I am quite lucky that she's local to where I am, so I have

had a bit of extra support, but I would like to have had more of a physio set up with her. But at least we will have the osteopath who does the horses as well as the humans so you know we've got her as well and obviously we have the psychologist coming as well. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I have been working, since I was long-listed in November, I've been really working on personal fitness and have lost weight and, you know, got a lot fitter than I would normally get for the beginning of the season. Sort of, actually since Badminton I've had such a hectic five week competition schedule that I've sort of, you know, stopped, stopped doing running and training and things, so I'm about to embark again on that, but yes, I'm going to do a lot of other fitness work and hopefully get out and work in the heat chamber a bit and that'll give me some, some feel for, for what we might able to expect. (Interviewee 12, Eventing Rider).

The Para-Equestrian Dressage riders talked more about physical training compared to other participants, possibly due to an increased awareness of their own physical abilities:

What's helped my fitness is these new vibrating power plates, because its passive exercise, I can't do repetitive exercises it just tightens me up, I just get stiffer and stiffer if I initiate it, whereas that does it for me. And I noticed a difference, I'm definitely fitter, my core strength is better and my cardiovascular is better and my trainer has noticed that I'm straighter in the saddle and I can ride much longer and I've noticed this so it's been great that power trainer and there's one downstairs that I can use after I've ridden. It's surprising how hard it works you, people look at it and think it doesn't do anything, it really works you and you can do all different parts of the body on it, it's fantastic, it makes me feel good. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Several participants have referred to the use of heat chambers as part of the rider fitness preparation for the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics. In the next quote we see that all teams utilised this opportunity apart from the Showjumpers:

All Dressage and eventers did, most of the grooms. Show jumpers did not but Showjumpers actually most of them compete in the Far East anyway because I know they come to Malaysia so they in some ways travel that bit more and actually fairly prepared mentally for what it's like and they tend to travel and compete without much time in between so it's something they're more used to. I think actually we did lots of education before they came. I think most of them read it. Yeah, preparation is the main thing. (Interviewee 18, Team GB Support Staff).

With regards to the previous quote, it is interesting to note the inclusion of grooms alongside riders. Indeed, in the following series of quotes we see how the grooms approach their Olympic and Paralympic preparations from a fitness perspective:

Yeah, I did a presentation at [Name] and also we had two separate grooms training days and grooms from all the three disciplines came so it's been a really, national wise, sounds a bit dramatic, but, you know, over the whole British sort of community that they've tried to just get a bit more emphasis on taking it more serious. I mean I'm stood here in a jumper because I'm actually in training at the moment. (Interviewee 8, Groom).

I think it's important if you're going to somewhere like that that you, because, you know, we're doing the horses probably more of the time than the riders are and if you get a bit lazy and you get hot and tired and you get a bit slack you could easily miss a cut that ends up a big leg so it's important that you're geared towards it as well and you've got to go out there with the mental state, you know, it's going to be hot, it's going to be humid, it might not be pleasant at all times but that's how it's going to be. (Interviewee 8, Groom).

I mean I have actually been doing extra training in the gym and I've been sitting in the steam room in my hoodie, looking like a weirdo… (Interviewee 14, Coach and Groom).

In the subsequent extracts we get a sense of what the heat chamber experience was like for the riders:

Erm hot! It's horrible because when we went in there they'd set it to something like 38 degrees and 85% humidity which is hot and sticky it's horrible. You get in there and you have to fill out these forms for the psychologist and by the time you've filled out the forms, you're soaked through, your t-shirts sticking to you, you're jodhpurs are sticking to you, your hair's all flat, its awful. You start just sitting there getting used to it but they had like a robotic horse a simulator and we had to ride and there's a bike in there as well and a treadmill which obviously none of the para's used, so we all use the horse. It's horrible you breathe in and you feel like you're not getting oxygen you're getting water and you find yourself taking deeper breaths and more frequently just to get the same amount of oxygen. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Well we went in the heat chamber for Athens but we had one session in there and then Athens was nothing at all like the heat chamber, we all sort of went oh, the humidity wasn't there and the heat wasn't anything like expected because we had quite a breeze that came in through the equestrian centre. But it is going to be like it, there's no getting away from it in Hong Kong but the session I did in Gloucester I didn't actually find that useful and I have done two sessions at Exeter which were really really good. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Below we are given an insight into a Para-Equestrian Dressage rider's experience of fitness, not just from a performance perspective but also from a maintenance perspective:

Well for me I'm just going to, I have a chap that I go to for strength and conditioning that I go to three times a week because I had been ill erm in April time just before I went to Germany and erm I lost a lot more use of my left side which is normally my good side, so it's to try to get me back to where I was or as

good as I can get myself before I became ill again and that's my aim. (Interviewee 22, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

Staying with the discipline of Para-Equestrian Dressage, in the subsequent extracts we get a sense of how performance expectation can affect the Paralympic experience and we also see how this particular rider utilises performance support in the form of a psychologist and her fellow team mates:

I mean its really going to be very different for me because I'm currently European Champion and I won a bronze and a gold at the Worlds so its really different now I do have that pressure not only for myself, because I always put pressure on myself to do the best that I can, but now other people know like my background and how far I can potentially go I think I will get fairly nervous and I hope that won't alter my performance. But we have a psychologist on the squad and my other teams mates tend to help. We've got the best possible support we could have. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

In the following section we will look more specifically at psychology with regards to performance support. In the same way as those working with the riders on their fitness had to break down barriers, we see again a slow change in culture with regards to performance support, although this time in relation to sport psychology:

Within the two Dressage teams, they actually do see it as performance and yes there will be problems, but generally I spend a lot of my time talking about performance not about problems, whereas I think the other two disciplines look at psychology quite differently and they think, you know, they talk, "Well, I don't have a problem" rather than, "How can I do... how can I make sure my mental approach is right?", or "How do I know that my mental approach is right?" and that's completely different. I mean I toured with Showjumping over a summer for about six months, and it was like having three... a little bit like having three heads and a straight jacket in your back pocket, that's what they look at it like. And

maybe that's me and my approach, I mean I don't think I'm that unapproachable (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

I mean it's not a mandatory part of the Starting Potential programme but you will, you will be asked about it and have to do some work on it, same as your nutrition, same on your fitness, same on your physio, whereas, at the older level, there's an element of choice to what you, what you pick up on and what you don't and certainly I think, I guess when I was, can't remember what it was, 2002/2003, you know, a lot of Show-jumpers were over 40, and probably didn't know quite where to put me, to be honest. Couldn't quite work out what age I was, you know, somebody blonde wandering around, well kind of blonde, wandering around and they just didn't know quite how to place it. In all honesty they weren't really ready for it. It was very interesting and worthwhile doing it, but it wasn't the right time to try and persuade... (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

In the above quote the respondent reflects on her experience with riders in 2002/3. By the late 1990s sport psychology was being used across many different sports and as a requirement of receiving lottery funding even then riders on elite squads were required to take advice from sports psychologists as well as nutritionist and physiotherapists. The general scepticism towards sports psychology within the equestrian sport community during this time is outlined in Funnell's (2004) autobiography:

Giles Rowsell had therefore invited a sport psychologist called Nicky Heath to come and give a talk one evening during this session. It was to change my life. Sport psychology was pretty new then and most riders felt it was completely unnecessary; in fact, all my friends thought it was hideously embarrassing and gave it a wide berth. But I wasn't embarrassed; I just pricked up my ears. I have always been open-minded to suggestions because anything, however minute, can help me, it's a bonus. At that stage I would have done anything that could have improved my attitude. So after listening intently to Nicky's lecture, I went up to

Giles and said that I would be prepared to be a guinea pig for sport psychology. (Funnell, 2004: p. 102-103).

Soon after that I went to see Nicky, who lives nearby. The first thing she did was get out a wad of paper – a huge questionnaire. I said she could chuck that in the bin straight away, because the last questionnaire I filled in told me I should be a bus conductor and was a waste of time. Instead we opened a bottle of wine. (Funnell, 2004: p.103).

Funnell goes on to explain how working with the sports psychologist helped her deal with competition nerves and understand that her approach to competition was different depending on which level she was competing at:

She was very quick to get to the heart of my problems which were, in essence, thinking too much: paralysis by analysis. I told Nicky that at one-day events when I've got several horses to ride and a hectic schedule, my results tend to be very good. But at a three-day event with only one horse, when I am normally used to riding ten horses a day at home, suddenly there's so much time to think: and I'll think far too much. (Funnell, 2004: p.104).

This change in competition rhythm due to the various levels elite riders compete at is unique for equestrian sport. Traditionally in sport once an athlete reaches an elite level the nature of their competition remains the same maybe only dropping down or changing due to recovery from injury or return to fitness. In equestrian sport the elite riders compete at various levels in order to bring on potential equine talent for the future or as part of their business requirements. Funnell highlights that only having one horse to compete and manage over a four day period of competition affected her overall performance. This is something that also raises concerns in the Olympic competition environment when again riders only have one horse to compete but over a much more prolonged period:

Well, I guess in part one of the things that we worked a lot with people on, was about boredom, the fact that they've only got one horse to ride, or one horse to care for or... so people were aware they needed to be able to be occupied. (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

As discussed in several previous sections, we are again noting the differences between the disciplines, which are again highlighted below:

Well, you've got a 60 year old guy, is it 60-something year old guy competing here in equestrian and then the youngest is, I think, 18 or 19? So you can have a massively broad range and I think that's one of the... I think that's one of the issues. Dressage has always had psychology, it had it before Sydney. Eventing did have it, didn't really get on with it particularly, I don't think and therefore don't want it. Dressage have had it and actually have always been relatively happy with how it works and actually have stuck with it and tried to mould it as they want it, as opposed to throwing it out with the bathwater and saying it can't work. I don't think there's any particular right or wrong answer and Showjumping a lot of the time, they were quite a lot older, pretty successful businessmen. (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

With regards to psychology, interviewee 9 offers an explanation as to why the teams approach this performance support differently:

Your coach or your performance manager is pivotal within this as to whether or not psychology is an integral part, because basically the athletes will take on a very similar view to your central point. So for 7, 8 years the two integral people across the Dressage disciplines have thought it is integral, in which case that's why it is. I think there is a degree of, not scepticism, but [the Eventing Performance Manager] does it, does performance psychology his way with his athletes and therefore that's enough as far as he's concerned. So, that's why it

doesn't feature; and [the Showjumping Performance Manger] the same, I mean just doesn't feature on the map. (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

Well I worked with some Eventers individually working up to Athens and that was absolutely fine. I think the philosophy that [the Eventing Performance Manager] has doesn't, yeah, in his mind negates the need I think is the right way of saying it and, you know, I've just been working on the two Dressage and that's, you know, filled the preparation time, you know, that's been quite a lot of work anyway. But they know that they could if they wanted to, but it, it's not seen as a need. I think one of the reasons you end up being here is because they're inconsistent in performance and I'm not a great fan of psychology support being about problems, unfortunately often that's what it's associated as, not about performance (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

The individual requirements of the disciplines also lend themselves more or less to the utilisation of sport psychology support as highlighted in the following extract:

It is only psychological pressure in Dressage, it's nothing else, because as I said it's the same test, not the same test has been running for 4 years, it's at least 8 years, and mostly 12 years, with a few twiddly changes, it's the same arena, it's the same judges. It is nothing different, but if you buy into it being an Olympic Games or an important date, there's nothing anybody can do. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

From a sport psychology perspective one of the tools used to support performance was personality testing:

I think the other thing that's a positive I guess is we've done quite a lot of work on the personalities and the types this time, and it has been quite... I really like that side and actually interesting quite a lot of the riders have quite liked doing it, I think, and the staff have found it quite interesting, where basically they actually

understand now, the differences between... they understand themselves a bit better but I think they understand how they differ from somebody else and actually the effect, the effect of their communicate and how they communicate with someone else and actually how best to communicate with somebody who has different personality to you, so again that made a massive positive... (Interviewee 9, Team GB Support Staff).

We'd done a psychological profile with everybody, grooms, riders, support staff, as much as possible to understand how everybody else thinks and behaves and what, you know, drives them mad and how they have to express themselves to actually get to the optimum and all the rest of it and that has really helped because we have exposed ourselves to difficulties. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

So in our team practice, what I very much wanted the team to do was drip-feed a few challenges in, challenges that psychologically could irritate or frustrate or inflame, but with an announcement that that's what I'm going to do to you, so let's see how much self-control you've got. So the challenge is, you know, yeah you can throw a tantrum, that's easy, that's... but now I'm going to mentally torture you and see how strong you are and for the prima donnas that's the challenge for them, not exploding, because that's easy, that's well practised, well rehearsed, now we have to turn it around and so we've been doing things like that. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

Sport psychology was identified in the systematic literature review in relation to athlete experience and performance. ECA of the primary and secondary data has highlighted that sport psychology within equestrian sport is not something that is fully integrated with regards to performance support. It appears to be utilised in different ways by individuals or disciplines.

Management support in relation to overall performance was not overtly addressed in the papers reviewed for this study through the systematic literature review methodology. However, ECA of the primary data identified this as a distinct aspect of the overall Olympic and Paralympic experience. As discussed throughout this section, performance support is an ongoing aspect of working with elite athletes. However, the nature of the Olympic cycle does influence performance support from a management perspective, be that with regards to training considerations relating to climatic considerations for rider and equine fitness or as we can see from the following quote, funding considerations:

> I think the biggest single change was around the funding mechanisms so that, in 2006, when the announcement was made, then, you know, mid-cycle there was an extra injection of cash and that was pretty significant, both from performance services point, which is a subsidiary of BPA, and is fully funded by UK Sport, so all the holding camp programmes were secured. And obviously in terms of the sports, they had a significant injection of additional talent funding and programme funding as well. So, you know, I think that we're starting to reap the benefits of the flexibility of additional funding has given us. I guess it's a significant occurrence when you get a home Games probably the switch normally comes after the Games, but I think we've been more on top of 5, 6 year programmes for London. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

Increased funding offers increase performance support options but as illustrated below that can also lead to increased performance pressure:

> I mean your professional approach shouldn't really change, you know, in terms of your core values and what your performance expectations are. I think that probably there's... from a Paralympic point of view, there's more awareness, there's slightly more pressure because of the increase in funding, but I don't think our mindset in terms of how we approach the Games is any different, I think the funding has allowed us to put more services in place that potentially, previously we might have to wanted to, but couldn't necessarily cost out. So that's been pretty

good, you know, that we've produced a booklet that has just arrived today called, the Travelling Athlete, and, you know, things like that. There's obviously a resource implication and we're better resourced now than we were pre-Athens, in some ways there's more tangible outputs but you would argue that they're the nice to haves and that everything that we would have done we'd done anyway and this is just the icing on the cake rather than, you know, there's no cornerstones that have been missed out, so the foundation was there anyway, you're just able to go that little bit further and hopefully those, you know, those things will make a difference as well. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

From the perspective of managing performance, the overall responsibility lies with the Performance Director. In the ensuing quote taken from an interview prior to the Beijing Olympics, we see the margins of performance he is dealing with:

I mean performance; this is a product we're dealing with. And you know we have our high level medal targets which are higher than I'd want them to be but, you know, if we come back with no medals round our necks, in all likelihood it hasn't been a success. I actually think the competition, you know in Eventing I actually think there are four teams that could win the gold medal, in Showjumping, well as on last years form, there's probably three teams that could win the gold medal, five teams that could win the bronze, so there's probably 7-8 teams that are going for the medals, and in Dressage realistically there's probably 4-5 teams going for the bronze, which I hope we're one of, so you know this is pretty tight stuff. But I mean the American's in the World Equestrian Games in Aachen lost the team bronze, by the equivalent of three seconds on the cross country across three horses, you know, you could identify that one of their riders had a stop and she circled far too big to come back to the fence, if she'd have circled on a 15 metre circle they would have won the team bronze, that's you know. In Athens 5 gold's for Britain, total running time, I think it was 13.5 – 14 minutes, the different between 5 gold's cumulative and 5 silvers was 0.534 of a second, that's what you're talking about, I don't know where those 0.5, .01, .001 of a second comes

from but its nip and tuck and I can see it won't be any different in Hong Kong. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

And in the following quote taken from an interview post games we see how actual performance influences future management decisions:

> You know, there are lessons that we've learnt about the programme as a whole and the build up and, you know, we have to be sharper and more professional in certain areas. I think in terms of expectation of commitment from riders and from staff to riders and, you know, utilisation of opportunities such as, you know, the coaching side but also things like the physiotherapist and, you know, we need to totally look at how sport psychology works and, yeah, you know, more professional in terms of utilising opportunities and develop performance. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

As we have noted several times during this section, performance support involves numerous elements, it is not simply about improving only one thing:

> If it was as easy as doing one thing extremely well and you win Gold medals, then everyone would be doing it. It is a combination of doing an awful lot of things slightly better. So, yes, conditioning of the riders, yes, being sharper on the coaching side, yes, having better horses, yes, performing better on the day, etc., etc., etc. It is just trying to add half a percent, or 1 percent to a whole range of areas, that is going to make it a big difference and then I do think that once you've done all that, then you also need it, in our sport, to go right on the day, you know, again if you compare with some other sports, they just needed not to go wrong. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

And thus it is not surprising that the management of this performance support also requires an eye for detail:

I think from the staff point of view, you know, I think one of the things that I've tried to instil since I came to Paralympics GB was that, as a core member of staff, and it doesn't matter if that's Paralympics GB staff, or the sports specific staff, it doesn't matter how bad a day you're having and what's going on, you have to be able to keep that from both your coaches and your athletes as much as you can, because if you're having a bad day and you bite your head coach's head off and then he bites an athlete's head off, it, you know, it's that, I guess ripple effect down the food chain and ultimately, you've just got tension in the camp. So, you know, you've got to be able to put your head above the desk and smile, even if you're having, you know, an absolute nightmare underneath the desk it's the what's happening underneath the surface, it's the swan, it's the swan analogy that, you know, it's graceful on the top and it can all be kicking off underneath. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

This attention to detail is again noted in this quote from an interview carried out with the Performance Director and here we sense the pressure that is felt in doing this job:

Therefore my job is to try to head off anything that I can affect that goes badly, so how do I judge myself at the end of the games is that I can wake up on the 16th September when I get back and say there is nothing else that I could have done to enable those athletes to perform. So consequently I will spend 18 hours a day, not worrying but trying to think what haven't I done, what can I do, so that induces you inwardly into quite a pressurised environment and when you get out there, at the end of the day the athletes have to perform, the athletes and the horses are the ones that win the medals, and anything that I do can only put them in a place that allows them to do it, I can't make them perform. But technically my job, I shouldn't have a job out there because everything should be so perfectly planned, but inevitably that isn't the case, things happen, things need doing and you're always trying to stay in detail two days a head, maybe a day ahead of everyone else, in outline two weeks ahead, so when I get there I'm already thinking about

the return move. So you put quite a lot of pressure on yourself. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

In the following quote we see how the Performance Director's attention to detail is noted by other members of his team:

[The Performance Director is] the sort of person that leaves no stones unturned and if he can think of a potential problem, he will think of it and he'll do what he can to prevent ever even cropping up. I mean the preparation that he and his team have put in is just so good, I mean there's a reason there's always military men running anything to do with horses, but actually it does have its advantages, especially if they have the right mentality, the older military mentality might be a bit old fashioned but I think that... I mean that sort of what is it, "fail to prepare, prepare to fail" sort of thing. (Interviewee 27, Team GB Support Staff).

Finally with regards to management of performance, this final sequence of quotes highlights two interesting factors, the use of delegation and personal management styles:

I've organised the grooms, we'll have the stable manager, which is [named person], he's a farrier, he's in the stables all the time, like the vet, but the vet is very busy, so I want [named person] in charge of sort of groom's welfare. So then we work out, with the permission of the riders, when those grooms can have a morning off, morning rest, because we train at night. We use buddy systems, and there's two grooms that are buddied together, same with the riders and staff, so two of them have been off shopping, while the other one does the day duties. So, the grooms have got their sort of structure there and their communication lines, which come through me, because I get all the feedback, and I'm continuously checking with the [named person] you know, what's happening and all the rest of it. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

I think if you ask any of the World Class people, or even the people like the grooms, which is sort of perhaps on the end of the line, they're preconceived ideas of a team manager or team captain, is that they're in the stables, shouting at everybody, organising everybody but that's not my style, that's not the way I run my own yard. I give somebody a job, if they do the job until they tell me they can't do the job, I'm very happy if they come and say "I don't think that's my bag. I'm not prepared to take that on", but when they do take the job, they do it, and I choose them because they have the ability, I wouldn't choose them if they didn't have the ability, and they get on and do it, and then when they slip up, I want to know why they've slipped up and when they do well, then obviously they don't need my praise, but they get satisfaction out of it, that's the way I do it. I've got a line up of great people who do the job, if I think there's somebody who can't do it, be it grooms, World Class riders, then they just won't be there, it's as simple as that and I haven't got that. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

Throughout this study we have discussed the uniqueness of equestrian sport, the relationship between the two athletes (the rider and the horse), and the fact that riders do not always associate themselves as sportsmen, or to some extent see themselves as different in a broader sport context. This section has highlighted these points. Performance support covers both the horse and the rider but the evolution and acceptance of such support occurred at different points, with the focus on the equine athlete coming first.

To some extent we have identified a holistic approach to performance support, with many teams across the Olympic and Paralympic context sharing resources, indeed in some cases even the equine and human athlete are treated by the same individual. However, as has been consistent throughout this analysis, the discipline specific teams have their own nuanced approach to the available performance support.

5.7 Success

With regards to the primary data included in this analysis, all interviewees were asked prior to the Beijing Olympics or Paralympics, what would make these Games successful for them? As mentioned previously, whilst the British had dominated Para-Equestrian Dressage since it was first included on the Paralympic programme, they have failed to show the same level of success at the Olympics. Despite these different experiences the majority of respondents, be that support staff or athletes themselves, consistently referred to winning medals as a measure of success:

> But I think you can't measure it individually, you have to measure it as the team, and I think success... I mean success will be... great success will be a medal, I mean anything you can bring out of it, I'm sure you'd find some success in it. I think to be able to go over there in that environment and compete is successful on its own, but I think it would be silly not to say well, success would be winning a gold medal and that's what we'll strive for, that's where the money is. (Interviewee 1, Team GB support staff).

> Erm I never entre any competition hoping to come second, so obviously we're aiming for the Gold but failing that Silver, you know what I mean so yeah and team gold that's the most important thing. Just see how it goes, and try to beat the Germans. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

> Getting to an Olympic Games has been my ambition since I was about 6 years old, that is, you know, a very great deal of personal satisfaction, you know, it is the ultimate isn't it? I think whatever sport you're in, well, I guess unless you're a footballer or something, you know, that is the ultimate accolade to get to an Olympics and hopefully win medals. I really, always really enjoyed riding on teams when I was a Junior and Young Rider, I feel I really upped my game and I thrive in that team environment, I know in the past I've always sort of performed above my average, so, you know, I'm hoping that again I will produce a better

than par performance and, I think in terms of competition expectations, I think, to land on a squad that's so strong, I think anyone of us on our day could bring home an individual medal. I think as a collective we're, we're just, you know, an exceptional squad and I think we've got a really good chance of bringing a Gold home, which is an added incentive really for you to, you know, for me to try extra hard and I think, you know, again that will help, help me raise my game. (Interviewee 12, Eventing Rider).

However through the ECA we are able to identify the individual nuances that are associated with the experience of success and in the following series of quotes we see one respondent reflect on the question from several points:

When you talk to each of the riders, they have their own definition I guess of what success is of which I know, I think I know what that is. So for me I guess if they reach or outperform what they're aiming for then that is a success. I guess from a UK Sport perspective, success is determined by colour of coin and you can't get away from that really. So, I think it has to be measured against a realistic... the realistic potential of those individuals, not, not something that somebody's dreamt up for them and I think they know what they're aiming for. So I guess, yeah, their own individual aspirations, which I think are the same as, what we as a team feel that is. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

But I guess the measure..., it's interesting isn't it? So, how do you measure the success of what a farrier does or a physio or a psychologist? Success for me is the environment works, we've been effective in our roles, and in terms of we're clear what they are, we accept what they are and we perform them to the best of our ability. We've minimised distraction and stress on the rider, we've made their Olympic experience and the team, broader team, and an athlete's experience a positive one. And whether or not they achieve what they're there to achieve, that's going to be the main thing, for me, which is if they don't achieve what their true potential is, then we're not... potentially we're not doing something right; and

equally the assumption is then that they're also not doing something right either. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

As alluded to in the previous quotes, success whilst on one level is an individual experience, within the dynamics of a team it has elements of a shared experience. In the following quotes we see how competition performance affected the experience of one particular athlete and her groom:

I remember in Athens on one of my tests, I can't remember which one now, but I'd gone in very early in the class, so there is all that waiting around and then I went back up to the stands and I think I watched the last four and it was kind of like OK at the moment you're in gold and then when you get down to the last two and you think I've definitely got a bronze, oh I've definitely got the silver and then oh oh I've got the gold. But you're on tender hooks the whole time. And in Sydney I was sat in bronze medal position for about half of the competition and the last one pipped me to the post. So even in Athens I didn't believe it and till I really knew. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I think for me the icing on the cake was that [named rider] was riding my horse at the time, and she had won... we'd been to the Europeans, the Worlds and then obviously Athens was like the icing on the cake, because she'd won 3 Golds in all, so he had won nine Gold medals, consecutively... I mean Athens was the best competition for me, not only because I think of the Olympics, it was just the run up, we didn't have any problems in the preparation, didn't have any problems, everything went according to plan. (Interviewee 14, Groom).

We were so lucky out in Athens because we had a tack room each, so you could put all your Good Luck cards up and spread out and you had a chair and, you know, so it was like your little home for a, you know, a good couple of weeks. So actually it was all that was left at the end was my chair sitting there and actually everybody was still buzzing, people were going up and down with wine and beer.

I sat down on my chair with a glass of wine and I absolutely bawled my eyes out and everybody came and "You're right?" It's happy tears but it was just so much, and I just couldn't stop, it was like...what have we done? You know, you know, and it was suddenly what you actually achieved, it suddenly hit you then. I mean yes, you're sitting... you're in the medal ceremonies and you're, you know, you're seeing it go up and, you know, this is for you but I think because you have to continue.. (Interviewee 14, Groom).

And in the subsequent extracts we see what it is like to experience winning for two of the members of the support team:

It's a huge wheel and there's lots of little cogs that make it go smoothly and some of those cogs might be a bit bigger than others and play more of a part, I mean it's like the age old adage that if you go to NASA and you talk to the man sweeping the floor and you say to him "What do you do?" he says "I put men on the moon". He has nothing to do with putting men on the moon, but that's the way he feels and I suppose it's a little bit the same way, you sort of you watch them standing on the podium and okay, I've been to championships where it's gone completely tits up and it's been horrible, but watching them all on that and watching them gallop round you still think, yeah, that's my medal too. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

We always say that even if you're the person that cleans out the bins in somebody's office, you effectively are at some point contributing to that medal, sort of thing, so the, the support staff and the crew that are in place, we all... it's not just the riders and the horses and then knock on to the owners that are winning that medal, it's all that support staff, that are actually winning those medals, and it's credit to them, so when the horses and the riders do well, it's... you feel for them because you feel a part of that and a little bit of that medal that's won you contributed to. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

The sense of ownership portrayed here, clearly demonstrates the social interactions at play here and the identity to the wider team within the context of individual performance. It is not surprising that the performance of the athletes affects the experience of all those involved:

> Yeah, yeah, you can, you can feel the tension and the, not stress, it's a different kind of atmosphere, but the riders and the trainers today, you could tell that they were sort of, the day out before competition and obviously the pressure starts to build onto them and they're wanting to produce personal bests, and I think at any event, if you can come out and produce a personal best, even if it's by .1, you've done your job, because your job is to come out here and do a personal best and if it goes wrong, it goes wrong, it's not the end of the world and my favourite saying at the moment is "Did anybody die?" because if nobody died, then what's the deal, it's things go wrong and they go wrong for a reason and there's no point in crying about it. (Interviewee 15, Team GB Support Staff).

> The fact that Great Britain might win Gold, the riders might win the gold medals, it's so important for them. So, the fact that they might be really happy and feel so special, it makes us feel happy and special, because we are part of the preparations, we're helping them. (Interviewee 16, Groom).

> Well I went to Athens when I was 16, I was like the baby of the team. That was an utterly life changing experience just being so young. I used to be quite shy and embarrassed about my speech and everything but it gave me real confidence, having to cope with the media and stuff so it really changed my life. I won a very unexpected Bronze medal in the individual competition which was amazing because I hadn't even thought, you know I just went along for experience not really hoping for a medal, well you always hope but I didn't really believe that I could get one. But I think because I just really went a long to enjoy it and there was no pressure meant that I really rose to the challenge, so yeah. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

There is no question that 'success' in whatever measureable form is associated with experience:

> I'm not a huge person that would cry, you know, I'm not an emotional person, but when I did Athens in '04 and then when your riders are stood on the podium, you actually get sort of... I welled up and sort of the tear was rolling down your face because just the emotion of the crowds and seeing your, your riders on that podium and actually just... it does get to you and it's, sort of there. (Interviewee 15, Team GB Support Staff).

> I would say Athens because that was our best result. I mean the first one I rode myself and we didn't have very high expectations of special results and you know we finished mid way and that was alright, but erm and of course that was exciting you were young and impressionable and so on and so forth but yeah for sure Athens was good because we had some very good results there. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

But what is interesting is the complex inter-relationship between 'success', 'identity' and 'experience'. The following extract is taken from an interview with a three time Paralympian and here she explains how success at the Games has an influence on the post Games identity of an athlete:

> To me it is the pinnacle you know what I mean but the others are in your mind, they are important, but because there's so much more involved, it's the publicity side, the press side, the fact that more people know you've done that and its accepted more isn't it, but I'd also like to say that if you don't medal when you go to this ok, you come home and its almost as if, have I been anywhere, its almost as if you're forgotten, whereas if you come back and you've medalled, especially if you've got a gold medal its everything begins. You know having been in both situations, in Sydney I didn't medal at all to Athens its yes very different. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

Indeed success or the lack of it can have a huge effect on the post-Games experience. In her autobiography, six times Olympian Mary King reflects on her Games experience in the context of medalling; the first quote is in reference to the Barcelona Olympics:

> Back at home, we were in huge disgrace, the first British team since 1964 to come home empty-handed from an Olympics. We were absolutely slated by the press, who were appalled at the sequence of events and could not believe the gold medal had slipped away from us. (King, 2009. p. 86).

King's experience of the Atlanta Olympics was similar and again she talks about the criticism in the press the team received for failing to come home with a medal. After each of these experiences King reflects on her feelings towards the next Olympic competition. After Barcelona she viewed Atlanta as an opportunity to ''rectify this [Barcelona] disaster'' (p.87) but after the second poor performance she questioned her optimism ''I couldn't help wondering whether I would be so keen and motivated to tackle another Olympics in four years' time'' (King, 2009. pg. 122). King's fellow team mate William Fox-Pitt also discusses his disappointment of the Atlanta Olympic performance in his autobiography and whilst he recounts his own personal performance, he also describes the situation from the equestrian team's perspective as well as from the wider Team GB perspective. Placing his experience in the context of these varying levels of team dynamics demonstrates his identity as part of the wider Team GB:

> We were part of the overall British disaster, a comfort in a way that we weren't the only ones to fall foul of the negative Atlanta vibe. Only Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent managed to overcome it, rowing triumphantly to gold, while the rest of us tried to come to terms with the ugly reality of having underperformed… Maybe it was a blessing in disguise, because the dismal overall results persuaded the UK Sports Council to put money into victory rather than participation. Overnight, they abandoned the British belief that we were lucky to be taking part and set about creating winners. (Fox-Pitt, 2009: p. 97).

Whilst the Eventing Team won silver at the Sydney Olympics, King was there riding as an individual and finished in seventh place. King's team mate Pippa Funnell, describes initially feeling 'gutted' at missing out on the team gold medal but she goes on to describe the experience of the medal ceremony:

> Standing on the podium and waving to the British enclave, where masses of Union Jacks were fluttering, it sank in that we'd flown these horses to the other side of the world, we hadn't let our country down – we hadn't actually let anyone down – and we were bringing home an Olympic medal. Many thousand of talented sportspeople will never get the chance even to try for an Olympic medal, let alone win one. (Funnell, 2004: p. 151).

Funnell's experience is very different from King's:

> I was despondent that I'd had the chance to go to three Olympics – three more than most riders ever get to – and I still couldn't get it right. (King, 2009. p. 171).

Interestingly, despite having a chapter entitled 'Becoming an Olympian', throughout her autobiography King never refers to herself as an Olympian. She discusses her various Olympic experiences and the increasing pressure to bring home a medal but never recognises the achievement of being selected or competing at the Olympics. Indeed, the associated pressure of performance is evident in the following quote as she refers to her 'relief' at finally winning a medal at Athens, although tellingly the reference to the colour of the medal reflects her personal measure of success:

> Bronze certainly wasn't the colour medal we'd gone to Athens for, but, in the circumstances, the relief was overwhelming. (King, 2009. p. 195).

Despite winning team Bronze at the 2008 Games, again King's disappointment is obvious:

We did well to win the team bronze medal, really, but I was heartbroken. My first thought was, there's another Olympics gone, and still no gold medal. Will it ever happen? I felt at that point, that there was no hope. (King, 2009. p. 256).

It is clear through the previous quotes that King associated Olympic success with winning not just a medal but specifically the gold medal. However, the analysis of Leslie Laws experience of winning a gold medal demonstrates that it is not always that straight forward. Law was part of the GB Eventing team for the Athens Olympics. During the competition, a German rider made a mistake which was not officially recognised until after the competition which resulted in Germany being awarded the team gold medal ahead of France and Britain, and the German rider being awarded the individual gold medal ahead of Law in silver position. Three days after the medals were awarded; the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld the German's mistake which resulted in Germany losing double gold and the British team moving up to silver position and Law moving up to individual gold. Law was back in the UK and competing at a small event when the results came through and as a result of the discussion provided by Interviewee 27 we can get a feel of how different that experience was:

Leslie Law was always one of the riders who I was a really good friend of, as well as working with him professionally and it was... it's still, it's saddens me really, I'd gone to Solihull where he was competing, because we knew the judgement was coming through and I'd sort of been tipped the wink, that it was fairly definite that he'd got the medal. I think he knew in his mind he was going to get it, but he was happy, but he just wasn't... it wasn't the same as cantering through that finish line and doing that, whatever, or being on the podium, having a Gold medal around your neck. And then he... it also sunk in and he had his medal and whatever and he just... we prepare them for so much, but we don't, in a way, prepare them for winning. And it was disappointing really, because the Games were still going on, and we were back at home and it had happened in a small bit of south of Birmingham, the BOA were so focused – and quite rightly – on the Games that were still carrying on, there was nobody there to sort of say to Leslie "Right, now

you're a Gold medallist, this is going to happen, this is going to be the interest in you, do this, do this, don't do that. Whatever happens, la-la-la-la" and he just felt that the whole world was going to open up for him, there would be sponsors knocking his door down, there'd be media wanting to interview him left, right and centre, there'd be this, there'd be that, and just nothing happened. He was still Leslie Law. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

The clear association between the title of 'Olympic Gold Medallist' and the associated identity is clearly articulated in the following quote:

I think that's one of the reasons why he moved to America... okay, he found a woman that he loved and whatever, la-la-la-la, but he just felt there was an opportunity for him there and here he'd be Leslie Law, but in America he would be Leslie Law Olympic Gold medallist for the rest of his life. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

In the accompanying quote from the Performance Director, we can see the tangible link between success, identity and Olympic experience as reported in records. Poignantly, only the gold medallists are referred to in this quote, which supports the lived experience of Olympic success as King discusses:

I mean some of the athletes will tell you that they didn't get the full Olympic experience, but to me if an athlete needs the Olympic experience to motivate them to ride their horse to the best of its abilities then they're no fucking use anyway, so... yeah, it was still an Olympic Games and at the end of each competition medals were presented and, you know, regardless of whether, you know, they were in Hong Kong or Beijing, you know, the Germans are always going to be the people that won the team Gold in Eventing and the Americans are always going to be the people that the team Gold in Jumping, and, you know, that's going to be in the history books. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

In previous sections we have specifically discussed 'experience' and 'identity' but here we have discussed them in association with success and both of these are inexplicably linked to 'medals' and 'funding' (Figure 5.7).
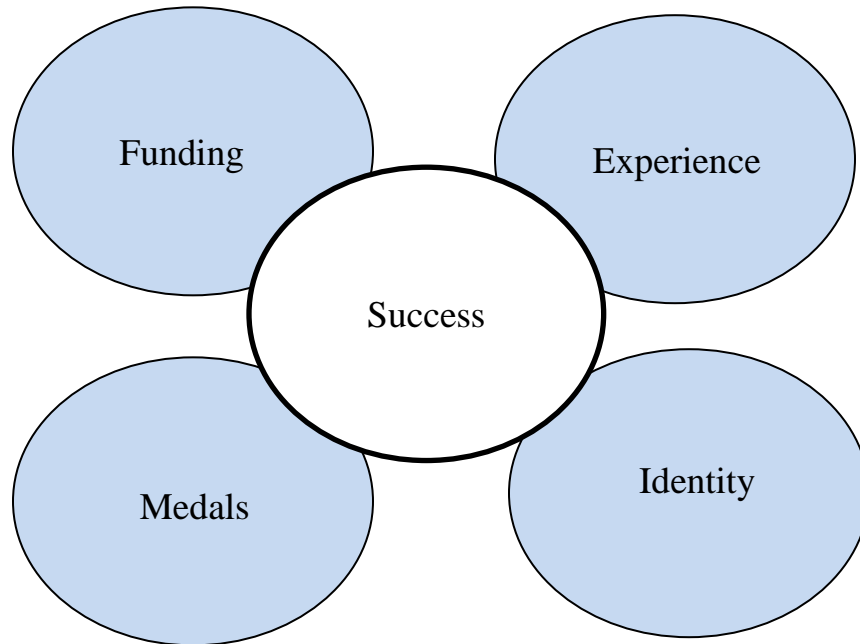
Figure 5.7: A conceptual framework of elements of success as experienced by study participants, raised in the primary and secondary data

Whilst it could be argued that striving for success is an inevitable part of any competition experience, analysis of the data associated with this study has enabled us to place success in the context of this particular experience.

5.8 Experience of the Games

'Experience' was identified as a second order theme interwoven in the discussion across several first order themes although primarily found in association with the first order theme of 'psychology / performance'. Thematic analysis of the literature highlighted a lack of studies relating to the 'lived experience' and a distinct absence of a 'first person' voice, with only six papers referring to the 'lived experience' of athletes.

The data analysed in this study primarily relates to the 'lived experience' of athletes and support staff and therefore permeates with a 'first person' voice. Through ECA of the primary and secondary sources four individual sub-themes pertaining to experience were identified; familiarity, Olympic traditions, multi-sport environment and competition (Figure 5.8).
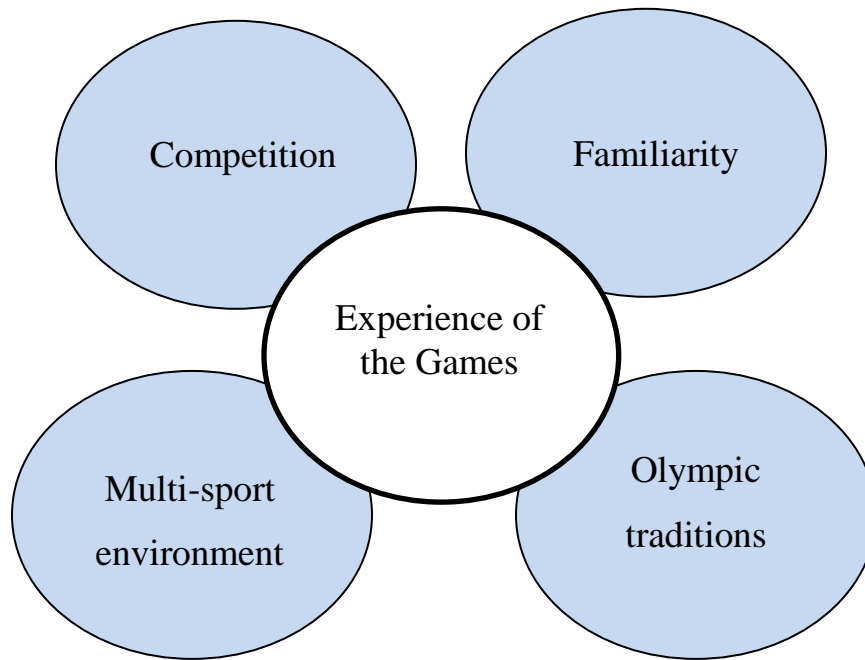
Figure 5.8: A conceptual framework of the experience of the Games for equestrian athlete interviewees / autobiographies, raised in the primary and secondary data

These themes holistically cover both Olympic and Paralympic experience however as we will see through the following analysis and discussion, there are nuances between the two which could be seen to change the tone rather than the fundamental nature of the experience. The following highlights these subtle differences and also demonstrates how, despite the identified sub-themes; 'experience' is a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon:

> I think the Paralympics is a little bit different as well in that there's a lot more interaction between the nations. Its funny you go to the Olympics and people who see each other week in week out won't talk to each other, it really is pretty

serious stuff the Olympics, Paralympics is serious but more off the field of play people mix more between the nations. I think probably the Paralympians will miss the multi-sport environment more than the Olympians to be honest, because most of the time at the Olympics most of the equestrian people, less for Eventing, don't really live in the village or didn't in Athens, one or two riders are pro it but most lived out so, and also, this will sound slightly wrong, the Olympic riders are current-professional riders in that they will go straight back from the Games and get on other horses at other competitions. The Paralympians, this is the major competition for this year, some of them might not compete again until, well might not even compete again for the rest of the season, they haven't got a string of horses, there aren't that many big competition during the year so they will be keen to stay on after and go back to Beijing for the closing ceremony and be part of it. The Olympians it's the competition and once the competitions finished that's it, move on, next thing Burghly, Barcelona Super League whatever it might be World Cup series indoors starting. So life moves at a quicker pace on the competition circuit. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

As discussed previously the nature of equestrian sport is such that some athletes have had the opportunity to compete at several Games. Familiarity is identified therefore as a lens through which any particular Games are experienced. The theme of 'familiarity' was most overt when respondents were discussing their experience of the Beijing Olympics. Due to the nature of equestrian sport being separated from the main competition, there was explicit reference to the fact that these games would be different:

I've never been to an Olympics before, so I don't really know what to expect anyway, but I know people have said that it's going to be different because we're away from the rest of the Olympics and it's not going to be quite the same, but obviously it's still as exciting. (Interviewee 6, Groom).
I suppose you know if there were some sports there it would be nice to see them but I've never actually been to an Olympics where you're in the Olympic village so I don't know what I'm missing. So for me that is the Olympics. (Interviewee 8,

Groom).

We will go to Beijing which I think is good especially for the new comers because, again it's a totally different thing staying in the Paralympic village than just doing your own kind of thing. Well much more noisy and you do become aware of the other sports. I suppose being out of the village this time we will have more opportunity to rest because it is so noisy and busy in the village and sometimes you're sharing with other sports within your complex so they could be on a totally different timetable to you. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

I don't know what to expect, I've been explained it by [fellow team mate] who I'm mates with on the squad and he's been to Sydney and Athens and things, and he says it's like a place where you go and everything's free. I imagine it to be, I've probably got it way off the mark. I imagine it to be like a big party house, I mean obviously it's not going to be but I really don't know, I don't know what to expect just erm I don't know. Sort of like a town within a town. I may be way off but that's the image I've got in my head. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

In fact, as illustrated by Interviewee 28, the separation of the equestrian sport was enough for them, with experience of five Olympic Games, to refer to the games as the equestrian Olympics:

I still think it will be an Olympic experience but it will be a little bit like coming to England as tourist and not having seen Buckingham Palace and the houses of Parliament. You know you turn around to everyone and say oh I've been to London and they say oh what did you see, nothing. I've been to the Olympics, oh what was that like? Well I don't know. Do you see what I mean? I think that's the best I can describe it I think. I mean it will be a great equestrian Olympics, as I said once you're competing it makes no difference, but you know I think it's nice

to be able to go and stay in the Olympic village, go in get the flavour of it all, seeing all these bits and pieces that is going on, see the other athletes when they are out training and that side of things. So from that point of view yeah I think everyone is going to miss out. I mean its not that big of a deal for me having done a number of Olympics I've experienced that side of it but you know for some of these riders Hong Kong or Beijing could be their only Olympics and they're not having been in the Olympic village or not having seen the main stadium or anything like that, you know you have to think that you've missed out. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

In the following extracts, through the use of comparisons, we get a feel for how an individual's previous experience influenced their Beijing Olympic experience. We can also begin to notice the subtle tangible and intangible references to the Olympic experience, for example reference to the tangible Team GB Lodge and intangible sense of occasion / profile of the event:

The one thing about being in Hong Kong and not in Beijing is that you then don't feel part of Team GB as a whole, with the other sports, coz when we were in Athens, we were able to, coz we were quite close to the town centre, we were able to get the coach in or the train in and we could then go and watch other sports and they had a place called the Team GB Lodge, which was sort of a friends and family point. So all the athletes would come there and their friends and family would go, so you could be sat in the lodge there, and Kelly Holmes would walk past, and that's an experience in itself because you are mixing with sort of people who are sort of more – what's the word – in the media a lot more, coz obviously equestrian isn't a high media sport and things like athletics and swimming and whatever are. So it's nice to sort of be in amongst those types of people. We actually had the experience on the plane coming over here, though, that there was a lot of athletes coming over on the plane that were going to Macau for the training camp, so we got the sense and were able to talk to those guys there and that was quite nice. It's, you definitely get the experience of being at an Olympics

here, it just... and having done Athens I've had the experience of being with the other athletes, so I know what that feeling is, but for somebody like, say [named rider], who's here on her first Olympics, she hasn't experienced that yet, so she'll probably be looking forward to that for the hopefully next Olympics in 2012 when you will be right in the heart of it, because obviously equestrian is in the middle of London. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

We won't be in the Olympic village, so we won't be part of everything else, which I thought in Athens was great really. To be in the Olympic village and to be with all the other athletes from all the other disciplines was, I think, a really Olympic experience. I think being in Hong Kong, where you're sort of separated and you're only with equestrian will put a different feel on it, really, it'll feel like you're just... I think it'll feel more like you're at a major championship than it will at an Olympics. (Interview 25, Coach).

However, even those with previous experience, were aware that despite certain familiar characteristics, each Olympic or Paralympic Games are unique:

I think even knowing what your kind of going to; the experience will still be very different. I do remember when we went to Sydney and never having been to a games before, when we drove into the village, I couldn't work it out, to actually find it was a whole, like a town, and we're driving around these streets and they're actually accommodation blocks and that was really weird. And I guess you have in your head what you think its going to be like but I don't think you can actually be prepared. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage rider).

So yes, I've been to other Olympic Games and that experience helps, probably helps from learning about mistakes from other Olympic Games, but these games are totally unique. (Interviewee, 19, Dressage Team Captain).

Despite the fact that 'experience' was identified as a second order theme during the

systematic literature review methodology, a clear definition pertaining to what an Olympic experience is was not obtained. Needless to say 'experiencing' is a unique process, but in the following quotes as respondents consider what the experience of the Beijing Games will be like compared to previous games, we get a sense of the Olympic or Paralympic characteristics which make this particular competition unique and definable:

> It will be a different atmosphere I'm quite sure, it won't be as big, we don't get the huge opening ceremony which means we don't queue for hours which we do etc. I know they're doing a smaller opening ceremony in Hong Kong. So yes it will be different. But we will get to see all the other athletes because we're going up for the closing ceremony. (Interviewee 2, Para–Equestrian Dressage Rider).

> The sad thing from the athletes' point of view is the nicest thing is really being involved in the Games because it is so unique and that's going to be taken away from us a little bit, so I think it will depend how much they use the facility to show us what's happening up in Beijing and I think if we're involved in the Opening Ceremony then it will feel much better but I think at the moment I sort of visualise that we're just going to a horse event and yes we are going to have our Olympic village but if you compare that to Athens when it was an actual village and a complex that was especially built, we're in a hotel so will it feel that much different from being in the middle of London in a four star hotel? And hopefully it will, but as I said it would be lovely if we have scenes and we're relayed and we get the true feel of the Olympics, not just the horse side. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

Indeed through ECA it is the traditions of the Olympics such as the Opening and Closing Ceremony and the Olympic Village, which we can identify as unique, definable experiences for this group of individuals. Interestingly it is important to note that with regards to Olympic traditions and symbols, only one respondent referred to the Olympic Rings and only one respondent referred to the Olympic Flame:

For me, as I said, it's been my dream since I was a 6 year old and I think one of the... one of the real appeals of the Olympics is it's such a universal experience, you know, or sporting, universal experience that, you know, if you're an Olympian, you know, it's something that everyone can relate to, whereas, you know, if you say "Oh well, I've been to the World Equestrian Games", you know, to someone who's not well versed in sort of horsey speak, there's "Oh, that's nice," you know, whereas you'd got... you've got the t-shirt, you've been there, you know...when I've made my Olympics I'm going to get the rings probably tattooed on my butt cheek or something... so not too obvious, but, you know, that's something I will carry with me to my grave and, you know, that's the sort of... that's what... that's what the experience means to me... (Interviewee 12, Eventing Rider).

Its cool you know. Quite a bit of anticipation just wanting to be there, you see all the people and how big the arena is, the flame and the atmosphere and you just want to be there. All the build up has been great since we did the Worlds last year, well since Athens really, its been huge and it all boils now to this moment really and now its that close, not that I want to wish next week away but I just want to be there you know, I just want to get in there and do my job. (Interviewee 20, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

In the next quote from a first time Paralympian, we can see that the athlete is familiar with the iconic Opening and Closing Ceremonies but he is uncertain what the lived experience of this will be like:

Yeah I don't know what to expect from that at all but that's going to be an experience, I mean you watch all the opening and closing ceremonies on telly from the last few games and they just look like everyone's having a great time and chilling out because obviously at the opening ceremony everyone is yet to compete but at the closing ceremony everyone lets their hair down and has a big blast so yeah fingers crossed it will be a good party. (Interviewee 20, Para-

Equestrian Dressage Rider).

In her autobiography, King shares her experience of her first Opening Ceremony in Barcelona 1992:

> I was adamant that I wanted to go to the opening ceremony but, exciting as that is, I have since discovered that there's an awful lot of hanging around…The best part was when, dressed up in our team kit and waving flags, we ran down a chute and out into an arena surrounded by roaring crowds. We knew the TV cameras would be on us when we emerged, and had to be prepared to do lots of waving and smiling, but this was something I have always enjoyed! Then everyone, from every nation, ended up in a big crowd in the middle, and a huge Olympic flag was draped over us. I loved the whole thing – it was an awesome experience. (King 2009: p. 82).

Through the two previous quotes we get a sense of what the experience of the Opening Ceremony looks like from the outside compared to what the lived experience is actually like. This is further reinforced by the comments of the Performance Director:

> Across all sports a number of coaches would say if you're competing in the first week don't go to it. Although it looks super on TV what tends to happen is well, in Athens they had to start forming up to get on the buses from the Olympic village about 4 – 4.15, the opening ceremony didn't start until 7.30-8.00, and they didn't get back to the village until half midnight. And for the first two thirds of the opening ceremony they were in a big, barn, big holding area, watching on screens and they're standing up a lot of the time. There's a lot of standing around which isn't good for athletes. So although it looks great on the TV and I'm sure it's fantastic to sit in the audience and watch, for 99% of people it's a pretty good pain in the butt. Now there will be some athletes out there that are motivated by all that, which is fine but personally my personally feeling is that if an athlete needs motivating by a light spectacular and lots of people dancing around in

funny costumes, then possibly their mental build up and preparations isn't quite what it should be. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

The attitude / experience towards the Opening Ceremony was the same for all equestrian teams across both the Olympics and Paralympics, predominantly due to the competition schedule. However, access to and therefore experience of the Closing Ceremony was different for the Olympic or Paralympic teams. Again this is predominately due to competition scheduling and competition commitments post Games. The first quote relates to the Olympic experience and the second to the Paralympic experience:

Actually as Eventing competes very early on we very rarely go to the opening ceremony and then because we are finished early we are usually sent home so in the past, so this would be my what fifth Olympic Games and I'm yet to experience either an opening or closing ceremony, erm so you can watch that on the television but you're still there. You know if you sit in the Olympic village and watch television you're still there, you see everyone dress up and go to it and that's a good thing. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

I'm sure it'll be fine and, and I mean the riders are being flown up after the equestrian competition has finished in the last 3 or 4 days of the main competition in Beijing and going to the Closing Ceremony, so I think that'll be, that'll be great fun, hopefully, you know, as long as they're not... it would be different if the success doesn't live up to expectations, in which case that'll be a bit of a misery aspect, but you know, we'll see. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager).

Despite the iconic symbolism of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, it was the Olympic Village which was discussed most in relation to experience. From the account of Interviewee 9, we get a sense of symbolic nature of the village with regards to bringing people together:

I guess this is the bit about the overall, the broader Olympic Village is the ethos

about the Olympics itself, isn't it, which is about the developing friends, the, the larger network of people that you come across, the larger cultures that you come across, the motto that's hung up everywhere isn't it? The One World thing, which is... I think it does cross quite a lot of boundaries, which nothing really else does and I guess that's the shame of not being in the whole thing, because I think you do miss that experience, it isn't the same. I don't know it would be great if you were in a village, but equally we're not, so there's no point in hoping you are. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

Indeed the Olympic Village was one of the main experiences that respondents used to differentiate the Olympics from other large international competitions:

They're nice Olympic Villages, they are extremely motivational and it doesn't make any difference to - in fact it probably helps the riders that they are not in the whole Olympic sort of hype and everything. This is going to be like a World Championships, because it's the disciplines and it's just equestrian, equestrian in the Olympic village, so kind of what's different? So, therefore, for me, there's one less interference removed, psychological interference removed, but it is sad, I think, for a couple of the riders that they don't see that, because it is highly motivational and inspirational. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

That was amazing I mean the whole thing was amazing. Being with other disabled athletes erm and it boosted my confidence because literally you look around you and there were people much worse off than you and you just felt that what are you moaning for I mean if they can do it I can, so it really gave me a boost. And the whole, the massive tent for food was really an out of this world experience. I think I'll miss that in Beijing actually it will just kind of feel like a World Championships. (Interviewee 23, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

I think that it will just be a bit disappointing for riders to not be going to an Olympic Village, or Paralympic Village where you've got that camaraderie of

other sports and cyclists saying "Brilliant! Well done." and vice-versa, and that you have got... so it'll feel a bit like a World Championships, but we'll see. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager).

It is interesting to note that the athletes refer more to the emotional experience of the village, the support staff to the performance side and the managers to the practical side of the experience as highlighted in the following quote in which the Performance Manager discusses the hotel accommodation in Hong Kong in comparison to the accommodation during the Athens Paralympics:

I still have concerns that you've got, basically two people in a hotel room, which like most of these hotels they're designed for a couple basically, it's not the ideal environment if you've got a couple in there who aren't a couple, and you've got two twin beds, you're either in the room or you're in the bathroom and if you need to get out early, or late and not disturb your mate that you're sharing a room with, particularly with riders who have disabilities and things, that's quite tricky because you're, you know, what do you do? I can see people, you know, sneaking out and getting dressed in the corridors and it's a bit sort of bizarre but the difference in Athens where you had accommodation was in the village and you had three double rooms and a bathroom and a loo I think and then a sort of sitting area, it meant, you know, that if there was somebody who had to get up early they would prepare things the night before, so that they're clothes would be, you know, outside on a chair in the communal area, they'd get out, quietly get out, go to the loo and everything, wash, change and head off. Whereas with a hotel room when you're bathroom is basically a corner of the room chopped off, isn't it, by the time you've got up and gone in there, you're bound to disturb your colleague, so that will be quite a challenge. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager).

The managers also discuss the practical aspects of the village with regards to how this directly affects their own personal experience and how the infrastructure of the village impacts on the various relationships they have to manage:

I find as a team manager, the one draw back is that they have to share rooms or often have to share rooms which of course if you stay outside you might not have to and baring in mind that equestrian sports are different to a lot of other sports which we are dealing with older people or married people with children and that sort of thing, you know you don't want to share a room when you're 35, 40 years of age and been married for 15 years, so erm that is one of the draw backs with the Olympic Village but as I said transport and that side of thing helps and makes the whole thing much much easier. There is less distractions as well and its easier also from the point of view of dealing with the owners and the press and everything else because they can't get at you, so you can say we're in the Olympic Village we'll contact you if we've got anything to say, there's no point in you contacting us and that works well like that. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

So it will be different not having that environment, it will be different not linking in as I did every evening where we were last time, our, our, our accommodation apparently was just above the main British Paralympic... the BPA offices and, you know, going back in the evening and going down and seeing which members of central support team of the Paralympic support staff were in there I made a point in going and checking one's pigeon hole, but also going and having a chat and seeing how their day had gone and having a laugh and a bit of a leg pull from the Chief Executives downwards, and that won't be there, this time and I think... I certainly enjoy that sort of rapport. (Interviewee 4, Performance Manager).

As we have discussed previously, the different Olympic disciplines have their own identities and outside of the Olympics they generally operate separately. In the Olympic environment several of the team GB support staff, who may normally only work with one discipline are required to work across and support all three disciplines. As we can see from the quote below the structure of the accommodation can affect their job and therefore their experience of the games:

The one thing that I would say is that when we had the houses in Athens, we actually bonded a bit better because you're actually living together within a house, so you had communal areas where you were doing your cooking and sort of lounging around and sitting on the balcony and things like that. So that side of it is missing from here, some of the camaraderie is lacking a little bit purely and simply because we're not actually physically living together in a sort of Big Brother style, which we were in Athens, which was quite good fun, especially for the likes of me, who was then sharing a house with people from Dressage and then people from Showjumping who I wouldn't normally mix with, you actually then increase your circle of people that you contacts and friends and people that you know from other disciplines which actually has been to your benefit, 90% of those people who were working at Athens are now here, so the working relationships have built up over the last four years and so you go from strength to strength from year to year. (Interviewee 15, Team GB support staff).

In previous sections we have discussed the different identities between the three Olympic disciplines, the Dressage, Eventing and Showjumping teams. As discussed by the Performance Manager, we can see that even decisions regarding whether or not to stay in the Olympic Village differ across the teams:

Each nation gets allocated x number of rooms, which is calculated on two athletes per room, and support staff the same, two support staff per room. Fortunately, because Dressage and Showjumping didn't want to stay in the Olympic Village, they wanted to stay in the Sheraton that meant that we were less people staying in the village, which meant that everyone could have a single room, throughout the duration. It makes a big difference. I think that, you know, you have some sports, like equestrian sports, like shooting for example, some of the sailors and some of the cyclists are older people and for older people who are used to living and having a family, and maybe being married and kids and those sort of things, to share accommodation with others, particularly over a longer period of time, is a bit of a let down. So, if we can have single accommodation I think it's a... it's a

major performance enhancer. That decision was basically done by me, as the team manager, because having been out of the test event, and done my recces and knew where everything was, it was my belief that it was better to stay in the Olympic Village. The other team, for whatever reason, decided that they would do it the other way round, and that fitted in well with us. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

In the following quotes we see how this wider connection to other athletes can positively affect performance:

Well if I went back to Athens where we had the village, we had the divers above us and they were actually first on so they literally started on day one, and we had our trot up on day one so we were literally a day behind them. And just really getting to know someone from another sport, and them getting a medal, all of a sudden, of course you're going there to do your best but when a team mate above you has just had a silver it really inspires you to think, come on we can do our bit as well and perhaps we can be the first to get a gold. I think that's what we'll miss this year. (Interviewee 11, Coach).

Equally however, some believe staying in the village can negatively affect performance:

I think potentially it makes a difference for the athletes potentially, riders, just because they're then not in a village, they don't experience that big village feel. But equally that can be a massive distraction for athletes and there's lots of research that says that that can actually be an interference. (Interviewee 9, Team GB support staff).

Regardless of the influence on performance, the Olympic Village was linked synonymously with Olympic experience either expected or actual:

I think possibly for the ones that haven't been to an Olympics before, it might help just being not in that whole Olympic Village, whole Olympic experience, it might help just being quietly part of an equestrian group that's doing their job, because they may not feel quite the amount of hype that you would do if you were in that sort of Olympic stadium, etc. (Interviewee 25, Coach).

I mean there is a certain amount of getting into the right sort of atmosphere where being in the Olympic Village and seeing all these other sports men and seeing how they are acting and seeing all this people from a lot of different countries etc and I think that whole thing helps people to get into the Olympic sort of atmosphere of it all which sometimes can actually work against some people, there's no doubt about that. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

I mean one of the slightly, slightly sad things about this Olympics is that we won't be in the Olympic village, we won't have that experience, you know, when you sort of dream, as a kid, of going to the Olympics, you know, you sort of dream of having breakfast opposite Daley Thompson or whoever it is these days. (Interviewee 12, Eventing Rider).

I think for the riders and perhaps some of the support crew, but especially the riders, I think it's a shame that they probably won't have the chance to be part of that or part... and part of the full on Olympic Village and be, sort of walking down the hall and a heptathlete comes towards you or whatever and I think it's a shame for them to miss all of that. I mean it's still the Olympics, you can't take it away, if they come back with a medal, it's still got the little person on it and whatever and it says it's an Olympic medal, so whether or not they got to sleep in the village, to them it might not matter, but I think when you sort of want to reflect on it, it just would have been nice to get the whole kit and caboodle. (Interviewee 27, Team GB support staff).

As we can see from the previous quotes, the Olympic Village was seen as a unique experience associated with the Olympics. An environment in which to meet people outside of equestrian sport which leads us into the next characteristic associated with an Olympic or Paralympic experience for this group of athletes, that of being in a multi-sport environment:

> I think for me the Olympics... I think it's just the atmosphere, it's just other competitions... I don't know, in a way you're looked after a little bit better, I mean the sponsors are more generous, it's made into a bigger... it's hard to describe really. It is just different and I think you get... because you're with other athletes as well, it's not just with the equestrian, you know, equestrian crowd, where in other competitions it's just you and the horsey lot, so to speak, where, you know, the Olympics, you're actually interested to see what your other Paralympians are doing with other sports, so it's sort of... I don't know, you do more things together, which makes it...you know, you have the Opening and Closing ceremonies, where everybody is there, which I think, you know, you're there as a unit, rather than just one team. (Interviewee 14, Groom).

As previously discussed 'horsey' was one of the identities associated with equestrian sport and in the following quotes we see how the association with 'other' sports is part of the Olympic experience for those involved in this study:

> I think its everything, representing your country and obviously you have the Europeans and stuff, I mean the Olympics is the big one, its much more mainstream than the Europeans, its not just equestrian, its everybody, it's the whole of Team GB, its not just your horses or you're just going somewhere with horsey people, you're like part of great Britton, like part of a much bigger whole than normal. (Interviewee 3, Groom).

Interviewee 5, an athlete who had experience of several Paralympics, describes how the multi-sport environment raises the profile of the competition and how this affects the overall experience:

> It's the fact that there's far more publicity isn't there, far more publicity I think it's I think a more pressured atmosphere. To me it is the pinnacle you know what I mean but the others are in your mind, they are important, but because there's so much more involved, it's the publicity side, the press side, the fact that more people know you've done that and its accepted more isn't it, but I'd also like to say that if you don't medal when you go to this ok, you come home and its almost as if, have I been anywhere, its almost as if you're forgotten, whereas if you come back and you've medalled, especially if you've got a gold medal its everything begins. You know having been in both situations, in Sydney I didn't medal at all to Athens its yes very different. (Interviewee 5, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

The increased media attention associated with the multi-sport environment is also discussed and again we can see how identity is linked with experience:

> I think the Olympics brings with it a lot of potential to put equestrian sports into a different light than they would otherwise be. We could really be the headline grabbers, quite easy, and it does get us... it opens journalists' eyes to us a little bit more, because we are alongside athletics and swimming and the more mainstream sports and that's what I think is special about the Olympics and why we always have to... we'll have to grasp to make sure we are part of it, because it does put us up there with other sort of sports that people are more familiar with. It's just trying to sort of sell the stories and breakdown some of the barriers and the Olympics gives us the perfect opportunity, because we are on that global stage, when we have a World Equestrian Games we're on the global stage but still only to the horsey people. The only outside interest you really get is from the national media of the country you're in, it's hard to sort of put you sort of up on the pedestal then, but I think the Olympics gives you such an opportunity.

(Interviewee 27, Team GB Support Staff).

Throughout the analysis relating to experience we are aware that the Olympic or Paralympic Games are more than just a competition. Whilst respondents refer to results and performance, this is wrapped up in the tangible and intangible characteristics that differentiate this experience from other types of international competition. For those involved in this study the key defining aspects of Olympic or Paralympic experience are the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Olympic Village and the multi-sport environment. All of these factors are discussed by Interviewee 17:

> I guess that, you know, in sailing and equestrian you've got two really professional sports, both from the Olympic and the Paralympic side, so these guys are not rookies, there's, you know, there shouldn't be any naivety in terms of feeling isolated or anything else, and largely they'll operate as a single sport, you know, world championship type operation, but probably a bit more going on. So, you know, that I'm sure that the way that they will have sold it and built it and prepared for it, is that we're going to go into a single sport environment and afterwards we're going to go and party in a multi-sport environment. So, you could argue that that's the best of both worlds: not too many distractions, obviously decisions to be made around Opening Ceremony or not, etc., etc., but, you know, focus on their event and then maximise the fun, the mixing element in those three or four days after the event has closed down. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

In this final section of analysis pertaining to experience, we return to the notion of competition. Through ECA, we begin to unpick the lived experience of Olympic and Paralympic competition. Two sub-themes have appeared which seem to influence competition experience. The first is the organisation of the competition and the second is the performance result. In the following quotes we get a feel for the athletes' experience of the Atlanta Olympics and Paralympics respectively, and we note how performance and organisation affected their experience:

Being part of the Olympic contingent in '96 and we had a shocking Games, and canoe slalom, you know, we could have medalled in four classes out of the four we represented in, and we didn't, you know, and at the time when there was a, you know, there was disappointments all round the camp, you know, we were part of that and, you know, it's sort of palpable in terms of the disappointment and quite difficult to pick yourself up and go into the, into the next event and there was definitely a feeling, you could definitely sense that from the top down, there was this pressure, and that we weren't performing. (Interviewee 17, BPA).

Next we can see that poor organisation of the games as a whole still managed to negatively affect the competition experience for this rider, despite a positive performance result:

I went to Atlanta in 1996 which was on borrowed horses, so we didn't take any horses with us. We got team gold there and individual bronze in the Kur. But in Atlanta the Paralympics didn't have much status in America, in fact they were even dismantling some of the stuff around us at one point…so it wasn't a particularly amazing experience it was such hard work. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

In the following quote from the same Paralympian who outlined the poor organisation of the Atlanta Games, we see how the organisation of the Sydney Paralympics resulted in a positive experience:

Sydney was different because it was so much better organised. We didn't stay in the village we stayed in a hotel near the venue, we did get into the village and it was roll on roll off and it was just so much better organised, the stadium was fantastic. (Interviewee 2, Para-Equestrian Dressage Rider).

The organisation of the competition affects not only the athletes but also the support staff. Through the description presented by Interviewee 21, we get a unique insight into the experience of the games from a member of the support staff who has been involved in

seven Olympic Games. This individual is responsible for providing hospitality support and we get a sense of how overall organisation influenced her experience:

> In Los Angeles we had to get them to allocate us a space, but for then it was "Brits only" and then, next Olympics was Seoul, where I organised parties for... I mean the conditions in Seoul were pretty awful and so I organised various sort of things, like the indoor school, which was massive, so I did a party for all nations in the indoor school and went outside and got all the food in and everything else, which was a horrendous thing to do, because they had this vast space, but they still wouldn't let us do it, because of security. Then I did Barcelona, and I did parties there because we weren't allowed to have a space, and then we went to Atlanta, where we had a mammoth thing, and the food was so bad for all the officials and everything that they ate in our tent... we had sort of 7-800 people in every day. Atlanta was a complete and utter nightmare, and then Jim Wolfe was just... you know, he was just fantastic because about a month before the Games... we have to provide our own tentage, but we had to go through the organising committee, they said they couldn't do the tent for us, so the guy who runs in Indianapolis he managed to provide a tent and it was vast actually, absolutely vast. But there we did each nation had its own booth with its own flags and its own television, but that was... we even had trees and everything in there, which we had to lug in and, oh... Jim got a friend of his who's a garden designer, to design the inside of the tent, but what he forgot about was that you had a boarded floor, so you need these big diggers and everything bringing in all these tents and it went through the floor... oh it was just a complete nightmare. (Interviewee 21, Team GB Support Staff).

As can be seen from the subsequent quotes from the Performance Managers, performance is unpredictable and the organisation of an Olympic competition is very different from the structure of other equestrian competitions, despite this we see how these factors affect experience:

We're riding a horse, horses don't know what day it is, the morning of the Grand Prix or the Olympic Games or anything else, they don't know. We can only do our best, preen them up there sweetly and, and in any sport, even if it's just you or me running, things go wrong. That's why sport takes the last five pages of the newspaper every day of the week, because "shock, horror!" you know, so-and-so's lost the Wimbledon, or lost the football, or whatever. I mean that's sport, it's not guaranteed. So, so really, you know, you have to come, you ride your horse, you do the best you can, you go home, you don't worry about whether uninformed opinion thinks you've done a good job or a bad job, that's very hard, because, you know, it can be but we don't ride horses for that reason and, I think it helps to come back to why we're doing it, why we're here, because we love riding horses and we've made ourselves pretty good at it. (Interviewee 19, Performance Manager).

It, as all those competitions are, it is a bit of an emotional roller-coaster, because however much you have planned and however much you have prepared everything, things always do happen and things do go wrong and particularly in this one, I think that we had our unfair, or fair, share of horses going wrong…And, so with all those things in consideration, I would say that coming back with two medals, Bronze medals was a pretty good result and we met our targets, which were set out by UK Sport and which... but, I don't think anyone is ever satisfied unless you win. So, you know, under the circumstances, yes it was fine, but yes, you know, you would still have been a little bit disappointed. (Interviewee 28, Performance Manager).

Previously we discussed how the athletes associate the Olympic or Paralympic experience with certain traditions such as the Olympic Village or Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Whilst the Paralympians were able to have access to the Olympic Village and Closing Ceremony regardless of competition result, it is interesting to note that in relation to the Beijing Olympics at least, access to these traditions and associated experience for the Olympic athletes was based on performance success:

And then the other issue is if the team medal, do they come to Beijing, do they come into the village and come and share that moment with their other peer group athletes? (Interviewee 13, BOA).

Finally with regards to Olympic experience, in the following quote we see how the Performance Director experienced the competition of the Beijing Olympics. We see how issues pertaining to the organisation of the competition and the performance of not only equestrian sport but the wider Team GB affected his games experience:

I mean we were aware that, you know, the Gold rush had started, I was getting text messages but to be honest if you're relying on what the sailors or rowers or cyclists are doing to motivate yourself at the Olympics, you shouldn't be there in the first place, you know. I mean yeah, it creates a positive environment if you're in the village, but we weren't, we were on our own and no, I don't think it made a blind bit of difference to be honest. I suppose you know, from a Performance Director's point of view, there's two things going on at the back of my mind, 1) thank God someone's winning some medals coz it's going to put Team GB up the medal table, which is good in terms of funding; and then you're thinking God, you know, how far down the table of sports are we going to be after this and, you know, is that going to affect our funding? So, that does rattle round your head. But no, I don't think it... well it doesn't motivate me, I don't need others to be winning Gold medals to motivate me, I mean I think if you're in that situation then you need to look in the mirror and give your head a shake, you know. (Interviewee 26, Performance Director).

As discussed at the start of this section, review of the literature sourced through the systematic literature review highlighted a lack of studies relating to the 'lived experience' of the Games and a distinct absence of a 'first person' voice. The data presented here as a result of the ECA clearly voices the experience of the Games, not only from the perspective of the athletes but also the wider team who support them during this specific competition. As highlighted in previous sections many equestrian athletes have been able

to experience more than one Olympic or Paralympic Games and for these athletes the Games are the only multi-sport environment in which they compete. Not only therefore does this data give an insight into the unique lived experience of Olympic or Paralympic competition, it also provides a unique insight into this sport specific experience.

5.9 Conclusion

A systematic review of literature on the subject of Olympic and Paralympic experience and thematic analysis of said literature identified several themes relevant in a general sense to our concerns, including, identity, gender, history, values and challenges. However, this analysis also highlighted gaps in the literature pertaining to sport specific experience and the individual lived experience associated with this type of competition. Within the context of critical realist ontology and epistemology and through the method of ECA this chapter aimed to explore and fill (at least in part) this gap by providing an insight into the specific and unique Olympic and Paralympic experience of this group of individuals. Figure 5.9 provides a summary of the shared nature of this experience whilst discussion throughout the previous sections has also highlighted the nature of the differences in this experience between those involved in each of the equestrian disciplines.
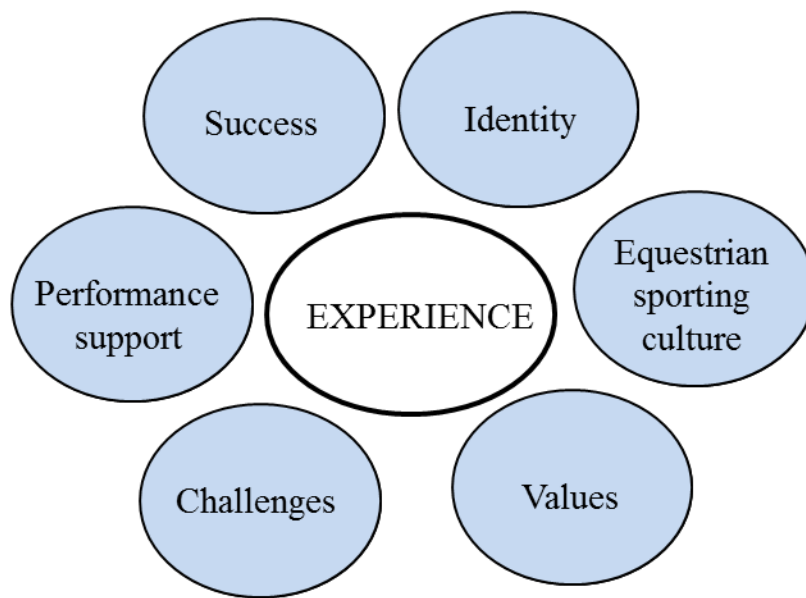
Figure 5.9: A framework of the shared experiences of those involved in equestrian sport in the context of the Olympics and Paralympics, from the primary and secondary data

With regards to 'Identity' it was interesting to unveil the construct of 'them and us'. 'Us' being inclusive of anyone involved in the world of horses and 'Them' being outsiders to this which includes other sports and athletes. This in itself became most apparent in the multisport environment of the Olympics but was also evident in the semantics used in association with identity. Throughout the analysis of the data, equestrian athletes were consistently referred to as 'riders', a term devoid of gender association or Olympic or Paralympic reference and a term that differentiated them from the generic inclusive term of 'athlete'. However, despite this identity being inclusive of both the Paralympic and Olympic equestrian teams, it was clear that a further sub level of identity existed at the discipline-specific level.

The importance of understanding Olympic or Paralympic experience from a sport specific context was highlighted in the analysis of 'Equestrian Sporting Culture'. In this section we gained insight into what makes this sport unique and the complexities of a rider's career development, relationships and the economics associated with the sport,

became apparent with regards to their influence on the lived experience of this group of individuals. Whilst this section may be considered the most sport specific aspect of the analysis, the section on 'Values' could be considered the most generic. Although there was a distinct absence of any direct reference to Olympism, references to the values of Excellence, Inspiration and Friendship were identified across those involved in both the Olympics and Paralympics, although again there were nuances found between the two groups.

Through the systematic literature review, 'Challenges' was identified as an emergent second order theme. Again however, the analysis of the primary data highlights the specific challenges faced by a specific sport. In the case of equestrian sport these challenges were inclusive of all the disciplines and the Olympic and Paralympic teams and were associated with the complexity of managing horses in a multisport environment, specifically logistics, accreditation and location. The uniqueness of a sport which involves an animal was also highlighted in the section of analysis that focussed on 'Performance Support'. Here we gained insight into the development of specific performance pathways for both athletes involved in this sport, the rider and the horse and this in itself highlighted that the performance focus has traditionally rested more with the horse than the rider. Through ECA we were also able to begin to understand the unique individual lived experience of this type of support and in some cases due to the longevity of a rider's career, we were able to track changes in the approach to performance support within this specific sport. We were also able to compare this experience across the distinct group of Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Whilst it could be argued that concern with success is an inevitable part of any competition experience, analysis of the data associated with this study has enabled us to place success in the context of this particular experience. Although to some extent the elements associated with success, those being experience, identity, medals and funding could be argued to be generic to any Olympic or Paralympic sport, the analysis enables us to address the gap in previous literature relating to the lived experience of this not only

from the athlete's perspective but also from the position of those involved in the wider team.

Finally whilst 'Experience' is of course interwoven throughout the discussion, through the analysis, specific space was given to discussing the lived experience of the Games for this group of individuals. As highlighted in previous sections many equestrian athletes have been able to experience more than one Olympic or Paralympic Games and for these athletes the Games are the only multi-sport environment in which they compete. As such four sub-themes of familiarity, Olympic traditions, multisport environment and competition were discussed in more detail and highlighted the fact that the Olympics and Paralympics is a unique competition experience for this group of athletes as a whole although there are differences between the Olympic and Paralympic experience.

As we draw to the end of the discussion of the findings we return to the aims of the Chapter. Through this specific data collection and analysis we have explored the uniqueness of equestrian sport at the level of Olympic and Paralympic competition and in doing so we have highlighted the similarities and differences between the experiences of those involved in the different equestrian disciplines and we have explored the roles which key stakeholders play with regard to this experience. In the proceeding and final chapter we will discuss the contribution to knowledge and theoretical insights developed in this thesis in light of this empirical analysis.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter will encompass the concluding observations founded on the basis of the synthesis of research data derived from this study. The research question and the focus of this thesis was 'What is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their career history?' Therefore the aims of this thesis have been to understand the 'Olympic experience' of an identified group, the British Equestrian Team, encompassing both the Olympic and Paralympic teams; to understand the role the Games as an event plays in the sporting life histories of the athletes; and to ascertain what is the nature of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for elite riders in the context of their sporting careers and how this may be different from other competitions?

Considering that the focus of this study was not an individual athlete but a sport-specific team we were aware that the experiences of the individuals involved would not be formed in isolation. The culture, community and power relations within the sport, the team and their environments, were therefore also taken into consideration. Thus a defining feature of this study is the examination of the phenomenon of the Olympic / Paralympic experience for a defined group of athletes, and the importance of structural contexts both as they impact on, and are formed by, the actions of various stakeholders. Whilst this thesis is not about providing a prescription for performance, clearly an understanding of athletes' experience in this elite competition scenario should be relevant to performance considerations, and this is in part the reason that the British Equestrian Federation facilitated access to athletes and entourage for activities which were complementary to the research study.

In order to fully address the research question the methodological approach adopted a systematic literature review in combination with ethnographic approaches to interview and documentary analysis associated with critical realism. This combination of approaches helped to create a framework that gave a significant place to interpretive

insights into how the participants perceived and constructed their world, while at the same time the methodology allowed space to consider ways in which the literature identified, commented on, and framed the reality of the world of equestrian sport. By adopting a critical realist ontology and epistemology, we were able to identify (real) structures in the world of Olympic and Paralympic equestrian sport, and the process of social construction of these structures. In this context, in relation to empirical data from interviews and other source materials we employed Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) derived from Altheide (1996) to explore ways in which subjects perceived, contributed to, and reacted to, such socially constructed structures.

Following on from the substantive findings presented in Chapter 5, in this final chapter we present the conclusions employing a retroductive perspective as advocated in the critical realist approach of Bhaskar (1997/1975). We begin therefore by discussing the contribution to existing knowledge and the theoretical insights developed in this thesis in light of the empirical analysis. Space is given to discuss what original contributions this particular study makes to the wider field of research whilst acknowledging limitations at the level of both methodology and substantive findings. Finally some indications for future research within the field are identified and we discuss how these may build on the data findings and analysis presented in the thesis.

6.2 Research study contribution

Traditionally the literature review process is the starting point for the researcher to appreciate the nature of the literature disseminated about a particular topic, and by doing so the researcher is able to map the intellectual landscape and indentify any gaps therein. As discussed in Chapter 3, traditional literature reviews are often referred to as 'narrative' reviews and whilst this section of many research reports will come with the prefix 'critical', these literature reviews have come under criticism with regard to rigour, comprehensiveness and accountability (Tranfield et al., 2003). Whilst issues of credibility linked to replicability are traditionally grounded in the positivistic sciences, Solesbury (2002) also criticises research efforts in the social sciences for not fully utilising past research, for being singular descriptive accounts of a specific research field,

and prejudicially only reviewing the contributions chosen on the basis of the implicit biases of the reviewer.

Within the fields in which evidence-based advocacy has gained prominence, such as the medical sciences, systematic reviews have increasingly replaced traditional narrative reviews as a way of summarising research evidence (Hemingway, 2009). Whilst research synthesis methods such as the systematic literature reviews are primarily evident in positivistic sciences, Weed (2005a) outlines that a number of social sciences are developing an interest in research synthesis as a primary research activity.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this thesis, little has been written about Olympic experience and very little has been written about elite riders. Clearly an understanding of both was needed to provide critical insight into the phenomenon of the Olympics for this group of athletes and the subsequent development and management of the sport. To this end, the systematic literature review presented in Chapter 3 provided a comprehensive overview and analysis of the current landscape of theory relating to the topic of Olympic and Paralympic experience. We present the application of the rigorous and replicable methodology presented in Chapter 3 as a unique contribution to theory, as to the best of our knowledge this is the first of its kind applied to the subject area of Olympic and Paralympic experience.

Beyond a more traditional narrative review of literature the method of a systematic approach enabled us to clearly map the current focus of research in this area. The thematic analysis of the literature not only identified present themes but also highlighted missing themes. Specific identified gaps in the literature included: a lack of first person voice and specific reference to 'lived experience', a lack of discourse pertaining to sport specific identity, a lack of direct comparison between gendered experience, a lack of comparison between able- and dis-abled experience, and no clear definition of 'Olympic experience' or what makes this type of sporting experience different from any other. In concluding this thesis we will highlight where this particular study contributes to addressing some of these identified gaps.

The systematic literature review provided an overview of the broad subject area of Olympic and Paralympic experience but highlighted the absence of equestrian sport-specific literature. With regards to a sport specific focus, whilst predominantly taking a reconstructive approach as referred to by Booth (2004), Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive overview of the historical development of equestrian sport at the Olympics / Paralympics. Through this reconstructive narrative we were able to begin to map the structural context of this sport. By defining the socio-cultural framework of equestrianism we were able to focus on the relevance of elitism and social class, along with issues of amateurism and professionalism. And through the identification and analysis of perceptions of equestrianism which, within the context of the Olympics, are centred upon the Eurocentric, military-influenced development of the sport, we were also able to discuss implicit and explicit references to, and relevance of, masculinity, sexuality and gender.

Whilst this comprehensive reconstruction provided us with a new insight into the specific nature of social practices in the equestrian Olympic disciplines, it also highlighted potential marginalisation of this sport from the wider sporting landscape. Indeed we argue that the lack of universal acceptance of equestrian sport in this context may diminish participants' access to symbolic (Bourdieu, 1993) and social capital (Burt, 2005) and may force participants to seek recognition, opportunity and resources from within their own ranks. Indeed, through ECA of empirical data we identified and discussed the construction and the resultant underlying reality for this group of 'them and us', 'us' being inclusive of anyone involved in the world of horses and 'them' being outsiders to this. This in itself became most apparent in the multisport environment of the Olympics. It should also be noted here that this constructed identity was inclusive of all the equestrian disciplines whilst being exclusive of sport and athletes more broadly. This inclusive identity across the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines may be linked to the culturally and organisationally-specific structure of equestrian sport whereby the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines are governed collectively.

Indeed, we have identified the combined governance as a key feature of the sporting context for these participants. This structure of combined governance across both the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines was discussed in Chapter 2 and whilst governance was not identified as a theme in the systematic literature review, its salient's was implicit in much of the empirical data. Indeed, the influence of the underlying resources and identified social structures were evident in the experience and world view of the research participants. This structure of governance results in combined allocation of resources, a more collective approach to performance support and is a factor contributing to / reflection of, the collective identity discussed earlier. Here we argue that through the development of this thesis, in light of Booth's (2004) reference to Munslow's (1997) threefold typology of historical enquiry, we have moved from the reconstructive account of governance presented in Chapter 2, to the constructive account of the governance structure as recounted by those involved in sport and finally we present aspects of deconstruction as we have analysed the significance of this structure of the lived experience of those involved.

In line with the critical realist approach adopted in this study we have focussed on the relationship between structures and agency. Specifically in Chapter 2, we have identified structures such as military culture, the Eurocentric nature / norms of the sport, and in both Chapters 2 and 5 we have identified the structure of equestrian sport governance and we have given consideration to medical / veterinary discourse (relating to the challenges of experiencing equestrian sport in various Olympic locations) and we have discussed how these structures impact on the experience of those involved. Within the context of the relationship between structures and agency we acknowledge that these structures are socially constructed and not immutably fixed, although some are more enduring than others. One particular example is the economic structure of the sport (specifically horse ownership) which is discussed at several points throughout the thesis and summarised in the following section. Specifically with regards to the lived experience of the participants of this particular study, we have highlighted the economic structure of the sport as one of the underlying realities of their experience (see figure 6.1) and in section 6.4

Recommendations for future research, we invite further analysis to evaluate the existence of economic structural differences at both a national and discipline specific level.

As discussed in Chapter 5, a shared construct of identity within equestrian sport, inclusive of Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, was one of many shared realities. The fact that this is evidenced is function of the inclusive approach to the research design resulting in representation of all the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines that form the British Equestrian Team. In fact through ECA of the primary and secondary sources specific to this study, we were able to define several sport-specific 'identities', such as those relating to the specific disciplines as well as an overall inclusive Team GB identity. Apart from that associated with disability, other identities were generally shared across the Olympic and Paralympic athletes. The results of the Systematic Literature Review presented in Chapter 3, highlighted that there was a gap in the literature pertaining to the lived experience of competition at this level, a limited amount of sport-specific identity based commentary or research and a distinct absence of comparative Olympic / Paralympic studies. Therefore we would suggest that this cross Olympic / Paralympic approach to the study in itself makes a contribution to our understanding of these two entities and as we move from the reconstructive to the constructive narrative based on the comparative analysis of the lived experience of those involved, we have sought to provide a substantive contribution to what is to date an element which is absent in the literature.

So far we have considered the construction of identity specifically in relation to the Olympic and Paralympic Games and whilst the Games experience is the focus of this thesis, the place of this experience within the wider career histories of equestrian athletes is also of relevance. With regards to this, one unexpected finding of this study was the concept of a dual athlete career and the construction of an identity within this. Several of the study participants have successfully competed in both able-bodied and dis-abled sport, and one of the study participants even referred to herself as having two careers 'able-bodied and Para Dressage'. This is in part due to the nature / requirements of the sport, the combined governance and structured performance pathways of both Olympic

and Paralympic disciplines. Whilst none of the participants had competed in both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Ethnographic Content Analysis pertaining to their broader competition experience, highlighted notions of identity and social capital.

Van de Ven et al (2005) suggest that disabled people are often perceived to be less capable and competent than able-bodied people and it can be difficult for disabled people to be taken seriously and not patronised in social situations. The results of this study have highlighted the integration, in Britain at least, of able-bodied and Para-Equestrian Dressage, and through the analysis of the lived experience of these riders, we can see how sport can break down barriers by dismantling the binary definitions and segregation of able-bodied and disabled sport and how this can help create valuable social capital. We therefore argue that equestrian sport provides a unique case study to highlight equity within a sport and one in which the construct of social capital could be further explored.

Continuing with the theme of Identity, in Chapter 2 and 3 we discussed the construct of gender. In Chapter 3, gender was identified as both a first and second order theme. Identified literature in this chapter was linked to wider issues of gender ideologies including issues pertaining to access to sport, differences between male and female participation, images of athletic masculinity and general masculine hegemony and female emancipatory trends and wider feminist movements of the time. Across these sources in the literature review, the wider socio-historic issues provided the structure to the discourse, with very little space given to biographical detail in its own right. All these issues are present in the context of the Olympics, as gender bias against the participation of women has been implicit in the history of the Olympic Movement. According to Borish (1996: p.44) the "Olympic Games provide a rich and dense arena for understanding women's gains in autonomy and physical emancipation, as well as constraints of their quest for equality in athletic performance". This is particularly pertinent in relation to equestrian disciplines in which men and women compete directly with one another, and in light of this it is not surprising to see gender discourse interwoven throughout this thesis.

In Chapter 2 we addressed these issues from within a sport-specific framework and highlighted the unique gender equality construct of equestrian competition, whilst also acknowledging the fact that sex integration in sport does not simply equate to participation parity. The fact the men and women can and do compete equally in equestrian sport does however provide a distinctive opportunity to address what Guttmann (2004: p.33) refers to as the 'third anachronism preventing the emergence of modern sport in its pure form', exclusion on the basis of sex. With reference to this Guttmann (2004: p. 34) explains that 'although men's greater physical strength and quicker reaction time make direct competition with women unsuitable in many sports, the logic and development of modern sports demand at the very least that women be granted separate-but-equal opportunity for involvement in sports'. In Chapter 2 we were able to reconstruct the gender activity and behavior expectations associated with equestrian sport through its evolution in the context of the Olympics. Gender structure itself is mediated within the construct of the sport and we have been able to see a change in anticipated gendered activities and behaviors that to some extent mirror wider socio-cultural developments.

It is worth making reference here to the recently published Olympic Agenda 2020, in which the IOC presents 40 recommendations that were discussed at the 127th IOC session and which 'lay out the strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement' (IOC, 2014: p.1). The findings of this thesis have a direct bearing on 'Recommendation 11: Foster gender equality; sub-point 2. The IOC to encourage the inclusion of mixed-gender team events' (IOC, 2014: p.10), specifically, that is, findings regarding the lived experience of athletes competing in a mixed-gendered sport. As previously indicated, we have highlighted the gap in literature pertaining to comparative gendered experiences within sport, and we propose therefore that the specificity of our study and consequent findings provide valuable insight in relation to athlete experience which could be taken into consideration when making such policy decisions as highlighted in Recommendation 11 (IOC, 2014).

Despite its discursive presence in Chapters 2 and 3, gender was somewhat absent from the findings in Chapter 5. In contrast to previous studies in which gender is associated with identity and the lived experience of sport, there was a distinct lack of gendered discourse present within the empirical data produced and reviewed in this thesis. Athletes were consistently referred to as 'riders', a term devoid of gender connotations and analysis of the experience of these specific participants failed to show any gendered differentiation. The use of gender-neutral terminology (rider) might suggest either that gender is unimportant, or that respondents were gender-blind. However when asked specifically about gender, respondents explicitly rejected the notion that gender was an important part of their athlete identity. We conclude therefore that gender activity and behavior expectations are not perceived as affecting the underlying reality of the performance environment of this particular sports team. This phenomenon is clearly of significance for the wider discourse on the gendered experience in sport.

The study has also highlighted an absence from this discourse of racial and ethnic representation. Whilst by no means a dominant theme in Chapter 3, some of the identified literature predominantly relating to sporting culture, identity, access and representation did discuss issues of ethnicity. In Chapter 2 the historical dominance of a Eurocentric culture associated with the Olympic equestrian disciplines was discussed and although we also identified the significance of emerging markets such as the Middle East, there is little evidence of the impact of athletes in the British team from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The British Equestrian Team has only ever been represented by white British athletes, highlighting a lack of representativeness in the sport a factor which is clearly associated with the broader construct of elitism. From a deconstructive position the fact that ethnicity is missing from this discourse is important because it reflects a culturally specific conceptualisation of the sport (sublimating discussions of ethnic disadvantage) and whilst this is not treated as a central focus in this current study it does raise issues of access and representation.

The discussion of cultural dominance within the sport leads us onto our next key finding, that of the economic structure of the sport. Whilst the commercial side of sport continues

to grow and economic structures are prominent in many sporting landscapes, this was not a theme identified in Chapter 3. This is not to say that there is a gap in the general sporting literature but it is important to reiterate that the focus of this literature search was centered on Olympic and Paralympic sport in which prominence was not given to economic issues, though it was identified as a salient theme with regards to the experience of this particular team.

With regards to equestrian sport, the economic influence is predominantly associated with access to horse power. Individual riders very rarely have ownership rights to the horses and this creates the need for riders to establish relationships with owners whilst being susceptible to market forces. In Chapter 2 we discussed this key factor and through the empirical analysis we were able to gain an insight into the lived experience, not only of the riders but also of those involved in the wider support team. Here we also noted a distinct difference between the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian disciplines. The salience of the economic structure was proportionately stronger with regards to the Olympic disciplines compared to the Paralympic disciplines. Due to the much shorter life cycle and lower commercial value of Para-Equestrian Dressage, riders had more sustainable access to horses.

It is interesting to note that since its inclusion in the 1996 Paralympic Games, Great Britain has dominated Para-Equestrian Dressage, yet despite an historic association with equestrian sport in general and consistent presence in the Olympics, the same cannot be said for the British Equestrian Olympic Team. The economic structure of equestrian sport, is therefore an important underlying reality that does affect experience and potentially performance.

As a result of the ECA numerous common features were highlighted in the lived experience of riders, regardless of whether this was within the Olympic or Paralympic context. However, with regards to the overall research question which specifically asks what is the nature of this experience in the context of riders' career histories, we were able to identify differences between these groups. Such differences are partly related to the career development pathways for these two groups and the differences in the

economic structure of the sport as discussed previously. Para-Equestrian Dressage riders reported a much quicker and shorter pathway into the senior elite squads and could therefore be part of a Paralympic squad much sooner than an Olympic rider. In contrast despite often being involved in international competition at junior and young rider level, actually getting onto the senior Olympic squad was seen as much more competitive and the fact that age is not a limiting factor in performance means that many riders have had access to numerous Olympic cycles which means that team places for new riders may not very often open up.

In Chapter 3 we noted that there was a lack of discourse specifically relating to the lived experience of the Olympic or Paralympic Games and a lack of consensus as to what makes these competitions different from others. For this particular team, the multi-sport environment of the Olympics and Paralympics was one of the main differentiating factors which made this competition a unique experience for these athletes as for the rest of their career histories they compete in equestrian only competition structures. As previously discussed this multi-sport environment highlighted the identity construct of 'them and us' and differentiated the experience for these athletes. Symbolic Olympic or Paralympic events were also identified as contributing to the uniqueness of this competition, most specifically the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the Olympic Village.

Due to practical and logistical considerations, equestrian sport is often situated outside of the main Olympic or Paralympic sporting centre. Based on the findings of this study, within a critical realist approach, we argue that inclusion in the symbolic events of the games, are for these athletes at least an important consideration for experience if not performance. We would also like to use this as an example of how an investigation into the lived experience of athletes can result in implications relating to the management of athlete experience by making reference to two of the IOC's recent 20+20 Recommendations (IOC, 2014). In Recommendation 1: Shape the bidding process as an invitation, the IOC lays out recommendations for a new bidding process which could result in 'the organisation of entire sports or disciplines outside the host city or, in exceptional cases, outside the host country notably for reasons of geography and

sustainability (IOC, 2014: p.4). As has been discussed in Chapter 2, Equestrian sport has on several occasions been situated outside the host city and on two occasions outside the host country. Our results however show that such sport separation does affect athlete experience which we argue is therefore at odds with 'Recommendation 18: Strengthen support for athletes; sub-point 1. The IOC to put the athletes' experience at the heart of the Olympic Games (IOC, 2014: p.12). The findings of this thesis provide a somewhat unique insight into how policy implications affect athlete experience at the Olympics and we believe this may have value to those involved in policy formulation such as 'Recommendation 2: Evaluate bid cities by assessing key opportunities and risks; sub-point 1. Introduce into the existing 14 Candidate City evaluation criteria a new criterion entitled: The Athletes' Experience (IOC, 2014: p.5).

Through the ethnographic approach as associated with critical realist ontology, we have been able to present a unique construction of the lived experience of Olympic and Paralympic competition. Through the analysis of the systematic review of literature, we noted a lack of ethnographic studies and absence of the first person voice. In Chapter 4 we presented the methodological position of this thesis. We discussed how critical realists view structures and agency as factors that in combination determine the outcomes of social phenomena. As such, a phenomenon such as experience cannot be understood by examining structures alone or by relying solely on the agents' behaviour, but through the dialectical relationship between the two. Ethnographic Content Analysis derived from Altheide (1996) was deemed a highly appropriate method to provide direct evidence of the Olympic and Paralympic experience.

As a result of the methodological choices made we have not only presented the first person voice and brought life to the lived experience but we have also been able identify the structures within which such lived experience takes place (Figure 6.1).
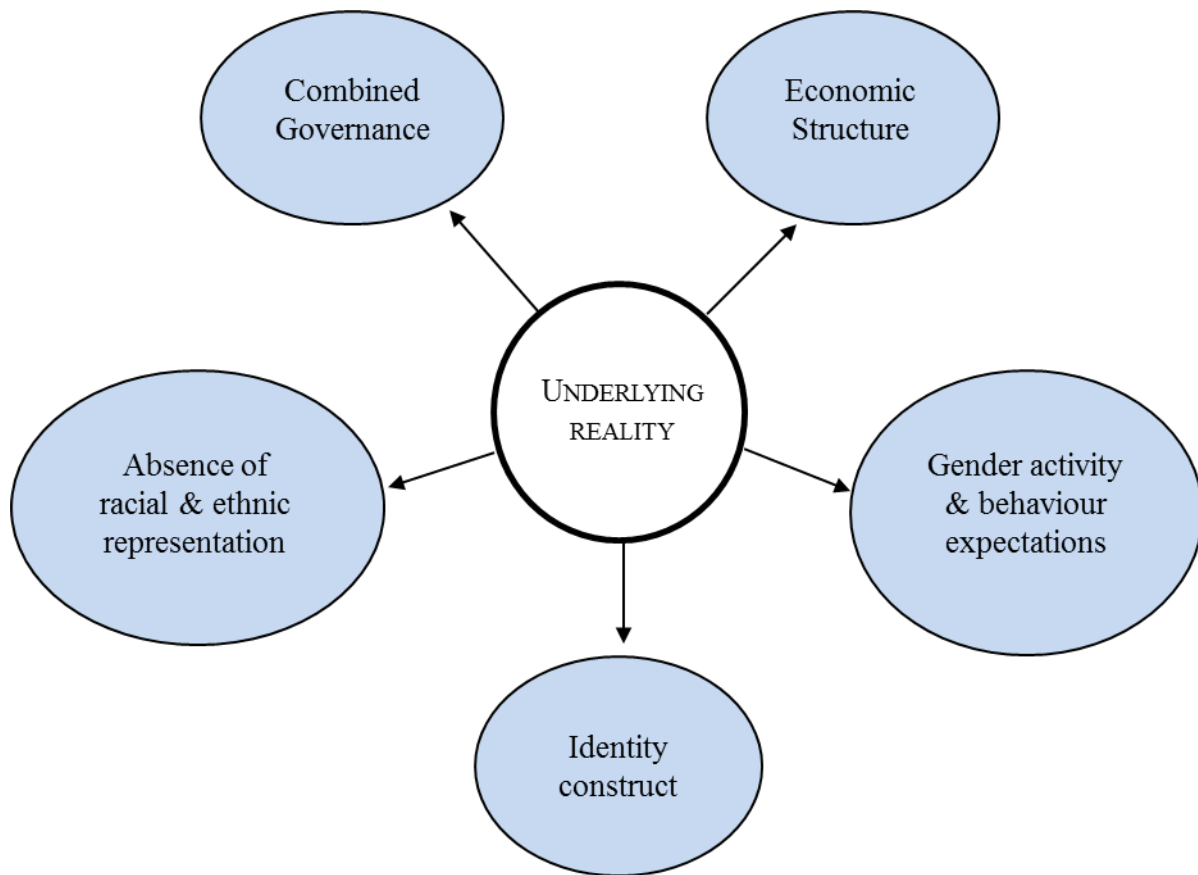
Figure 6.1: Underlying reality of experience

By including not only riders but also support staff across all the Olympic and Paralympic equestrian disciplines we have begun to not only map the structures but also the relationships which occur within and between these structures and through the reflexive approach to analysis we have begun to complete the exploratory arm of retroduction and move closer to understanding the 'Olympic / Paralympic experience' of the British Equestrian team within the context of the athletes' wider sporting careers.

6.3 Research Limitations

Whilst we have argued that this thesis has provided findings which contribute significantly to our overall understanding of the Olympic and Paralympic experience, it is important to acknowledge a number of limitations that should be taken into consideration when conducting future research in this area. This study was designed to capture the sport specific experience of one identified team in the Olympic and Paralympic context.

A qualitative approach was therefore deemed appropriate to collate the range, diversity and complexity of the participants lived experiences. However a limitation inherent in the research sample is that by targeting one national team, the research is culturally limited and may be missing out on substantial cultural nuances. We also acknowledge that the convenience sampling technique utilised in this study can lead to the under-representation or over-representation of particular groups within the sample. Since the sampling frame is not known, the inherent bias in convenience sampling means that the sample may be unrepresentative of the population being studied. It is important to note therefore that whilst this method enabled us to gain insight into this teams' specific lived experience, such an approach is associated with analytic rather than statistical generalisation (Yin, 2009), allowing generalisations to be anticipated in those research sites / with those research subjects where the context is similar.

Qualitative research in general is often criticised in terms of its lack of validity and reliability and the individual circumstances of this study may lend themselves to evoking further criticism regarding rigour. However the strategies used in the empirical data collection employ alternative criteria in terms of ensuring that claims made were, warrantable, trustworthy and credible discussion (see for example Wood and Kroger, 2000 for a discussion of such criteria in qualitative data gathering and analysis).

As this thesis employed an ethnographic approach to data collection, potential limitations of the researcher should also be taken into consideration at this point. In the case of this ethnographic approach, the research is reliant upon the observations of just one person, the conclusions about what the participants were doing, and saying or feeling could therefore be affected by the researchers' knowledge, cultural bias or ignorance. In Chapter 4 we discussed how the nature of data collection and analysis for this particular study required a level of reflexivity as to the researcher's role as co-creator and evaluator of the data. Researcher reflexivity is a process that requires the acquisition of a level of social and self-awareness through the research process, in relation to both the participants and the environment in which the research knowledge is produced. Although it should be acknowledged that in practical terms this was rather challenging at times, the researcher

did seek to engage in critical reflection throughout the entire research process and this is reflected in the commentary produced in the thesis.

The final stage of the data synthesis of the systematic literature review consisted of a construct analysis. In this section the literature was reviewed with specific consideration for the methodological constructs used. The aim of this phase of the analysis was to elicit 'the nature of this phenomenon' and thus inform both the methodological and empirical work in the subsequent stages of the research process. We were able to identify that the majority of the papers used a qualitative method of inquiry with the dominant method of data collection being interviews and a popular method of analysis being some form of content analysis. We were however unable to identify a dominant ontological or epistemological position. Although we have argued for a critical realist ontological and epistemological approach to this study, employing ethnographic content analysis, we do acknowledge that the utilisation of alternative approaches such as life histories may also have elicited significant data in relation to the place of the Olympics and Paralympics in the career histories of the athletes. Indeed due to the fact that many riders have had access to numerous Olympic and Paralympic Games during the course of their careers, the life history method would have undoubtedly provided rich data. However such an approach would have neglected the identification of real structures provided by a critical realist analysis which was an important consideration for this specific research study.

Another limitation inherent in this particular research project was addressed in Chapter 4 and is associated with the unique circumstances under which this research was conducted. Prior to registration at Loughborough University, during the time of data collection, organisational circumstances resulted in a lack of PhD supervision (as the author was in-between institutional registration) and supervisory support was not available at the time when access was granted to conduct elements of this research in parallel with work for the British Equestrian Federation (BEF). Once issues of PhD supervision were resolved following registration at Loughborough it became clear to the author that the conducting of the systematic literature review should ideally have been carried out prior to conducting the interviews. However, due to the necessarily pragmatic

convenience-driven character of the interviews (conducted in parallel with, and with access secured via, other work by the author carried out for the BEF) and the individual nature of the lived experience, the interviews (though not their analysis) were undertaken without prior access to the findings of the systematic review. These organisational practicalities also meant that Altheide's approach to analysis could only be used post hoc to inform and develop the analysis.

An additional pragmatic limitation is the fact that this research was constrained in terms of the time and resources that were available to undertake the empirical stage. The primary data collection was conducted around the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, it would have been particularly useful for this study to have also conducted comparative interviews around the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics which were a unique 'Home Games' for this team. In acknowledging these limitations we are pointing out the need to balance being granted privileged access to interviewees and sources at a particular point in time, against the constraint of having to move into the field earlier than would have been intended if the research had not been subject to these practical constraints.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis has highlighted a number of issues that go beyond the aims of the immediate study but which provide opportunity for further research in this field. Specifically the methodological approach adopted in this study highlights areas of future research that could build on the current findings. With regards to this, we refer to the retroductive model presented in Chapter 4 and reproduced here for ease of reference (Figure 6.2).
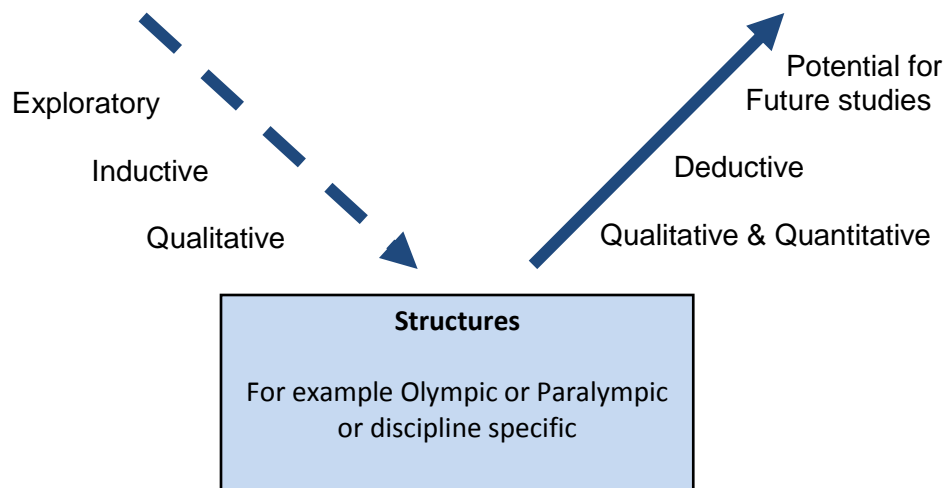
Figure 6.2 The retroductive model

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, theoretical adequacy was derived from a retroductive approach whereby assumptions are weak and exploration is strong. Combined with the fact that the empirical data used in this study was drawn largely from interviews and autobiographical material, the method of analysis was informed by ECA and the ontological and epistemological approach taken was that of critical realism, the focus of this thesis has remained on the exploratory, predominantly inductive side of retroduction which leaves space for the continuation of research on the deductive side.

This study was approached with the aim of understanding what the significant underlying relationships or processes were between the social actors and the surrounding context, in which evidence was employed largely to provide informed hypotheses about the existence and nature of structures in an inductive fashion. As highlighted in section 6.2 several salient social structures have been identified, potential future studies could therefore be designed to deductively test the nature of these structures. At this stage we propose that future research should be positioned within three areas: additional research within the framework of British equestrian sport; comparative international research in equestrian sport; and finally cross-sport comparative research.

As a result of examining the lived experience of the British Equestrian team as a whole we have highlighted how through competition structure, combined governance and

performance pathways some of the riders have access to both dis-abled and abled competition. Whilst the degree of access and level of competition varies we have identified the notion of a dual athlete career experience and we would suggest that there is potential to explore this further, specifically with regards to talent identification, and the construct of social capital.

This study has identified the economic structure of the sport as a significant framework within which experience is constructed, specifically in relation to horse ownership and the associated relationships and opportunities this affords. Within the context of the current study we identified differences in the lived experience within this structure between those involved in Olympic or Paralympic disciplines. We suggest that future studies could be designed to further deductively evaluate the existence of structural differences between the Olympic disciplines of Eventing, Showjumping and Dressage, specifically from a team GB perspective but also from an international perspective.

For example the Dutch Showjumping team has recently emerged as a strong contender on the international circuit and it would be interesting to evaluate the extent to which this new-found performance success is associated with the fact that the Netherlands Equestrian Federation (KNHS) has begun to financially support horse ownership for national team members. We suggest therefore that additional research in this area could focus on how the economic structure of the sport links to issues of access and participation and the wider political economy of the sport.

Indeed, an international comparative study within the context of equestrian sport is a general recommended area of future research. We believe research of this nature would help to clarify some sport-specific structures whilst also identifying potential national differences or national contexts which ultimately influence athlete experience. Future research of this nature could help identify cultural significance and influence with regards to the underlying realities highlighted in this study such as gender activity and behaviour expectations and the presence of racial and ethnic representation or the lack thereof. We

also believe it would be useful if future studies in this area were to focus on access and representation whilst continuing to investigate identity construction.

Several of the structures identified with this particular study relate to the multi-sport environment that is the Olympic and Paralympic Games. With regards to the lived experience of this competition for these identified athletes, this multi-sport environment provides a unique competition setting. However this is not the case for all national teams as some have access to other multi-sport environments such as the Pan-American Games. It would thus be interesting to develop additional research carried out with teams which have experienced various multi-sport competitions in order to evaluate the extent to which this is a significant feature that makes the Olympic Games a unique experience for equestrian athletes.

As discussed so far this study has begun to elicit evidence of some of the structures associated with British equestrian sport at the Olympic and Paralympic level. Beyond the recommendation for additional equestrian sport-specific studies a further dimension to consider would be the development of a comparative study in another sport. We recommend for example additional comparative studies investing athlete experience at the Olympics specifically focussing on sport separation experience and mixed gender sport experience. We suggest that such additional studies could contribute to both operational and strategic policy planning whilst retaining consideration and implication of athlete experience.

6.5 Final Remarks

In this final chapter of the thesis we have re-presented the research question and located conclusions and potential for future research in a retroductive framework. Whilst acknowledging research limitations, we have highlighted how the methodological outcomes of this study seek to contribute to wider knowledge. We have presented this thesis as an exploratory piece of work, and as part of a wider retroductive strategy, and have acknowledged the opportunity to go on to confirmatory approaches in which, for example we could operationalise some of our conclusions about the relationship between

experience and structural factors identified. We have also identified the potential for further application of this conceptual framework of Olympic and Paralympic athlete experience across sport specific and nation specific cases. We have argued that the chosen methodological approach to analysis has enabled us to identify the balance between shared structures, such as performance pathways across all disciplines and shared resources, and individual discipline nuances, such as discipline specific identity and relationships.

Finally we believe the value and indeed interest of this study can be measured both intrinsically, in relation to ascertaining what is or is not unique about the Olympic experience for this group of athletes, and extrinsically by considering what the policy implications may be when one considers the athlete's view.   We believe this study has provided an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and this knowledge could be especially relevant for those involved in the management of equestrian sport. For example we have highlighted the impact of sport separation or inclusion on athlete experience and we have suggested that such structural performance-related decisions, such as location of individual sports during the Games, should be consider in wider policy decision making, such as those which were considered in the recent Agenda2020 discussions resulting in IOC recommendations (IOC, 2014). We have also discussed the power issues related to horse ownership and the consequence of horse power in relation to performance and the practicalities of shared performance support / resources across the disciplines, especially during Olympic / Paralympic competition when access may be limited to policy structures such as accreditation. Recognising and understanding the kinds of satisfactions and challenges that individuals experience, the significant features of their athlete identity, and the structural constraints and opportunities of their environment will help identify and design the services and provision required to support the athletes through this experience. While this thesis has not been about providing a prescription for performance, but rather about providing a contribution to knowledge in relation to the athlete experience, clearly an understanding of athletes' experience in this elite competition scenario should be relevant to performance considerations.

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APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF DATA EXTRACTION FORMS FOR REJECTED STUDIES

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC08
Title	Going for gold in 2010: An analysis of British Columbia's literacy goal.
Authors	Walker, J.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	International Journal of Lifelong Education
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC08
Title	Involvement in Special Olympics and its relations to self-concept and actual competency in participants with developmental disabilities.
Authors	Weiss, J., Diamond, J., Demark, J. and Lovald, B.
Year of Publication	2003
Publication	Research in Developmental Disabilities
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC08
Title	The Olympus 320 engine: A case study in design, development and organisational control.
Authors	Lawson, J.
Year of Publication	1992
Publication	Technology and Culture
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC10
Title	Mechanisms of asthma in Olympic athletes – practical implications.
Authors	Haahtela, T., Malmberg, P. and Moreira, A.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	Allergy
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC12
Title	The more things change, the more they are the same: Continuing concerns with the Special Olympics.
Authors	Storey, K.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	ASC
Keyword	ASC12
Title	Wind forecasting for the sailing events at the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
Authors	Spark, E. and Connor, G.J.
Year of Publication	2004
Publication	Weather and Forecasting
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc08
Title	Emotion self-regulation and athletic performance: An application of the IZOF model.
Authors	Robazza, C., Pellizzari, M. and Hanin, Y.
Year of Publication	2004
Publication	Psychology of Sport and Exercise
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc08
Title	Idiosyncratic description of anger states in skilled Spanish karate athletes: An application of the IZOF model.
Authors	Ruiz, M.C. and Hanin, Y.L.
Year of Publication	2004
Publication	Revista de Psicologia del Deporte
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc08
Title	Sports sponsorship as a strategic investment in China: Perceived risks and benefits by corporate sponsors prior to the Beijing 2008 Olympics.
Authors	Yang, X.S., Sparks, R. and Li,M.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc08
Title	Understanding strategic alignment for destination marketing and the 2004 Athens Olympic Games
Authors	Singh, N. and Hub, C.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	Tourism Management
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc09
Title	Membership categorisation in British 'Olympic' advertisements: Image and text.
Authors	Gastaldo, E.
Year of Publication	2005
Publication	Communication and Cognition
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	PSYC
Keyword	Psyc09
Title	The sexual identity of athletes.
Authors	Moore, K.L.
Year of Publication	1968
Publication	Journal of the American Medical Association
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD01
Title	Medical report of the Montreal Olympic Games.
Authors	Laurin, C.A. and Letourneau, G.
Year of Publication	1978
Publication	American Journal of Sports Management
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD02
Title	The decision to join the Special Olympics: Parents' perspectives.
Authors	Goodwin, D.L., Fitzpatrick, R., Thurmeier, R. and Hall, C.
Year of Publication	2006
Publication	Adapted Physical Actively Quarterly
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD03
Title	Ethnography, space and politics: Interrogating the process of protest in the Tibetan Freedom Movement.
Authors	Davies, A.D.
Year of Publication	2009
Publication	Area
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD08
Title	The female athlete triad exists in both elite and controls.
Authors	Torstveit, M.K. and Sundgot-Borgen, J.
Year of Publication	2005
Publication	Medicine and Science in Sport and Exercise
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD08
Title	Association-dissociation patterns of United States Olympic marathon trial contestants.
Authors	Silva, J.M. and Appelbaum, M.I.
Year of Publication	1989
Publication	Cognitive Therapy and Research
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	SD
Keyword	SD12
Title	A comparison of physical fitness and body awareness between Special Olympic athletes and non-athletes with intellectual disabilities.
Authors	Ozer, D.
Year of Publication	2005
Publication	ICHPER SD Journal
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS05
Title	Aspects of life-history and ecology of Olympic Salamander, Rhyacotriton-Olympicus.
Authors	Nussbaum, R.A.
Year of Publication	1997
Publication	American Midland Naturalist
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS05
Title	Egg and larval developments in relation to systematics of Novumbra hubbsi, The Olympic mudminnow.
Authors	Kendall, A.W. and Mearns, A.J.
Year of Publication	1996
Publication	Copeia
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS05
Title	A springtime Olympics demands special consideration for allergic athletes.
Authors	Katelaris, C.H., Carrozzi, F.M., Burke, T.V. and Byth, K.
Year of Publication	2000
Publication	Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS08
Title	Paths to leisure physical activity among adults with intellectual disabilities: Self-efficiency and social support.
Authors	Peterson, J.J., Lowe, J.B., Peterson, N.A., Nothwehr, F.K., Janz, K.F., and Lobas, J.G.
Year of Publication	2008
Publication	American Journal of Health Promotion
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS10
Title	Allergy and asthma in elite summer sport athletes.
Authors	Helenius, I. and Haahtela, T.
Year of Publication	2000
Publication	Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study

Database	WOS
Keyword	WOS10
Title	Green vs, grey: A comparative energy analysis of two Olympic speed-skating ovals.
Authors	Elliott, J.
Year of Publication	2007
Publication	Journal of Architectural and Planning Research
Justification for exclusion	Falls outside the scope of this study